

Scientists set to probe mystery circles in Wales

A TEAM of scientists investigating mystery circles which have appeared in fields throughout the country is to travel to Wales this week to study marks in the Black Mountains.

The discovery of 98 circles which appeared within a week on two hill-tops near Llanthony, Gwent, brings the total found across Britain to more than 250.

The phenomenon has baffled experts in the West Country, who have been studying the circles since 1976.

Scientists' spokesman Colin Andrews said the latest find could prove vital in solving the riddle of the circles.

"We believe we have something of major proportions," he said.

The exact location of the twin hills is being kept secret to stop tourists and sight-seers walking over the perfectly-formed shapes.

In the past, the circles have appeared in arable crop fields.

But in the latest - and so far the largest - discovery,

acres of heather have been shredded into what scientists refer to as tadpole-shaped circles because of a five metre-long, curling line which clips the outer perimeter.

Mr Andrews said the new variation of shape and plant victim could provide them with important clues.

"Heather is much better at holding in radiation than most living organisms and this is one area we shall be studying," he said.

"In the past, the circles

have flattened six types of soft arable crops which slowly undergo a molecular change. However heather, which is much tougher and fibrous, has been snapped at the stem.

"Because of the scale of the formations, we are sure there is no human involvement in the phenomenon. We can eliminate the hoax theory once and for all."

The circles had been found near ley lines, believed to be energy forces under the earth's surface.

Looking into the circles

FARMERS are seldom surprised by what they find in their oats, barley or wheat fields but mostly it is a trespasser of one kind or another who can quickly be seen off the premises.

For cereals growers in southern parts of Britain it is just not as easy as that.

Over the years something or someone has been attracted to their crops and the only visible evidence of their nocturnal visits are the large, near-perfect circular indentations left behind.

While the phenomenon of the circles is not a new one - older farmers remember their fathers and grandfathers talking about them - it is only now they have been investigated to any great degree.

Colin Andrews and Pat Delgado in *Circular Evidence* (Bloomsbury, £14.95) do justice to the many sightings that have occurred in the past nine years.

Their efforts are purely documentary and make no effort to prove anything beyond the existence of what they term, "a persistent and compelling enigma" in our midst.

Nevertheless their investigations at the numerous sitings of these bizarre phenomena are as thorough as those involved in a murder hunt.

Case studies have been compiled, interviews con-

ducted with farmers and other witnesses and fine detail surface and aerial photographs taken.

Sometimes the sitings are of similar proportions, although miles apart. On other occasions they vary from what could be called the norm.

On all occasions they have left the authors awestruck; and, they are not ashamed to admit, at times a little frightened too.

Conventional science, they assert, does not have a ready answer for what is happening, not only in England but in France, Switzerland and other places as far apart as New Zealand and the USSR.

In the light of what has occurred they make a plea to the scientific establishment to take notice of it and allow serious research to begin.

Farmers too would like an explanation. For while most of them find little time for suggestions that alien visitors are the culprits they are now quite sure the damage to their crops isn't always caused by vandals, hoaxers or courting couples overcome by a day out in the countryside.

Michael Drake

DINGBAT SOLUTION

Below sea level

Mystery rings are strictly for the birds, say experts

RED-FACED scientists who investigated 98 mystery circles in the Black Mountains of Wales have discovered they were made by a local farmer - to encourage grouse to settle.

The circles, found on two hilltops at Llanthony, near Abergavenny, Gwent, were thought to be linked to the scores of circles

discovered across Britain since 1976 and would have brought the total being investigated by baffled experts to 250.

But yesterday, Mr Colin Andrews, spokesman for the scientists, said: "These circles are nothing to do with the investigation. They were cut by the local

landowner. The heather was mowed into circles to increase the amount of grouse in the area."

Undeterred, the scientists have moved back to Wiltshire to study a 32-metre circle, the biggest so far, found close to Silbury Hill, near Marlborough.

26-8-86 BELFAST TELEGRAPH Riddle of grant circles grows

ANOTHER five giant circles of flattened corn have mysteriously appeared at the Devil's Punchbowl near Winchester in Hampshire.

The new rings, the largest 42 feet in diameter, are across the road from three discovered in a wheat field last month.

Corn lecture

AUTHOR Dr Terence Meaden was flying to Japan today - to lecture on the riddle of circles which appear in cornfields.

30/8/89

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