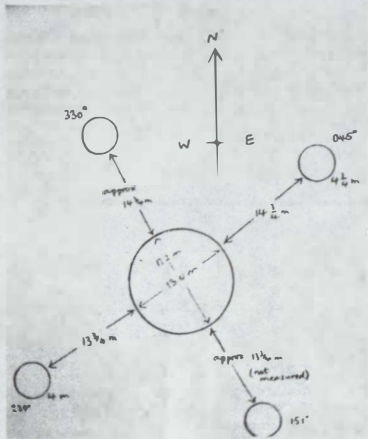
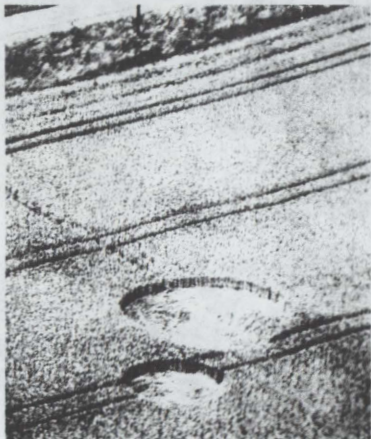
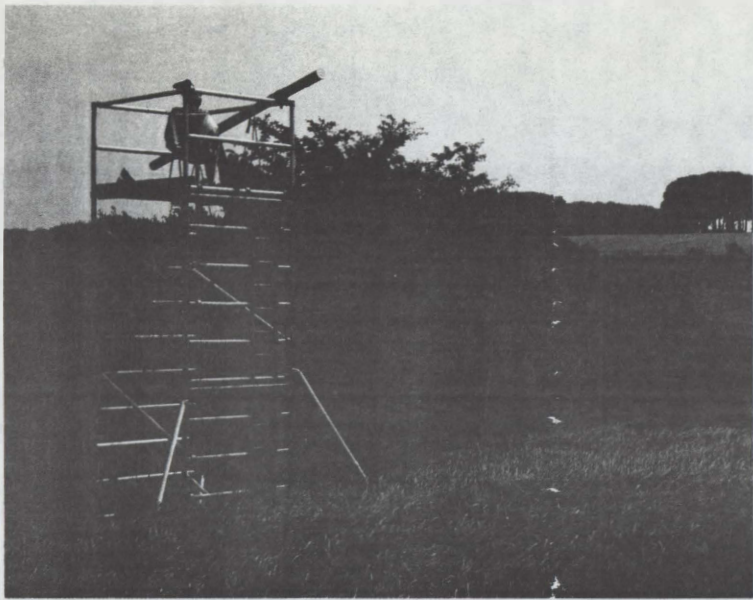


CROP REVOLUTION 10 YEARS ON

by RALPH NOYES



(Top) 1—The White Crow tower, from which a week-long watch over a disturbed cornfield near Winchester was mounted last month. (Above left) 2—A doublet that appeared near the White Horse at Westbury in Wiltshire in 1987. (Above right) A measured drawing of a quintuplet

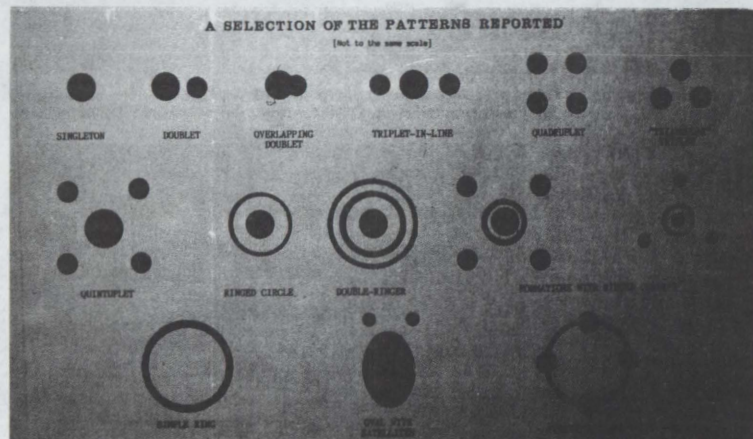
SINCE "Going Round in Circles" appeared in COUNTRY LIFE (February 2, 1989) there has been what one of the principal researchers, Mr Colin Andrews, rightly calls "an explosive development" in these strange events. In the six weeks following mid-May, when the first of this year's circles was reported from Avebury Trusloe, more than 130 had been observed in Hampshire and Wiltshire (although not elsewhere). Further reports—all from the Wessex area—are said to be coming in at the rate of about 10 a day. We

have already had more occurrences in this short period than in the whole of any previous year. The total number of circles reported since 1980, when the subject first came under serious study, is now approaching 600. Many have been found in complex groups or patterns which the experts believe have, in most cases, formed simultaneously in a single "event". The diagram (Fig 5) shows a number of these "events", ranging from the simple singleton (a circle on its own), through

several different kinds of array, to the remarkable ringed circles and the "Celtic Cross". So the total of nearly 600 circles represents a smaller number of "events"; probably between 150 and 200 during the 10 years of serious study. The circles are not the kind of ragged damage (sadly familiar to farmers) caused by birds, animals, wind, rain, summer whirlwinds or thoughtless visitors. They are remarkably precise and geometrical, with a sharp cut-off between areas of disturbance and surrounding crops. The disturbance takes the form of a flattening of the crop, laid down in a distinctive clockwise or anti-clockwise swirl. The crop itself (usually grain) remains surprisingly undamaged in most cases: the stems are firmly bent near ground level but not broken; and the fruiting heads (usually ears of corn) are left intact and continue to grow and ripen until harvested. Only rarely does the crop make any effort to stand up again. In some cases the disturbances are "rings" rather than "circles". The subject bristles with puzzling questions. Who or what is making these things? How are they (or it) doing it? Why are most of the reports coming from Wessex? What can possibly account for the extraordinary variety of patterns? Is it really the case—as the sequence of reports suggests—that we are witnessing something which is growing in numbers from year to year and steadily increasing the elaboration of its patterns? If this is so, are the patterns signs of an intelligent purpose rather than merely a blind force? In this 10th year of sustained observations we now have at least as many intriguing guesses as bewildering questions. Some were printed in the correspondence columns of COUNTRY LIFE (March 2 and 9, 1989). (I particularly enjoyed the claim of the—alleged—Fun Balloon Experimental Company to be causing these events during balloon sorties by its members; I only regret that attempts to trace this company or to observe it at work have so far failed.) To the many kind people who wrote to me in response to "Going Round in Circles" (often with helpful information) I sent a listing of the main articles which have appeared since 1980 in outlets as varied in their background and interests as the *Journal of Meteorology*, *Flying Saucer Review*, the publications of BUFORA (the British UFO Research Association), *New Scientist*, and the journal of the Royal Meteorological Society, the national and local press, and several magazines which devote themselves to "green" issues, "New Age" concerns and the "paranormal". All this material remains of great interest to anybody searching for clues and who wants to trace the history of the subject; and it indicates the great range of speculation which the circles have attracted. But there are now three publications which bring us some way further forward (to be reviewed in COUNTRY

LIFE on July 20) and an interesting scientific operation has recently been mounted near Winchester which has produced worthwhile results. A start in the direction of co-operative research—even though funded privately—was made during June. Mr Andrews and his colleagues in Circles Phenomenon Research set up a 24-hour watch, lasting from Saturday, June 10 until Sunday, June 18, overlooking a field in the Cheesefoot Head formation near Winchester, which has suffered cropfield circles in every year bar one since 1981. The hope was to catch one of these mysterious events in the act of forming. The farmer concerned would not allow the researchers onto his own property but the Longwood Estate helpfully made land available, just across the A272 road and overlooking the field in question. A watchtower was set up, carrying a television camera and a sophisticated night camera, generously lent by Photonic Science, a company which makes advanced optical equipment. Two caravans contained monitoring and recording apparatus. More than 50 of us took part during this exciting week, mounting three eight-hour watches a day. We were carefully briefed in advance by Mr Andrews, Professor Roy of Glasgow University, Dr Terence Meaden and Dr Adrian Lyons of Photonic Science. The operation was called "White Crow" after an old joke which scientists sometimes make. "All crows are black" is what most of us would say; but good scientists always test such statements by looking for counter-instances. It only needs one white crow to upset our confident generalisation. And it would only have needed the observation of one circle in the process of forming to disprove (or prove) some of the current theories—for example, that they are all hoaxes. Nothing turned up in that much haunted bit of Cheesefoot Head. But we were far from disappointed... In the small hours of Sunday morning, June 18, just as the last watchers were about to begin dismantling the equipment, remarkable events took place. In a field some distance to the south of the White Crow site, and in quite a different direction from the one in which we had been looking, powerful and inexplicable sounds were heard (and captured on tape). When the sun came up a ringed circle was found nearby, possessing new characteristics. Dr Meaden, among others, made careful observations of it. It was certainly not a hoax. As I write this article, further details are awaited. So where do we now stand? Hoax can be ruled out in most cases for good reasons which readers will be able to examine for themselves in the three books just published. Other guesses abound—but are hotly debated. All we can be certain of is that an extraordinary sequence of events has taken place since at least 1980; and that there is a strong appearance of increasing

Following our article in February about the mysterious circles appearing in cornfields there has been a dramatic increase in their number and complexity. Last month, a 24-hour, week-long watch on a field prone to disturbance was mounted—with exciting results.



(Top) 4—A double ringer, still visible after harvesting, which appeared in 1988 in the field watched from White Crow this year. (Above) 5—Diagram of patterns observed since 1980. They tend to haunt certain areas but never appear twice in the same place

frequency and increasing elaboration. One of the intriguing matters on which readers of this article may be able to help the researchers is in the apparent concentration of the circles in Hampshire and Wiltshire. From the large postbag I received in response to "Going Round in Circles" only one "event" was reported that we did not already know about (and it, too, lay very near to "haunted" Wessex). Are there others elsewhere in Britain? COUNTRY LIFE readers may know about "events" in other localities.

Any information would be most gratefully received. Letters will be answered, and material passed to the research groups. But please read this article carefully before concluding that you have information about a circle. Photographs or measured drawings would be greatly preferable to unsupported anecdotes. Information should be addressed to the author, c/o COUNTRY LIFE, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. Photographs: 1, 4, 5, the author; 2, Army Air Corps; 3, Christopher Wood.

Tales out of this world

By LES WILSON
Reporting from Earth

A BEWILDERING trip to another galaxy; an eerie landing on a Hauraki Gulf island; two weird tenants in a Christchurch home; a terse note from SIUPI.

These are just some of the extraordinary stories we've received from readers with UFO experiences.

From Ostend, on Waiheke Island, Mr W. B. Lord even drew us a diagram of the craft he swears hovered while he was staking out a local dump being used to poach game ducks.

Mr Lord was a volunteer ranger and had been instructed by the local police to watch the area.

"It was about 3am. I noted a very bright glow in the vicinity of Onetangi. I thought at the time it was Venus rising, but the glow was too bright.

"Suddenly this thing came up over the hill. It was nearly as big as a half moon with a purple funnel hanging down from the canopy. It moved at a terrific rate, then it would hover and go again.

"It went in bursts and thrusts with gas streaming from the funnel. I could still see it as a small star when the sun came up.

"I know some people

will poo-poo this story, but I'll maintain to my last breath this is what I saw."

● An extraordinary tale came from Christchurch where a husband and wife believe they may have two female aliens for neighbours.

"One of them has odour symptoms similar to the aliens you wrote about from a recent UFO book.

"They came to the district 18 years ago and claim their families live out of town. But there has never been any contact and when school



holidays come round they go off. Could they be going back to their base for instructions?

"They came to the district separately and claim not to have known each other before, yet we've overheard them talking about things they've done together before they came here."

● Also from Christchurch we got a brief note from Mr H. E.

Kiwis share UFO sightings

Wright who says he is a South Island Unusual Phenomena Investigator who wants desperately to get in contact with Riley Crabb, the investigator who lives in Orewa north of Auckland.

● Author V. C. Haines was painting his Te Kuiti kitchen when I called him.

At 78, he's spry as a 60-year-old and wants to write more about his trip to Petra, a planet in another galaxy.

Under the name of William Henshaw, writer Haines penned a book called *Our World After A Nuclear War*.

It was based on a "dream" he had eight years ago in which he was transported from London to another solar system by spacemen he describes in fine detail.

He was visiting relations in Walthamstow Central when he met the spacemen who had landed in a craft similar to the American moonlander.

He says one visitor had a huge forehead, ears, eyes and nose similar to ours, "but his mouth gave the impression he'd been sucking a baby's dummy all his

life."

The spaceman was called Renco and he was the second pilot. He had learned English when he was sent on an earth probe.

The author agreed to go with the spacemen and spent three months getting to Petra.

The aliens told him their planet was almost destroyed by nuclear war, but there had been a few left to start rebuilding.

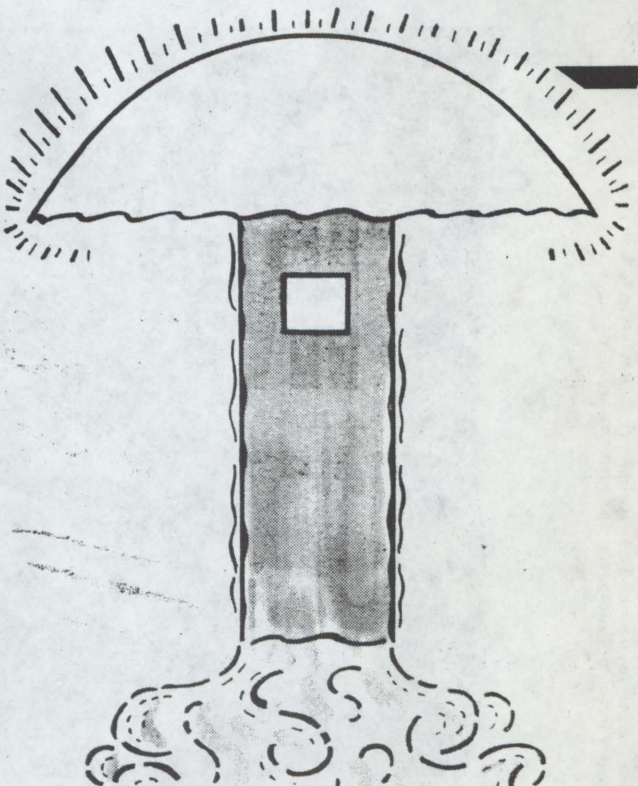
"My main reason for writing the book is that I believe we are heading for nuclear disaster," Mr Haines said.

He had the book printed and then toured New Zealand promoting it. It's a good read.

"Until I went to London I'd never believed in UFOs. I've been a down-to-earth sort of person all my life. I've been a builder and I stood three times for Parliament. I was the Mayor of Te Kuiti and a councillor for years," Mr Haines says proudly.

How does he explain the "dream?"

"It was completely clear to me and I knew I had to write about it. I think people should make



up their own minds about UFOs, but at least you people are giving them a chance to talk about the subject.

● Which brings in John Morgan, FRAS, of West Coast Rd., Renwick, who writes that for



many years he worked on a programme replotting meteor radiants.

And he kept records of UFOs he saw "North of Renwick. 5

degrees above hills, straight path at first, turned suddenly at 130 degrees, flickered and went out: SSW of Renwick, low, went below hills, in sight eight seconds; South of Renwick, two side by side, disappeared into cloud; North of Renwick (thought it was a plane with landing lights on) but it was a light craft with a fuzzy yellow object about 500 metres behind. Control tower at Woodbourne received a report of it from a woman caller, but staff didn't notice it.

At Mosgiel a large craft came in from the northeast on a steady course, went into a cloud patch and disappeared.

Probably the most electrifying of his experiences happened south of Renwick when two UFOs came in one above the other, faded and disappeared. They were reported to the US Embassy and Patterson Air Force Base in Colorado took over the report.

● If you have any UFO experiences write to *Sunday News*.

Experts probe circles mystery

A team of French scientists and corn circle enthusiasts have visited Silbury Hill on the Marlborough Downs to carry out further research into mysterious corn field circles.

Colin Andrews, who heads the Andover-based Circles Investigation Group, reported that four more circles had appeared in a field north of the monument on Monday. Last week there were 28.

"It seems to be where the major activity is. And there have been a number of reports of orange lights being seen that seem to be going into the ground, but we don't know what that's all about," he said.

Scientists are working on the theory that the circles are formed through imbalances in the world's geo-magnetic field, brought on by the ozone layer crisis.

"We've eliminated so many possibilities, but there are still so many questions," said Mr Andrews.

Another strange development in the mystery is the sudden appearance of circles

with tadpole-type tails. The first was found south of Winchester two weeks ago and 12 more have been found in heather on two neighbouring Welsh mountainsides.

But the most peculiar find to date, an infectious jelly-like substance found in 1985 within one of the Hampshire circles, will be returned to this country from Spain where it has been in deep freeze.

Baffled scientists are still trying to discover what the substance is. At first it was thought to be some kind of confectioner's sugar, but further exhaustive tests have failed to identify it.

The white blob, about the size of a bar of chocolate, has been slowly melting and vaporising since it was discovered.

Those who first came into contact with it experienced severe breathing problems within hours of sniffing it, but later recovered.

One man thought his dog was going to die after sniffing it - for several hours the animal lay listlessly on its back, hardly moving and suffering respiratory problems.

There are 28 in a field north of Silbury Hill on the Marlborough Downs near Avebury and last year they also appeared in the same area.

Ken Rogers, chairman of the British Unexplained Society, has been investigating the phenomenon.

He worked on the TV documentary *Secret Circles*, which will be screened on BBC 2 at 8 pm and features scientist and broadcaster Prof Heinz Wolff.

CR: T. Good

Circles in TV study

Strange circles which have mysteriously appeared in corn fields are the subject of a television documentary tonight.

A decade ago ten circles were found across the country, but this year there have been more than 100 in southern Britain, most of them in Wiltshire.

Jelly adds to the circles mystery

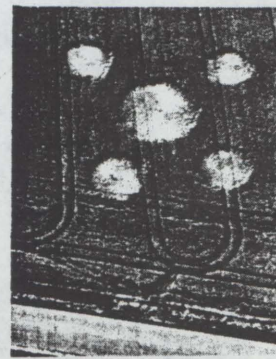
Mystery surrounding a series of circles flattening crops in fields across southern England has deepened, with investigators claiming they could be the work of an "unexplained intelligence."

A further 11 of the almost perfectly symmetrical shapes were reported in Wiltshire and Hampshire at the weekend, adding to a total believed to be around 170 so far this year.

Ministry of Defence chiefs are also reported to be investigating the phenomena after an infectious jelly was found inside one of the rings.

Nine people are said to have suffered severe chest colds within hours of coming into contact with the white substance.

Investigators Colin Andrews, a local government official, and retired NASA radar expert Pat Delgado believe the circles could be linked to the death of a Harrier



Mystery circles. These were seen last year at Firs Farm near Devizes.

jump jet pilot in 1987, whose body was found near a group of Wiltshire circles after falling from his plane.

Mr Andrews said the pilot could have crossed a high energy beam which may have caused the shapes.

"There must be some force field manipulated by some unexplained intelligence," said Mr Delgado.

The Ministry of Agriculture believes the shapes could be caused by small whirlwinds of fertilisers, and Mr Delgado has warned that cereal crops within the rings should not be used for human consumption.

Mr Andrews also believes further tests on the white substance, which he is reported to have collected from a ring in a field near Marlborough, could hold clues to the mystery.

It is said that tests have failed to identify it so far, but scientists at the University of Surrey and at Guildford are expected to re-examine it shortly.

UFOs and fortune tellers - look to the Reporter for the future Riddle of flying saucers spotted over Solent

SIGHTINGS of UFOs were made this week over the Solent.

Inexplicable orbital activity was witnessed by retired serviceman, Drew Dickson, who watched aghast with his wife and grandson as two mystery objects hared into view above his house.

The grandad observed the UFO's for 25 minutes from the roof of his Royal British Legion Home and caught the mystic moment on film. They hovered over the western side of Southampton and eventually vanished towards the Solent.

The photographs clearly show the existence of a pair of curious craft fleeting across the sky.

Mr Dickson, 61, checked with Southampton airport and the city weather centre and was assured that the alien apparitions

were not aircraft or weather balloons... and that they could not be traced on radar.

"I often watch high flying airliners pass over head, and these were definitely not planes," Mr Dickson said. "There was no engine noise at all - it was uncanny. I just don't know what they were."

"I'm not saying it was something from space, but as they didn't show up on radar they must have been very, very strange objects indeed."

Along with the sudden appearance of mystery circles in fields, this is the latest tale in a long line of happenings which cannot be explained.

The Solent area has been long famous for its close encounters but have YOU ever seen a UFO? Write in and tell us about your extraterrestrial experiences.