

CIRCLES UPDATE

by Jenny Randles

BUFORAs research into mysterious crop circles being discovered in fields around Britain took a dramatic new turn in the summer of 1989 with the publication of "Controversy of the Circles". This came alongside two other books from meteorologist Dr Terence Meaden and FSR UFO consultants Colin Andrews and Pat Delgado. (All to be reviewed elsewhere in this issue of UFO TIMES.)

Here I merely wish to briefly update some of the dramatic events that followed publication of the book "Circular Evidence" in particular. The Andrews/Delgado book (which has nice pictures and offers vague and confusing evidence in support of the UFO connection) achieved considerable media publicity in a cleverly orchestrated campaign that saw features in newspapers as diverse as the Sunday Times and the London Evening Standard. Several TV features (including main news coverage as a proper midstream item rather than a 'silly season' add-on at the end of a bulletin) also occurred.

Hype

Part of the reason for this was the PR hype. The authors were also aided by the very fortuitous arrival of over 200 circles in Wessex this summer (more than ever known before). Some might see an element of coincidence in that and wonder if the huge publicity and the increase in circle numbers might not be wholly unrelated (although many of the circles allegedly appeared before the book or publicity arrived).

These circles also featured novel designs, some of which might enhance the idea that they are the product of an 'unknown intelligence' (as Andrews and Delgado diplomatically phrase their beliefs). Examples include crucifix and teardrop shapes. They also bolstered their claims by alleging via press releases and through MPs questions in the house of commons that there was a

potential danger to health should you eat crops from effected circles as dangerous radiation could be getting into the food chain. This certainly did not harm the sales potential of their book although at least one farmer told us they were less than happy with the damage such vaguely supported statements might be doing to their own family livelihood.

Serious Research

The stance of BUFORAs investigation and research team has long been known on this phenomenon. We have fought for rationality and common sense and co-funded serious research with the meteorological community and also sponsored two major public debates in London in 1986 and 1987. "Controversy of the Circles" amply sets out the position statement of Paul Fuller and myself prior to summer 1989 as the two NIC members most directly involved in the circles phenomenon.

Certainly the new events of 1989 will need to be digested and reported on at some future date. We have fought an interesting media battle against what we both perceived as the irresponsibilities of these FSR consultants and some of their colleagues. We have tried to show the feebleness of their much touted 'UFO evidence'. Small successes were achieved with sensible articles in sources such as the Sunday Times and a curious debate between myself and Colin Andrews on the highly popular Gloria Hunniford radio programme (which saw Andrews - as I

judged it - much on the defensive yet apparently unable to answer direct questions without frequent repeated asking).

In addition, Paul and I have been following the actual circles events with fascination. A circle site near Chester has been monitored all summer and I investigated a dramatic report from Marple in Cheshire where eye-witnesses saw hay being sucked up into a tight spiral, creating an oval 'UFO' that drifted across the sky and then dumped its load. An alleged circle was reputedly left in its wake. And - I also studied and photographed a circle site in a field of oats in Nottinghamshire. Other sites outside the Wessex cases observed by Paul Fuller are in Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Essex and are being researched by various BUFORA investigators.

What this all clearly shows, of course, is that the circles are a long-standing and widespread phenomenon that are more common than first believed. That fits the proposition that they are essentially a natural mechanism and ties in very strongly with predictions that arose from the joint BUFORA/TORRO survey of cereal farmers in Hampshire. That

seems to me to be highly significant. But the debate will, of course, rage on.

Essex Circles Discovery

by Mike Wootten

Over the years that crop circles have been appearing over the British landscape (with varying and more complex patterns appearing as each year unfolds), I have not personally seen one 'live'. But that all changed on August 3rd, when after being alerted by Paul Fuller of a 30 ft circle appearing in Shenfield not twenty miles away from me in Essex, I eagerly dispatched myself to the location.

Apparently the circle was first noticed by local residents on the 18th July and was situated 8 ft from a public footpath. However, some ten days later, another circle appeared only 5 ft away

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The Shenfield circle

The instruments selected are: very advanced X-ray cameras for the prime focus positions of the three telescopes, two reflection grating spectrometers - to measure the spectra of X-ray sources. A telescope which operates at visual wavelengths has also been selected, to enable the study of both X-ray sources and optical emissions simultaneously.

XMM Facts

XMM is an important part of ESA's programme called 'Horizon 2000', XMM is expected to have an operational lifetime exceeding 10 years after its scheduled launch in 1998. XMM will also be ESA's largest scientific satellite.

All these facts should keep Europe's astronomers 'happy' in the forefront of astrophysical research 'well into the next century'. All information courtesy of NASA and ESA.

If any investigator requires astronomical information to help with the evaluation of case investigations please write to:

Gary Anthony, BUFORA ARP, 141 Newington Street, Hull, North Humberside, HU3 5LF.

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from the original, but only 15ft across.

Analysis

Both circles swirled crudely in a clock-wise rotation, with most of the corn stems broken at the base. The central point (unlike most 'genuine' circles) was positioned precisely in the middle of both circles. The topography of the area is very unlike most of the circle 'hotspots', with slight undulations and no major hills in the area.

A local resident who reported the circle to BUFORA stated that a three point leyline passes some 50 yards away

from the circle; so does the A12, but I doubt whether that has any significance either.

After studying the affected area closely and discussing my findings with Paul Fuller and Terence Meaden, I am convinced that the discovered circles are hoaxes. With the heightened media attention to circles this year, hoaxes are to be expected.

Gwent Circles Mystery Solved

After the discovery of 98 'circles' on a 1500ft, heather covered ridge in the Welsh Black Mountains. Colin Andrews stated, "We believe we have something of major proportions in Wales."

Unfortunately, he hadn't. The circles were produced by a farmer to allow young grouse to get to the young heather shoots. Well, you can't win them all.

INTERNATIONAL UFO SEMINAR

by Stanton T. Friedman

Sheffield Central Library Theatre

Saturday 28th October: 1.30pm

Tickets £3.00 (£2.00 OAP/students)

Radcliffe Civic Centre, Manchester

Sunday 29th October: 7pm

Tickets £5.00

"Flying Saucers ARE Real" is the title of two illustrated lectures to be presented by nuclear physicist, Stanton T. Friedman in Sheffield and Manchester.

The events are sponsored by the Independent UFO Network and supported by BUFORA.

Friedman's lecture will cover 5 large scale scientific studies of US Air Force data not generally discussed. More than 60 slides will illustrate his presentation and a question and answer session will follow.

For further details and advance bookings contact: Phillip Mantle, 1 Woodhall Drive, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 7SW. Tel; 0924 444049.