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UFO mystery

By DAVID GADD

A strange circular marking in a Waitakere beach swamp has left people talking of UFO activity in west Auckland.

The depression is similar to phenomena being reported in England, Europe, the Soviet Union and Japan.

While alleged UFO sightings are common over the Waitakere Ranges this incident is apparently unique in Auckland.

A perfect circle, about 3m in diameter, appeared in a raupo swamp behind sand dunes in the small bay between Karekare beach and the old Piha Tramway tunnelled rock.

The raupo reeds are flattened into a circular pattern in the middle of surrounding upright reeds, and appear woven into an anti-clockwise swirl.

In England corn and other high standing grain crop fields are the most frequent to be affected by this phenomenon.

There, questions on the circular markings have even been asked in Parliament with special government investigations called for.

The Karekare circle first appeared some time in February.

However, it was not until later this year when papers, and the influential *Time* magazine, ran articles about the overseas occurrences and theories of alien origin, that west Aucklanders began making their own UFO associations.

"It is amazingly close to those overseas circles," says one eyewitness, who has returned several times to look at the Karekare phenomenon.

Even now, nine months on, the Karekare reeds are flattened and seem woven. Those in the depression also now appear greener than surrounding reeds.

The reeds were intertwined like something rotary came down at enormous speed and wove the reeds together, says the eyewitness, who does not want to be named for fear of being labelled a lunatic.

"People who are smarter than me think there's something very strange about it."

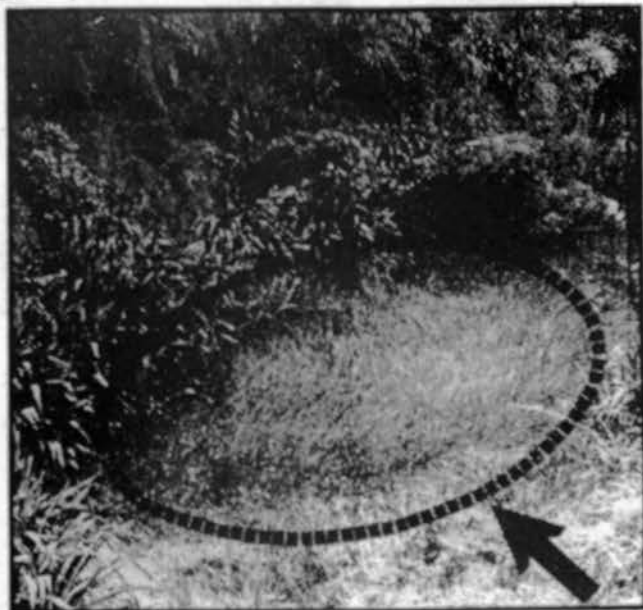
He discounts the obvious conclusion of a helicopter causing the pattern because the circle is within 2m of cliffs and under overhanging scrub and trees.

Squadron Leader Gordon Habgood of the air force says the closest a helicopter could safely fly to the cliffs is 6m.

The air force, usually notified by people of UFO sightings, has no record of sighting in February either.

One man convinced of UFO activity in the Waitakere Ranges is Oratia's Bruce Cathie, the former air force and Air New Zealand pilot has tracked UFO sightings for 25 years.

He says the Karekare circle fits in with overseas mark-



A line is drawn around the unexplained flat spot in reeds at Karekare.

ings, even down to the green centre while vegetation nearby appears to die off.

He believes it was made by a mechanical object, possibly an anti-gravity craft hovering.

However Mr Cathie feels it is more likely to have been piloted by men than extra-terrestrial life. He says the Waitakeres are a favourite area for overseas military to engage in secret research of various craft.

The ranges are also perfect for secluded drop-offs and pick-ups of personnel. He says the military either test their own craft or alien craft that have been found by humans.

However, one natural explanation of the mystery comes from Dr Terence Meaden, an English physicist. According to the *Time* article, Dr Meaden puts the circles down to a previously unknown atmospheric disturbance.

He calls it the "plasma vortex phenomenon" and says a spinning ball of air, highly charged with electricity, hits the grain crops, or reeds, and flattens them.