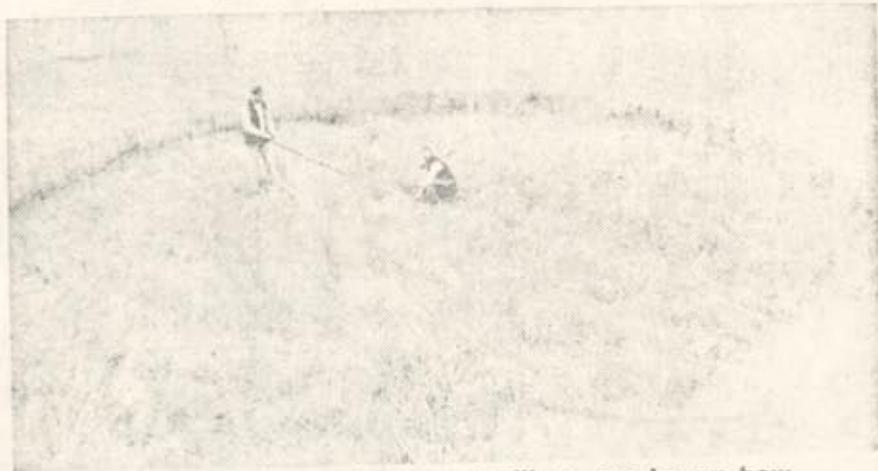


n circles again



The strange circles are back, and still no-one knows how

IS E.T. back again for his annual visit?

The tell-tale marks that suggested his arrival last year—a perfectly-formed large mother circle with four babies around her in a barley field—have been found again, this time in Dogleg Field, near Winchester, Hants. They are just a mile away from last year's mystery.

Perfect groupings have been appearing since 1980 in the area, and near the famous White Horse in Wiltshire.

They have attracted scores of investigators — our own intrepid Jean Rook attempted to unravel their secrets last year.

But still no-one knows what causes them, though theories abound. Could it be:

- UFO's?
- Druid rites involving stakes and chains?

By DAVID THURLOW

- Helicopters?
- Freak whirlwinds triggered by a hot spell?
- Supernatural powers?
- A hoax?

This year's big circle is 42ft. 6in. across, the smaller ones, 45ft. away, are 13ft. 6in. in diameter.

But there's an intriguing difference from 1983. The new circles are quite invisible from the edges of the field, and

Farm flyers find a field's hidden puzzle

from the main A272 road just 50 yards away.

It's almost as though they were not meant to be discovered—except from the air.

And that's how they were found when four local farm managers flew in a helicopter to see how their crops were doing.

Farmer Dennis Kendell, on whose land they are, said: "It's uncanny. This is the fourth year out of five we have had them on the farm in different places."

"It's anyone's guess what's causing them but I think somehow it's got to be mechanical."

"But the disturbing factor is that there are no other marks at all near two of the smaller circles. The other three are on the drilling tracks made by the tractor, which someone could walk on."

"But these aren't and there is not a stalk disturbed around them. The barley is laid down in a strange way outwards from the centre."

Petronel Payne, a tractor driver's wife who has made a study of the circles, said: "It gets more and more intriguing."

Soak thy neighbour

Story: DAVID WOODING Picture: CHRIS SUNDERLAND

EVERYONE in Newton Road knew the worsening drought could force water chiefs to draw the line on hosepipes.

But when they found out exactly where the line had been drawn, they decided it bordered on the ridiculous.

The people who live on one side of the road can carry on using hosepipes to water the garden or clean the car as usual.

But anyone caught using a hosepipe on the other side of the street faced a £400 fine.

It is the latest in a series of borderline battles for the folk of Newton Road, Billinge, which straddles the county boundary between Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

Those living on the Greater Manchester side draw their water mainly from Haweswater reservoir in Cumbria

which has dropped to a third of its normal level.

North West Water Authority has banned more than five million people in Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Lancashire from using hosepipes to help conserve supplies.

But Merseyside consumers, including one half of Billinge, draw mainly from Lake Vyrnwy, in North Wales, which has not yet hit crisis level.

Pauline Foster — one of the Billinge "dries", said yesterday: "It's ludicrous. Everything seems to begin and end in the middle of this street. Our gardens are withering away while those on the other side are blossoming."

But Jonathan Huddart, who lives opposite, had a word of comfort. "They can have a drop of water anytime," he said.

BRITON DROWNS ON HONEYMOON

A BRIDE on her honeymoon desperately tried to save her husband as he drowned on Saturday.

The British couple were in a small boat on Lake Geneva when waves from a passing vessel swept the man overboard. The victim, in his thirties, will not be named until relatives have been informed, said Swiss police.

'STAN' IMPROVING

ACTOR Bernard Youens, 69, who plays Stan Oden in TV's *Coronation Street*, was "slightly improved" at Fallowfield Royal Hospital yesterday following the amputation of his left leg.

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The hosepipe border