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**THE BIMONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND**

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**MAGNETIC THEORIES
MOSAIC BOOK CLUES**

**CRIMES AND
MISDEMEANOURS
IN THE FIELDS**

FULL 2000 SEASON REPORT

"It's the end... but the moment has been prepared for"
DOCTOR WHO ('Logopolis')

If you haven't yet looked at the opposite page, you need to stop and read it before going any further with this column. All done? Well, with that shock absorbed, let's get on. There's still this issue and two more left to go, and a new horizon opening up after that, so brave your hearts and soothe your worries.

There's a lot to get through in this very late issue, with so much unfinished business from the summer needing to be put down for the record. Please forgive some of the very small print we've had to use to squeeze it all in.

Unfortunately, some of the subjects that need tackling have a rather gloomy bent to them, but the truth must out and some developments cannot go uncommented on. We can't pretend that crop circle research is always a bed of roses and sometimes a few thorns need to be picked out. Despite the very beautiful designs we've received this season, there's been a turbulent atmosphere at the Front and the traditional autumn retreat to the trenches from all sides gives us a chance to absorb what's happened with perspective.

The gloomier aspects in no way, of course, over-balance the very wonderful and exhilarating gifts the formations and the resulting inspiration, friendships and insights have given us, and we will be celebrating this next issue when we report on the important summer crop circle gatherings.

Another piece of positive news is that *SC* and *The Cereologist* have decided to end the ongoing feud which has dogged the odd column in both over the last few years. A constructive conversation between *Cereologist* editor John Sayer and myself at the CCCS Andover conference this year has resulted in us deciding to put aside our differences. As proof, we offer the photo of the two of us below! As John himself puts it: "A picture's worth a thousand words: we've buried the hatchet, forgiven and forgotten, put the past behind us and are looking forward to working together from here on in." We extend this truce to our new web site and welcome the chance to let bygones be bygones. There, a happy ending!

ANDY THOMAS

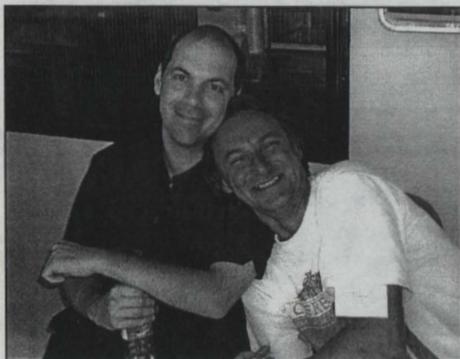


Photo: PAUL VIGAN



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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not SC as a whole, unless otherwise stated.

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CONTRIBUTE TO THE FINAL ISSUE!

It is you, the readers, who have helped make SC what it is. Your loyal support - and we have some readers who have taken the whole nine-year trip with us! - has been much appreciated. Your many letters of encouragement and kind comments over the decade have been a treasure to us which we will never forget. Our very last issue of SC (NOT the next one), due out in February, will be a special one which we want you to be able to share in. If you have any comments you wish to make about SC, crop circles and crop circle research in general and where you see it all going, we would very much like to include them in the magazine. It may be your final chance to have the last word! Please send any contributions - typed or ASCII text if possible - to the editorial address or the SC e-mail address, both listed above.

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Front Cover: Avebury Trusloe, July 2000. Photograph by LUCY PRINGLE

Are you sitting down? If not, you may wish to, as the following important information may require a little recovery time...

From early next year, *SC* will cease to exist as a printed journal. This means that issue 94 of *SC*, due out in January-February, will be the final issue. [This does NOT affect Southern Circular Research or our regular monthly meetings, which will continue as normal.]

This has not been an easy decision! However, there is a time and a place for everything, and now is the time to close the book on *SC* - but not crop circles, nor on our reporting and commentary services. In its place, a new web site, with a new name, will be set up in an attempt to widen our reach - and restore some time and sanity to my life! All the most important aspects of *SC* will be transferred to the new web site, where what we do best can flourish in a new environment, one which will enable us to have a greater influence on events as they happen, albeit in a different way to what has gone before.

We know that many of you will be sad and disappointed at this news. We fully understand and share this sadness, and appreciate that those who don't have access to the Internet may feel let down. For those dispossessed, we can do nothing but express our regrets. We'll speak more about the new web site next issue, and make some suggestions which may help those without access.

So what are the reasons for this decision? It had long been planned, quietly, that *SC* 100 would be our last. Due in January 2002, that would have been the perfect numerological time to stop - 100 issues and exactly 10 years since the very first. However, circumstances and a feeling of destiny have conspired to bring the final issue forward a year, to end on our ninth anniversary, six issues earlier than intended. Nine years isn't bad going for something that began as a humble newsletter for a few Sussex circle enthusiasts and ended as a globally-read cult fanzine.

There are two essential reasons for *SC's* demise - or transformation to a new medium - one rational, one personal. There's been a growing feeling amongst the team for a while that *SC*, in its current format, has achieved everything it can achieve - and it has achieved much! The hard truth is that an increasing number of people are turning to the Internet to get their information these days. It's the ideal format for a phenomenon which shapes and shifts every other day each summer. When monthly, we could just about keep up with what was going on, but now it's frustrating to be sifting through stuff that could have been more effectively dealt with a month and a half before, with the possibility of making a difference at the time. Ideally, *SC* would run alongside the new web site, but this simply isn't possible in the circumstances. What the Internet lacks is a good crop circle news and commentary service, an area in which *SC* has always excelled. This is what we hope our new web site will provide, reaching a wider audience than we do now. It will not be a circle reporting site in the conventional sense, and its upkeep should be far less time-consuming than our existing production schedule. It should be up and running in an

elementary way at least by our last issue, and we will announce more details next issue.

So much for the rational reasons. There is a deeper incentive to this move. Despite the team effort behind these pages, and the mailing thereof, putting out *SC* relies very much on my personal commitment. It is a major tie on my personal life. I have spent (quite

happily) almost five months out of every year for most of the last decade editing and producing it! Until recently this has been possible to keep up, but very much at the expense of my own projects. The increasing lateness of each issue is a pointer to the sheer practical difficulties of maintaining such a tight schedule amongst work, the school run and other day-

to-day commitments. Moreover, many of you will be aware of my books, crop circle-based and, more recently, non-circle-based. Writing is a vocation to which I am very much dedicated and, time-wise, it has become increasingly difficult to juggle *SC* with my impulse to explore other inspirations, some of which people have been given hints of at my Glastonbury Symposium presentations.

SC has always had a sense of mission for me. I never saw it as a frivolous hobby, but as a valuable and necessary outlet for opinions and information which weren't getting enough airing in the face of burgeoning sceptic propaganda. It has served this purpose very well. But this sense of mission is now calling me to other areas of life I feel I have something to contribute to, and I need the time back to enable me to move confidently forward with these ideas, through my writing and presentations. Over the years my schedule slotted around *SC* comfortably for the most part, but, slowly, the tail has begun to wag the dog, the pressure of production dates dictating my life plans. Though going bimonthly helped for a while, I now have to wrestle back control of my own destiny to enable me to take on some new arenas, whilst retaining my duties to the crop circle world on my own terms. Retirement, incidentally, is not an option... hence the new web site. *SC* foes should in no way relax.

Giving editorship of *SC* to someone else was never really a serious consideration. With no obvious successor in place, whatever makeshift arrangements might follow would create a completely different publication. *SC* is probably the best it's ever been in terms of presentation and content. Better to go out on a high than a slow slide into an uncertain future.

We'll say more in the course of the next two issues. We hope you appreciate our reasoning for this big decision, which may take some time to absorb, and apologise for any shock this may have caused! Life will go on...

A separate letter is included with this issue, giving details about what will happen to your outstanding subscription money. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. Nobody should be left short-changed. If you don't have a letter for any reason, please contact us and we will send you one. AT

Please also read the important boxed message on page 2, column 2, regarding our final issue!

END OF AN ERA...

Please read the following announcement
from your editor ANDY THOMAS.
Stand by for a shock...

The world of crop circle research is often seen by some of its inhabitants as an arena of light versus darkness, beyond the trivia of clarifying what is genuine and what is not.

To many, those who would steal joy in their attempts to reveal the crop field wonders as nothing more than the work of mundane human artists are 'the opposition', cold-hearted, steely materialists, anathema to the kaleidoscopic, multi-dimensional world of endless possibility to which those with more open belief envelopes aspire.

In turn, many sceptics see themselves as saviours of a world in danger of falling into superstitious New Age peril. To them, human art is as valid as any creative pulse from some other dimension, and they see the believers as being in need of a healthy dose of what they call 'realism'.

There are grey areas to all this, of course. Many 'believers', for instance, speculate that the sceptics or hoaxers are working for conspirators, well-aware of the very real nature of the circles and their origin from higher realms and eager to distract attention away for purposes of their own.

Despite this struggle between perceived light and dark, both sides have always inherently acknowledged that there are certain battle lines which should not be crossed. The arena can sometimes be fun and stimulating, after all, as the protagonists play the role of defenders and prosecutors in a trial to define the true reality. Each knows their own role and plays it accordingly. But in the summer of 2000, there has been a strong sense of these lines being violated, crossed from both sides.

Human circle-makers like the ubiquitous Team Satan have, at least, always radiated a sense of commitment to art, whatever misdemeanours they have perpetrated (and there have been many), and accept the philosophical value of the need for 'believers' in the crop circle phenomenon, as well as sceptics. But a new breed of human circle-maker has arisen in the last year or so, which respects no such conventions, namely Matthew Williams and Paul Damon. After tiring of getting his kicks from breaking into MOD establishments in the name of 'The Truthseekers' (his one-time organisation) and researching UFOs, Williams got bored and moved (literally) into the Alton Barnes area for some fun. Always fairly sceptical towards the phenomenon, he set about making crop formations, partly, he claimed, as a method of interactive 'communication' with the forces behind the real circles - but mostly, to see how quickly cropples could be fooled. He claims they are fooled easily. This is tempered with seductive talk of

generously donating spiritual gifts to the fields to delight and enhance people's lives, an old Team Satan trick to ingratiate with those troubled by the concept of man-made patterns.

How many formations Williams & Co. have or haven't made isn't known, nor is important to this piece (see the Silbury and West Overton reports this issue for a pointer). If you want an idea of their credibility, bear the following in mind; when challenged this year as to why, if so keen to donate their spiritual art to the public, they didn't do it legally, Paul Damon claimed to my face, in a fit of self-justification, that they already work with the full blessings of the Wiltshire farmers, who enjoy and tolerate their activities, presumably without any wish for recompense. If you have ever looked into the eyes of a farmer who has just received a crop

circle, you will see this eyebrow-raising statement as the ridiculous fallacy it is.

So much for the truth or otherwise of their work. What's of issue here is the line Williams has crossed into stalking and sending threatening e-mails to certain Wiltshire-based cropples. The e-mails are vile, disruptive and dark. They reveal no commitment to artistic aspiration, but purely to debunking, making a mockery of their 'spiritual gifts' talk. Phrases along the lines of "when we're finished, by this time next year there will be only 10 believers in the Wiltshire area" illustrate their true intentions. They are out, by their own admission, to "destroy" the remaining credibility of the phenomenon. Quite what is behind such venomous determination, when there are a thousand more useful things they could be doing with their lives, no-one knows. Doesn't attempting to prove the circles to all be man-made kill the golden goose for the hoaxers? Williams accuses his targets of perpetrating myths about a phenomenon the targets themselves allegedly know to be man-made. This shows how little understanding he has of what drives the people in question. He has the right to consider them misguided, but not to dictate their inner minds to them. He is very wrong in his assumptions - his targets genuinely believe in a real phenomenon, as many do, and have every right to.

The imposition of a sceptic dogma which drives the debunkers to threaten, invade live events and even leaflet public meetings with printed character-assassinations, smacks of desperation. Williams and cohorts were thrown out of the Wiltshire crop circle weekend by the police, having refused the organisers' requests to leave. In retaliation, one of the Wiltshire branch meetings was later disrupted by Williams and Damon, bursting in to distribute their defamatory

NEWS CROSSED LINES

The 2000 season has been a turbulent one for some areas of the crop circle community, with a sense of the ceaseless battle between sceptics and 'believers' coming to a head. But the battle lines have become blurred, with the antics of new hoax claimants, hate campaigns and Colin Andrews's new theories, as ANDY THOMAS explores...

writings. Bouncers now have to be employed by the Wiltshire group for their meetings. Is this what things have come to?

Williams was always an attention seeker. When he doesn't get it, tantrums occur. His targets have studiously ignored his efforts to block their enthusiasm for the circles, and now his wrath must be felt by all! Doubtless, this strange vendetta will continue. He enjoys the controversy, the ego-boost of being infamous, an addiction felt by other hoax claimants over the years; witness his theatrical gestures when being evicted from the Wiltshire conference. His activities are now known to the police, both his threatening communications and, having actually proven the authorship of at least one formation this summer (the farmer has filed an official complaint), his other claimed nocturnal pastimes.

Meanwhile, tales of drug abuse, excessive drinking, ego expansions and bad personal behaviour in and around *The Barge* among some of the characters which inhabit it, all add to the general air of ugly decadence which has descended this season. There has been open talk from the better-hearted cropples about the need to find new gathering centres, seeking some sort of cleansing.

But battle lines have been crossed both ways. This year saw the ghoulish spectacle of at least two major crop circle researchers openly boasting on public platforms of their participation in the creation of man-made formations. This is a sad and dangerous development, hardly guaranteed to endear the agricultural community towards already beleaguered cropples. Those who have tried such stunts before were heavily criticised by some of the very people now claiming to be indulging themselves, but this year there seems to be a much greater acceptance of the validity of such work. The justification for this activity is always to help "tell the difference" between non-human formations and those made by - wait for it - 'Human Crop Circle Facilitators', the new term for vandals. The trouble is, it doesn't help to tell the difference, as no-one can agree on any observations anyway nor how to detect verifiable qualities (see Michael Glickman's article this issue). Only confusion results, and a blurring of roles and responsibilities has occurred which upsets the uneasy balance which had hitherto been respected.

Into all this strides long-time researcher Colln Andrews, with his now annual PR media blitz. Last year, it was the announcement of funding from the Rockefeller Foundation (angering the foundation itself, which wished for relative anonymity). This year, he has a new theory to disseminate. According to Colln, 20% of crop circles, the simpler ones, are caused by natural magnetic fields. All the rest are man-made.

It's an interesting theory, one which demands detailed analysis. Unfortunately, this is exactly what has not been forthcoming. A year ago we wrote about the risk of "the temptation to proclaim tentative and mundane results as something astonishing..." in the aftermath of the funding (SC 85). Sure enough, the ideas behind the new magnetic theory are very vague. No paper has been produced for perusal, though one is promised - but this isn't good enough. Media blitzes shouldn't be initiated until

there is something to show for it. Through e-mails and suchlike, Colln has since leaked out a little more detail here and there, but nothing which supports the solidity with which the case has been presented. The bombastic press and TV coverage of Colln's announcement was patently hollow gong-banging with no substance, full of misrepresentations of Colln's credentials, status and background. Though much of this was almost certainly due to standard media sloppiness, Colln was not overtly quick to correct the impression that he was an eminent scientist/Dr/Professor, in the same way he still insists on stating that he once "addressed the United Nations", when in fact he addressed a UN staff recreational group (see SC 24). Though some reports meekly reported the important new work which would revolutionise crop circle research, others doubted the PR scuttlebutt. The *Daily Express* summed it up thus: "[There is] no excuse for the way that television reports presented the story. It was introduced as a solution to the mystery from a 'scientist', as if this idea was on a par with the item that followed it on the lunchtime news about intelligence and heredity... ..However much a cereologist may want to be part of the larger scientific community, his relationship to it is more like that of Dr Who to the Doctors in Casualty."

The announcement seems to have backfired on a number of levels, with even the *Daily Mail* running a whole page piece by Colln Wilson rebutting Colln's claims, and supporting instead the ET theory (!), and the hitherto Andrews-supportive *UFO Magazine* and Whitley Strelber's US radio show laying into him with surprising vigour.

The *Daily Express* actually sums up the dilemma of Colln's new theory very well: "This idea will leave him between two stools. It will not impress the rationalists, who consider that since we know that humans can make crop circles, there is no need to look for explanations on the fringes of science. Nor will it please the true believers for whom these are phenomena not of science but of the spirit." The piece goes on to spoil itself by praising the likes of Team Satan for being responsible for the whole thing, but this comment is incisive.

The problem rests in two areas. Simplifying things, the new theory is based on the observation that 'genuine' crop circles have their natural magnetic fields shifted by several degrees; therefore magnetism must be responsible. But with no detail on how the 'science' was conducted, exactly what equipment was used to detect this shift (was it related to Ron Russell's device? - see accompanying article), what controls were observed to test the machinery's veracity and how this rather simplistic deduction was reached, there's a strong smell of fudge in the air which will impress no true scientist. Does magnetism behave in such a way as to pull down crops? The theory makes little or no nods to any previous scientific experiments carried out in circles, ignoring many important observations made previously, not least the work of Dr Levengood, which was only faintly and critically alluded to at Colln's Andover presentation at the CCCS conference in August.

Worse, the assertion that 80% of formations are man-made seems backed up by nothing more than

the rumour and innuendo which has fuelled hoax theorists since cerealogical time began. We already know from Collin himself (SC 88) that his main 'detective' refused at the last minute to divulge his alleged findings about hoaxing activity, and all other similar investigations appear to have revolved simply around people hanging about in Wiltshire fields looking at formations from 1999 and 2000. Data from other counties doesn't seem to have played a part, surely skewing the results. Hints of Collin's 'inside contacts' with information about circle hoaxing seem to refer to nobody more than debunker John Macnish, whose (flawed) 'findings' were made freely available to all in his book and video in the mid 90's. No less than Team Satan themselves have denied that "seven" formations were filmed in the human making by TV crews this summer, as announced at Andover, for instance. It appears, in fact, to have been just three, and even if it were seven, does that prove 80% of formations are man-made? Collin's deductions seem based simply on the methods we revealed in SC 86, methods which remain highly questionable.

Collin believes simple circles and the occasional more complex formations like quintuplets can be accounted for by the magnetic theory, but this is severely challenged by the simple observation that there are far, far fewer simple circles and quintuplets appearing today. The vast majority of formations are complex patterns. If the theory is sound, where are the dozens of single circles and simple rings? Where are all the quintuplets? Where did the real phenomenon go in the last 10 years? The truth is, many believe it developed into something else, into something Collin's belief envelope can no longer accept.

These comments will anger Collin. They are not designed to do so, nor is his ire desirable, but an honesty of opinion is called for here. We will be accused of plunging in to comment on findings without having seen the details - but that is precisely the problem. This theory should never have been announced with such a big splash until a paper had been produced and perused by the crop circle community for constructive comments. Collin speaks of 'peer review' taking place when the theory is finally aired properly. But who will peer review it? Who are his peers? Croppies or scientists, when not many of either have so far seemed impressed and Collin seems to distrust so many other researchers? Who will he deign to send the details to? (He speaks of *Nature* magazine publishing his results - very unlikely, given its disdain for anything beyond the hardest science.)

This new theory has been developed in a seemingly intentional vacuum, which makes nor requires reference to work by any other cerealogists, perhaps as a form of protection. It is something individual to Collin, something all of his own, and with scant details available, something hard for outsiders to challenge, but which looks impressive to the general public.

When questioned on details at Andover, Collin floundered badly. Yet this presentation has since been described by Collin as having been 'warmly' received. From where most were sitting, it felt severely chilly.

The sadness is that the new theory seems secondary to Collin's apparent main purpose - to prove that most crop formations are man-made. This thrust is

what has preoccupied most of his media coverage, interviews and statements. If it *isn't* intentional, Collin should be far more careful about the way he puts himself across. Little has been said of the theory, but much said about the levels of hoaxing. On the BBC news, we were presented with the surreal sight of a farmer (Tim Carson) defending the reality of the phenomenon, while the crop circle researcher debunked it, as both stood within the basket weave formation at Adam's Grave (dutifully pronounced man-made by Collin). Collin made an interesting Freudian slip on this broadcast. In it he clearly stated that he thought only "5%" of formations were genuine. He later told me this was a verbal mistake, and that he meant 20%. That's some mistake. That such an error could issue from his lips without immediate correction suggests he was not too uncomfortable for such a view to be broadcast to millions.

Most offensively, Collin speaks of his need to reveal the high level of hoaxing to help burst the bubble of the "industry" of books, T-shirts and videos, etc, which has flourished around something he now considers fraudulent. His crucial part in initiating this 'industry' in the first place is not mentioned, of course. And his assumption that the people involved in this industry (no prizes for guessing who some of them might be, eh?) *don't really believe* in what they tout is insulting and demeaning - not to mention stupid - in the same way that Williams and Damon's character-assassination campaigns are. Can he really believe so much dedication and hard work can be fuelled by the hope of dubious financial benefits alone? This has more to say about the projection of Collin's own disillusionment than anything else. It smacks of a scorched earth policy, of trying to break the once-favourite toy so no-one else can play with it. Collin says that, in time, his theory will be seen as a very good move for crop circle research, restoring credibility to an apparently tarnished interest group. He considers that the acceptance of 20% of formations being genuine is brave and generous. In this, compared to the views of many, not least those swayed by the efforts of Matthew Williams and co., he's possibly right. Perhaps we should be grateful for small mercies, that someone who has publicly removed himself beyond the normal bunch of wacky 'believers' he himself helped inspire, is willing to stand up and be counted to say that even that small amount may have validity. The acid test is this: Will Collin announce, using his new detection methods and putting his reputation on the line, which formations are 100%, no-doubt-whatsoever, *genuine*? Until confident demonstrations and serious evidence of proper scientific work with facts, figures, controls and graphs is presented, the rapturous reception he perhaps feels he deserves will remain unforthcoming.

The roles and lines which have become so blurred this season may result in no-one being able to see anything clearly, not least the wood for the trees. The perceived battle of light against darkness has suddenly become something in the middle, a skirmish in rather grey and murky fog. There is a sense in many researchers that this uncertain but potent struggle may peak or accelerate further in 2001. Prepare to batten down the hatches. **AT**

We have passed through a crop circle season like no other, a season in which the developing radiance of the formations themselves was balanced by a spite and viciousness unlike anything we have experienced before (*see article this issue*).

Not only was the phenomenon itself regularly insulted and condemned, but individual researchers, 'believers', to use the word which has now become a term of abuse, were exposed to the most focussed of attacks.

I suppose it was inevitable. As the public and media acceptance of the crop circles grow, the reaction of the dark side must become more unpleasant.

For many, Colin Andrews's latest activities might be seen as the worst blow of the season. I would argue against that. While Colin's deepest motivations will always remain shrouded in mystery, he has become, by his own choosing, a powerless figure. True researchers have long regarded him as isolated, while even his chosen audience, the media, are showing signs of boredom with the Mussolini-like pronouncements, the relentless self-promotion, the promises and the failure ever to deliver.

No, the worst damage this season was caused by Ron Russell and Simeon Hein and their 'machine'. This story, masquerading as 'science', might rate as the most bogus episode in crop circle research. Let me go through the history. They themselves have placed the matter in the public arena.

For over a year, we heard of the Hein/Russell machine which would, we were assured, distinguish the "real" from the "false". Those with the most superficial grasp of crop circle history will recall the ADAS soil sampling, the electronic 'gizmos' and other litmus tests which were finally and definitively to set our minds at ease. In fact, they were all finally and definitively abandoned. Hasn't Dr Levensgood settled the matter? What more can we want?

Early in the season I sat with Ron over a coffee in Devizes. He was thrilled with his new device and he felt sure that the "science" would help him to convince people of the reality of the phenomenon. I had been here before. I suggested that people would be impressed by the commitment and integrity of the presenter and not by the wavering of needles on yet another silly electronic box. He disagreed and I challenged him then to bring me, next season, a list of all those who had been persuaded or convinced by his gadget.

During the Oliver's Castle fiasco, I was impressed by how many of us were suddenly video specialists and computer special-effects technicians. This year, I am overwhelmed by how many 'scientists' have miraculously appeared!

- NEWS - * SOPHISTRY & Self-Deception

There has been a long and shaky evolution of cerealogical 'litmus tests' designed to detect the real from the hoaxed, but now the latest version has failed its creators, the goalposts have been changed to accommodate its failure, as MICHAEL GLICK AN recounts...

We should note here that Ron Russell is an artist while Simeon Hein is a doctor of sociology. Their scientific protocol was simple. They went into a circle and if the needle wobbled strongly enough, it was "real" and if the needle stayed still, why, then it must be hoaxed!

At no point were control readings established. Certainly the limited number of iterations would have rendered the whole procedure statistically (and scientifically) useless. Above all, there was no attempt to state exactly what type of energy was being registered here and nor was there any attempt to demonstrate that this particular energy actually was a direct part of the crop circle phenomenon.

Inevitably, stories percolated through. It was rumoured that the machine failed dismally to perform in the lovely Milk Hill six-fold flower, but as it was so beautiful and well-regarded our heroes excluded it from their list. Next up was the pathetic triplet opposite Silbury Hill (*see report this issue*) which gave record readings. This was seen as final confirmation of the machine's discernment, despite several researchers' doubts about the formation's provenance.

Science? Measurement? Statistical rigour? A shambles.

Our narrative shifts now to Glastonbury High Street during the weekend of this year's circle Symposium. Ron Russell, looking green, called me over. "I am devastated," he said. Apparently he had been to witness an advertising graphic being stomped into the wheat by the usual suspects. When it was completed, the machine was produced and - shock horror! - it gave the most positive of readings. There were rumours that he actually vomited on the spot. Ron said bleakly: "Two years of research out of the window."

I put my hand on his chest and said "Ron, you have the most powerful machine for judgement and discernment in there. Why don't you use that and your experience and throw your gadget away?" It seemed excessive to point out that anyone who hangs around with these deceivers and participates in their pranks is destined for trouble anyway.

I left feeling sympathy for Ron and Simeon. It was a doomed enterprise from the start, but they believed in it. Now they would have to bite the bullet and announce the failure of their 'experiment' to the community.

But two days later the whole story had miraculously changed. The machine was no longer there to distinguish the real from the man-made. No, the machine's task now was to demonstrate that the real and the man-made showed the same energy!

What sophistry! What fraud! When your experiment fails, simply change the object of the experiment...

To add insult to injury, Hein claims he then participated in the making of a circle. In the now familiar manner of these things, there were quick glimpses of sketches, rumours of meditations and hallucinogenic drugs, time-loss experiences, hoaxers moving like "whirling dervishes", but, as always, a real coyness about facts.

And surprise, surprise, the machine performed

impeccably (or at least according to the *second* objective) after this travesty.

This story ends at the Andover conference of the CCCS where several researchers, including Hein, spoke proudly of their personal participation in hoaxing and of their now definitive insight that man-made circles are an essential part of the phenomenon.

What a disgrace! Shame on him! Shame on them all! Shame on all of us for swallowing this garbage!

A short footnote to this sorry tale. We hear now from across the seas that Ron Russell, licking his wounds in Colorado, is planning to put together a massive 'hoaxing competition' next season - for profit. Will these people never learn anything? We are privileged to be close to a shining mystery. Can we not simply move forward in our work? Surely this season has shown us that the hoaxes, the hoax claimants and the hoax obsessives have had more than enough attention. Stop it, Ron,

MG

LETTERS

YOU'RE NICKED...

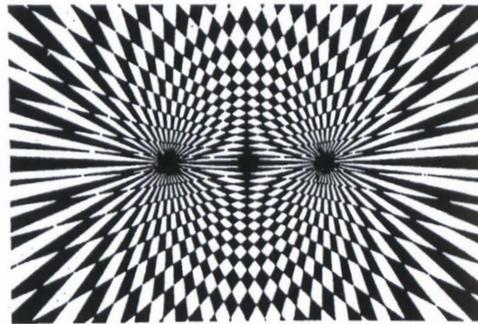
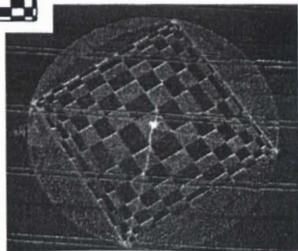
One notes that four major formations this year had their basic designs described in *Mosaic and Tessellated Patterns - How to Create Them* by John Wilson (Dover 1983), as shown in these diagrams...

Nick Kollerstrom, London, NW3

The formations are not exactly the same, but there's no denying the methodology used to create them follows these principles very closely... Make of this what you will! - Ed.



This grid (left) is virtually identical to the formation which appeared at Windmill Hill this year on 18 June (below)... (Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER)

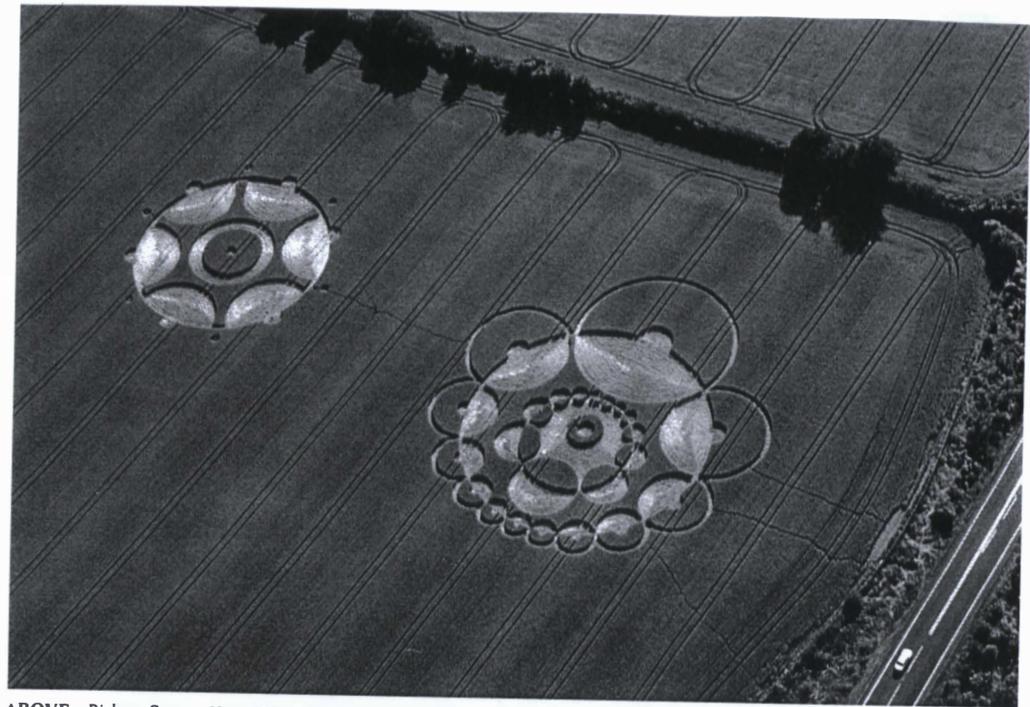


Formations which closely resemble these patterns - Avebury Trusloe (above), East Kennett (right) and Woodborough Hill (below), can be found in the photos section of this issue. The Woodborough design is the least alike, the diagram having only 18 outer points, whereas

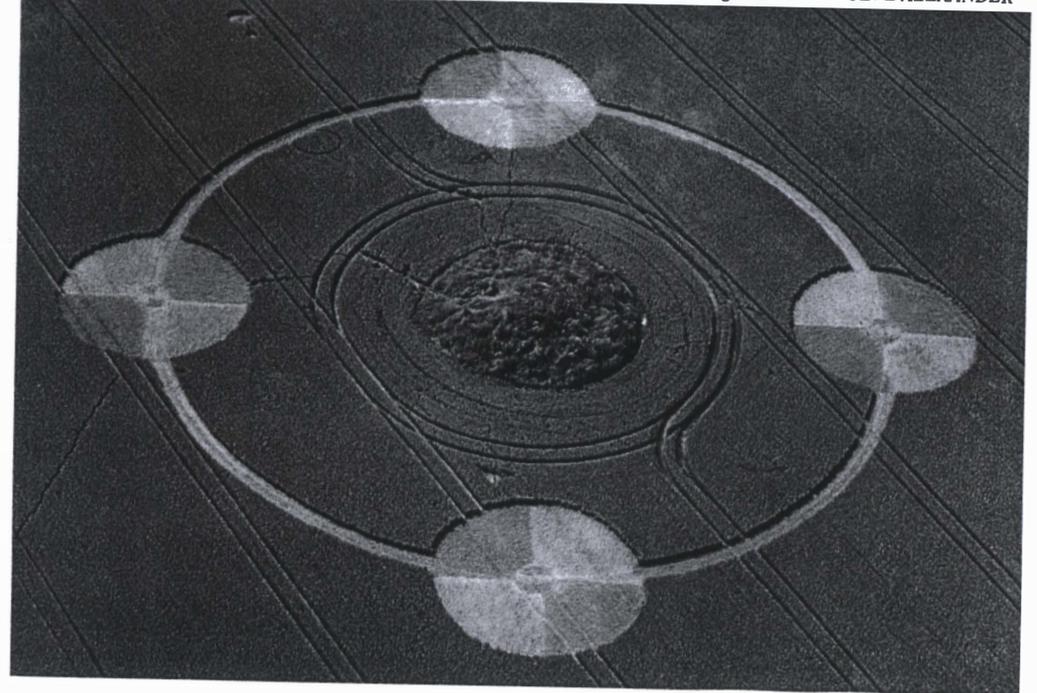


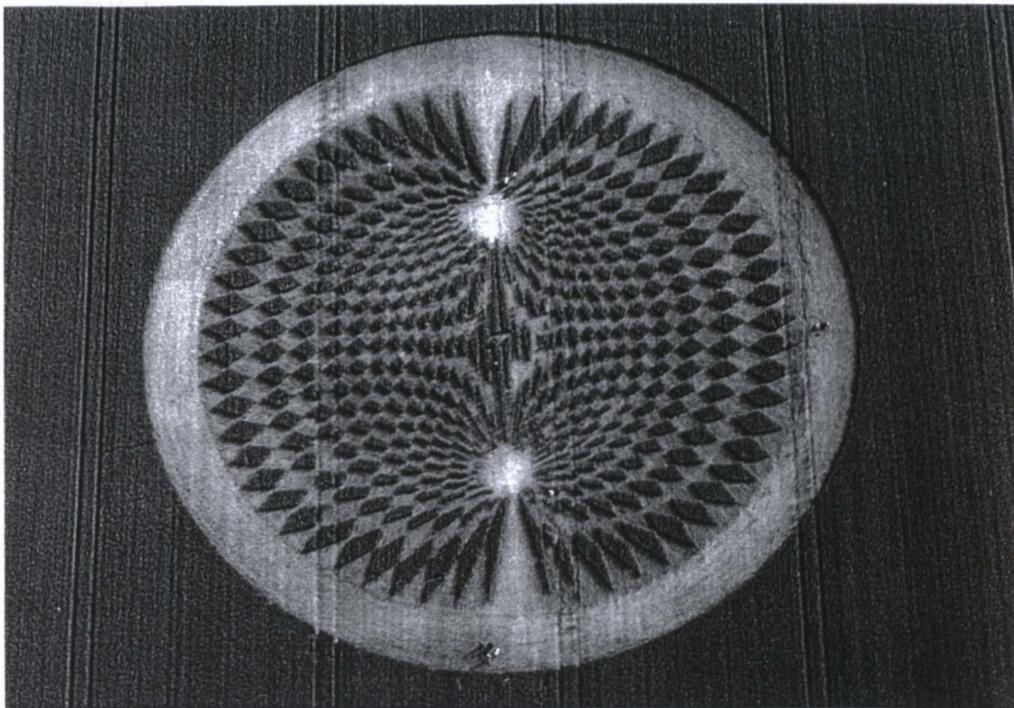
the actual glyph had 22 and doesn't work in quite the same way, though it is very similar.

All diagrams come from the aforementioned book.

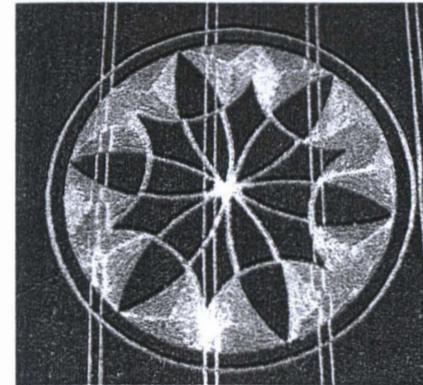
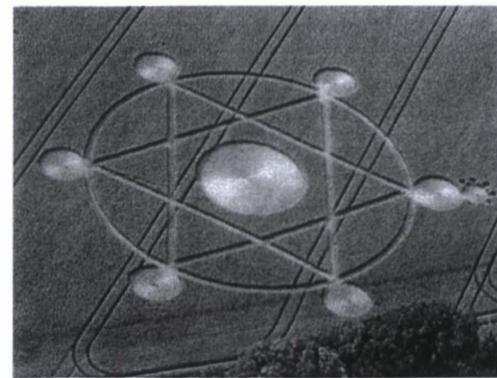
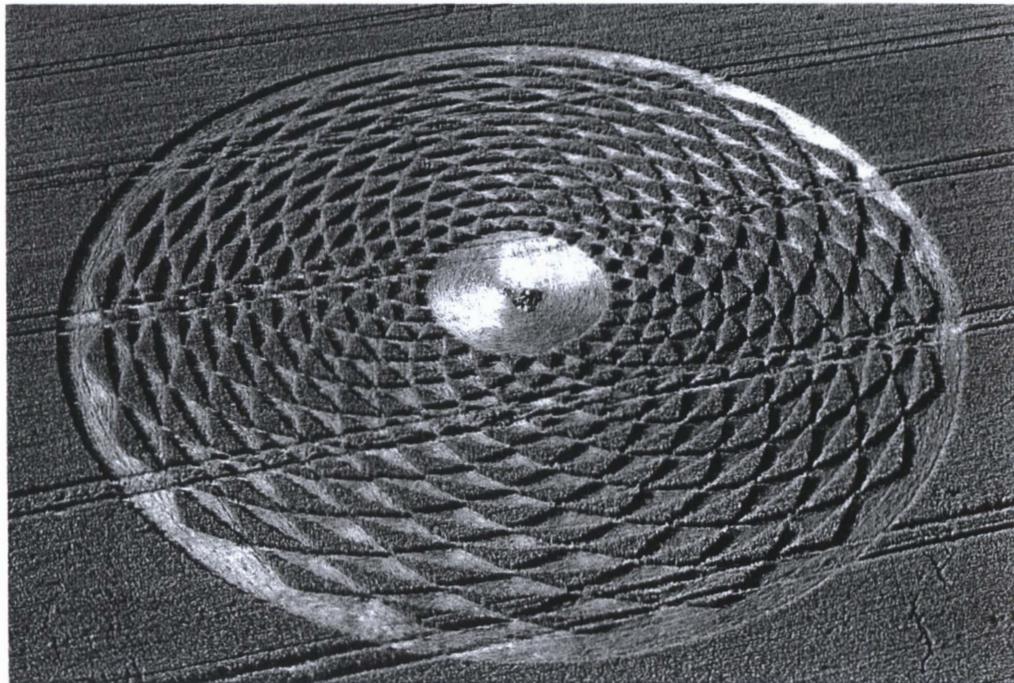


ABOVE: Bishops Sutton, Hampshire. Report p12. The large formation on the right appeared on 14 July, and the smaller on 30 July. Photo: LUCY PRINGLE **BELOW:** Everleigh Ashes, Wiltshire, 19 July. Report p17. 11 years ago, just one quartered circle like this caused excitement... A round barrow has been used as the centre, complete with swirled grass. Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER

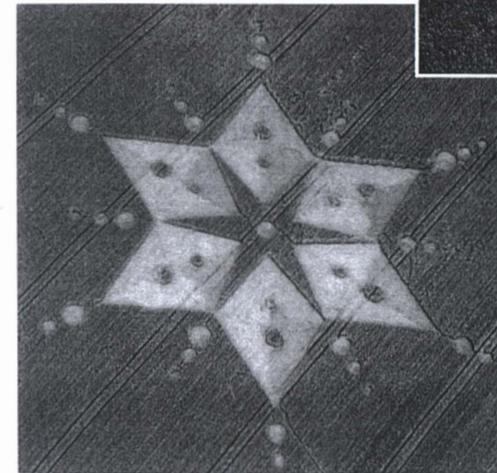




ABOVE: Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire, 22 July. Report: p15. Arguably one of the best ever formations. Photo: LUCY PRINGLE
 BELOW: Woodborough Hill, Wiltshire, 13 August. Report: p19. Another, related, stunner... Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER



TOP: Pegsdon Hills, Bedfordshire, 28 July. Report p12. Photo: ANDREW KING ABOVE: Milk Hill, Wiltshire, 1 July. The 'Rose Window' (SC 91). Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER RIGHT: East Kennett, Wiltshire, 2 July. Grid of 1600 components (SC 91). Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER BELOW: Istead Rise, Kent, 29 July. Report p13. Photo: ANDREW KING BELOW RIGHT: West Tisted, Hampshire, 23 July. Report p?. Photo: LUCY PRINGLE

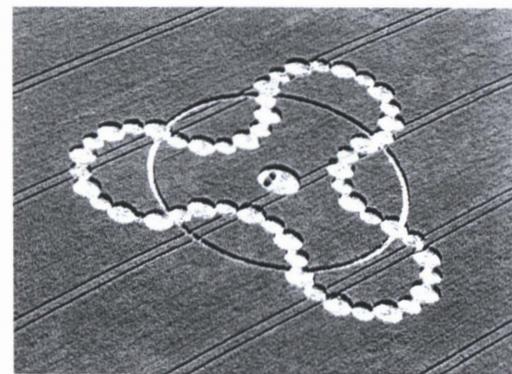
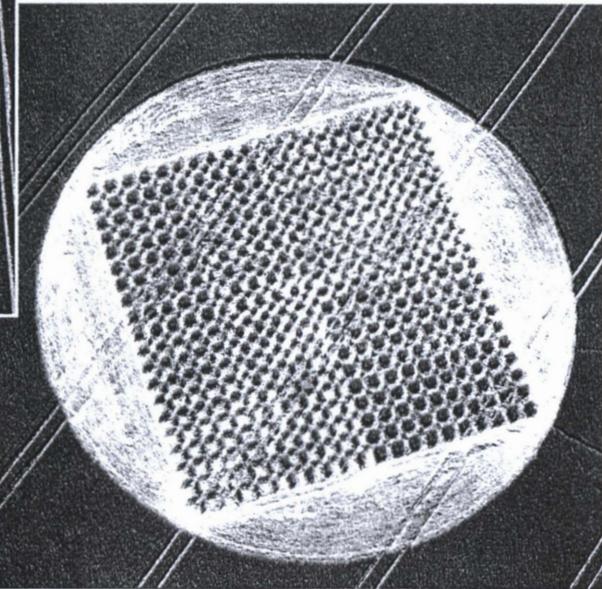


FORMATIONS
2000
GALLERY #2

Full colour original copies of Steve Alexander and Lucy Pringle's photos can be obtained from:

LUCY: 5 Town Lane, Sheet, Petersfield, Hants, GU32 2AF, tel/fax 01730 263454
 e-mail: LucyPringle@compuserve.com

STEVE: 27 St Francis Road, Gosport, Hants, PO12 2UG, tel/fax 02392 352867
 e-mail: temporarytemples@netscapeonline.co.uk



In the following reports, we round up as many formations as possible which have appeared since our last issue. Measurements are often approximate unless clearly specific. All these formations appeared in wheat unless specified otherwise.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Dunstable Downs, nr Luton: 16 July. Double-ringed circle with four satellite circles attached by paths. Light phenomena were videoed in and around this formation on two separate occasions.

Telegraph Hill, Pegsdon Hills: 20 July. Ringed 'tetrahedron'. Rather like a simplistic version of the famous Barbury Castle '91 formation, this had a circle just outside the ring attached at each point of a triangle, while three inner paths (giving the tetrahedral look) led into a central circle. Well executed.

28 July. Elaborate ringed 'Star of David' (PHOTO p11). Clearly following on from the style of the above design, this very crisp emblem had a circle perched on the tip of every point of the star, just outside the ring, and a central circle within the star itself. One of the outer circles had a further attached circle, which in turn had six tiny grapeshot around it. Certainly the best formation yet seen in this part of the country.

BERKSHIRE

Greenham Common: 30 June. Unknown configuration. Perhaps a testimony to – or a parting gift from – the women protestors, who finally left this summer?

DERBYSHIRE

Swadlincote, nr Ashby-de-la-Zouch: 23 July. Unknown configuration of squares.

DEVON

Dartington, nr Totnes: 5 July. The word 'COCK' in barley, each letter 42' high. Hilarious! Close to Dartington College, would you believe. Also, however, suspiciously close to the offices of *Kindred Spirit* magazine. Whatever can have come over them? Oh...

Kennford, nr Exeter: 29 July. 1990-style dumbbell pictogram with boxes. Those who still hanker after mythical 'golden age' formations of yore doubtless enjoyed the appearance of this very retro-looking pattern. Approximately 200' long, the larger of the circles was ringed and on either side of the connecting shaft were the classic 11/11 rectangular markings. Reported on local TV.

DORSET

Blandford Forum: 17 July. Three 10m (average) circles in triangular configuration linked by tapered paths. This

strange formation, directly underneath power cables, was distinguished by the oddly shaped scimitar-like paths which linked the circles in a continuous sweep of lay from circle to path and vice versa. Complex standing knots and figure-of-eight swirls were found in one of these paths.

Bonham Farm, nr Stourhead Gardens: 18 August. Single circle.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

South Cerney, nr Down Ampney: 11 August. Circle with inner spoked arrangement. This appeared next to the Thames Water Authority buildings. Seen from the road, but never surveyed to our knowledge.

HAMPSHIRE

Bishops Sutton: 15 July. Complex cluster of semi-rings & semi-circles (PHOTO p9). This very

attractive design followed on from the similar Stephen's Castle Down pattern (see last issue) and some previous year's Hampshire designs, resembling a clump of bubbles, rings on the outside of a circular perimeter and flattened semi-circles on the inside. These elements were far larger on one side than the other. Bishops Sutton played host to one of the best 'asteroid' formations in 1995, of which these type of designs carry faint echoes.

30 July. Ringed circle surrounded by six semi-circles (PHOTO p9). In the same field as the above, another design arrived alongside, simpler and smaller, but continuing the semi-circular trend. The two formations look stunning together in aerial shots.

Chilbolton: 13 August. Two 'bubble' clusters either side of a double ringed circle. This description doesn't begin to do justice to the very complex design which appeared directly adjacent to a radio telescope installation, but it's the best you're going to get here. Continuing the genre of semi-rings and semi-circles outlined in the Bishops Sutton report above, the 'bubble' clusters were made up from increasingly smaller such elements, surrounded by outer grapeshot with standing centres. Thin standing curtains of crop separated parts which just touched each other and these remained fairly intact (such features are usually trodden down by visitors within a day) as the formation was little visited due to its inaccessibility. The smooth continuous flow of crop from section to section was impressive.

There was something about the look of this formation which seemed to echo the radio telescope itself, hinting at the concept of radiating or receiving, and many found this an intriguing and exciting design. Last year, the 'Sierpinski gasket' fractal formation appeared close by.

Hursley, nr Winchester: 31 July. 'Splash' circle. No, we're not quite sure what this means either, but apparently it existed and was visible from the A3090.

Ovington, nr Corhampton: 13 July. Ring with seven outer thin semi-rings around its perimeter. This design had an oddly unfinished look about it, with one thin semi-ring missing where one might have expected an eighth to have been, while the ring opposite had part of its inner area

flattened. A small semi-circle perched on the outside of the main ring at the gap.

West Tisted, nr New Alresford: 23 July. Triple-looped chain of circles superimposed over a ringed circle (PHOTO p11). An attractive work, looking like a bicycle chain draped across a saucer, the chain itself was made from 51 touching circles of similar, but inconsistent sizes. The small central circle was distinguished by two small standing pillars of crop resembling (presumably unintentionally) two eyes. These pillars are Hampshire 'signatures' which were seen in several 1999 flower-type formations in the region, though this was their only appearance this year.

HERTFORDSHIRE

Deacon Hill, nr Hitchin: 7 July. Ringed triangle with central circle. This rather rough looking formation, geometrically askew, arrived on the Pegsdon Hills. Small grapeshot lay outside the ring at each point of the triangle.

7 July. Triplet with overlapping rings around the central circle. This appeared nearby on the same night as the above, but was rather neater.

Hartlebury, nr Kidderminster: 5 July. Two circles. One circle was around 40' and the other 15', visible from the junction of the A449 and the B4193.

Pegsdon: 16 August. 6-fold double-ringed flower. Very similar to the 'flower-of-life' style designs which appeared around Cheesefoot Head in the early 90's, the geometry of this formation was very poor, petal proportions being notably inconsistent. One of the petals had two curved paths either side of it.

16 August. Complex of semi-rings, rings, & overlapping squares around a central circle. The same night as the above, this better, though still geometrically lacking, pattern appeared in the adjacent field.

HUMBERSIDE

Boothferry Bridge, nr Hull: 18 August. Two ringed circles superimposed on a thin ring. Another strange symbol looking like two brushstrokes sat across the ring. This could be seen from the M62 River Ouse crossing.

ISLE OF WIGHT

Culver Down, nr Brading: 1 August. Single circle with grapeshot. This was visible from the B3395.

KENT

Broad Street, nr Maidstone: 13 August. 166' 6-fold 'flower-of-life' design. A series of overlapping rings made up this quite complex shape, its attractiveness compromised by its rather crude construction. The rings were a little wobbly and some of the resulting petals asymmetrical. Like many previous Kent formations, this appeared very close to the 'Pilgrim's Way' footpath.

Istead Rise, nr Gravesend: 29 July. Elaborate 294' 6-pointed star with radiating grapeshot (PHOTO p11). Quite the most beautiful formation Kent has ever received, this consisted of a very accurate flattened 6-fold star with a smaller central standing star with thinner arms. From each

left of the central star, two standing circles radiated outwards, the line becoming three flattened circles on the outside. Three outside grapeshot also radiated from each point of the central star, giving the whole formation a very glowing, bright, happy demeanour. Levensgood-type nodal bending, elaborate nests and very defined swirls were all found in the lay, though the satellite circles were more indistinct. Another formation appeared on the same spot - next to the Channel Tunnel rail link - in 1999.

Temple Newell, nr Dover: 29 July. 30' circle and 30' triangle. Spotted from the A2, but cut before any investigation could take place.

LEICESTERSHIRE

Braybrooke/Little Bowen, nr Market Harborough: 15 July. Elaborate pictogram of circles, rings, boxes & claws. This very long, crisp-looking pictogram had an older-style look to it incorporating many classic elements to the point of being a pastiche. The most interesting aspect was a standing ring within a fried-egg shape circle, with blobby, wavering edges. Though well-defined and layered in places, there was a lot of damage to the crop.

Church Langton, nr Market Harborough: 24 August. Dumbbell with squiggly connecting path.

OXFORDSHIRE

Garsington: Reported 16 June, but probably older. 200' circle with emanating 'turbine' shape. Whatever that means.

Stonor House, nr Henley-on-Thames: 7 August. 200' circle with inner triangle/triple dumbbell with emanating spurs/150' square design with inner circles and ovals. Little more is known of these events, but they appeared close to the Oxfordshire Way footpath and were later vandalised by coloured paint sprays being applied to the laid crop!

Uffington: 22 July. Complex 'thought bubble'. Directly below the famous Uffington white horse carving, a quite beautiful design appeared comprising a circular 6-fold triangular petal motif made from sprogaph-type overlapping arcs, leading on to a tall of eight diminishing circles, all touching, culminating in a larger ringed circle. An arc had clearly been laid first, around which the tall circles had then formed, a la the Stonehenge 1996 fractal. The lay was very clear-cut and overall this was a favourite formation for many this year. The same field had a fleur-de-lys design a few years back.

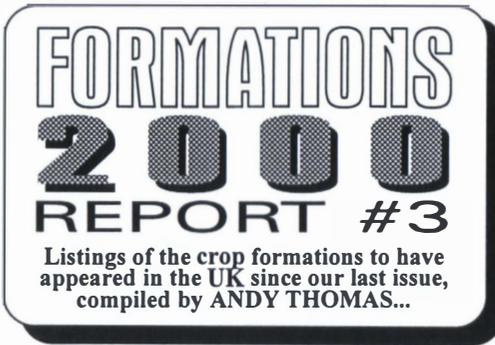
SHROPSHIRE

Church Stretton, nr Ludlow: 1 September. Single 20' circle. This formation was visible from the A5.

SOMERSET

Chaffeymoor, nr Wincanton: 23 July. 49' single circle. This contained a nice splayed centre and observations recorded classic Levensgood-type 'blown' and swollen nodes.

Holton, nr Wincanton: 28 July. Single circle. Spotted from the road just a few miles from the Chaffeymoor formation, but not visited to anyone's knowledge.



Porlock, nr Minehead: 26 August. Circle with three orbiting grapeshot in a triangular configuration.

Whitchurch: 23 July. Complex of 12 circles and paths in organic barley. The layout of these circles, all connected with thin paths, was rather haphazard, but the quality of each was excellent. The largest of the circles, roughly in the middle of a vague cruciform arrangement, had a large offset standing centre within it. The organic nature of the field meant that there were no tractor tramlines allowing any access. No entry paths were visible. The formation was spread across a very steep slope.

SUSSEX

Clayton, nr Hassocks, West Sussex: 22 August. 35m circle with a halo of large and small circles. This appeared very close to the two locally famous windmills known as Jack and Jill. It was clearly visible from the A273. The halo of circles lay on its south side, looking rather like a tiara around a sphere. Very angry, the farmer cut the formation out the day it appeared. Surveyed by SCR after harvesting, there was marked nodal bending in what was left, creating deliberate curvature in the swirl lay which was most certainly not phototropism (where plants bend back to the light from the node). Many stalks were bent at both nodes to give this very impressive and humanly impossible effect. Nodal swelling and elongation, consistent with Dr Levengood's findings, were clearly present across the formation. Clayton had two previous crop designs back in 1991.

Denton, nr Newhaven, East Sussex: 15 July. Five circles of 34', 31', 24', 15' and 16'. This 'cosmic pawprint' appeared at Denton Corner, overlooking Newhaven harbour. The same field played host to an elaborate dumbbell pictogram in 1995, but these circles were slightly further to the north. A good view of the formation could be had from the A259 road heading east from Newhaven to Seaford. All the circles were nicely swirled with offset centres. When first visited there were no entry paths into the circles not intersected with tramlines.

Keymer, nr Hassocks, West Sussex: Reported 17 August, but probably older. Four scattered circles of 42', 26', 25' and 23'. In a field of bearded wheat, bordered only by a footpath and no road, four single circles were discovered from the air by Michael Hubbard. Three of the circles were clustered together at one end of the field in a roughly triangular configuration, while the fourth lay 200' to the south. Three paths were subsequently trampled down from the smallest circle, while the name 'TOM' was crushed out nearby, but these were additions by visitors and bore no resemblance to the quality of the neatly-swirled circles. The centre of the 42' circle had clearly been burnt, with noticeable carbon blackening, but this could have been due to visitors playing with fire as fragments of a cigarette packet lay in another circle. Incidentally, smoking is a very stupid thing to do in a field, for obvious reasons - several people have been seen with cigarettes in Wiltshire crop formations this year, which is not only somehow offensive in such beautiful surroundings and clear air, but also the sort of thing guaranteed to seriously anger farmers and put them off allowing people into formations. Have some sense, people!

Moulsecomb, nr Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex: 15 August. 30' x 26' oval with 36' curved path. This rather crudely executed shape appeared in a wheat field very close to the Moulsecomb housing estate. A 22' oval ring and assorted messy pathways lay at the edge of the field further

west. The main oval was essentially anticlockwise, but had a randomly mashed centre.

The poor quality of this formation did rather suggest it might be the work of youths from the local estate, although there is no proof of this and it looked neater in aerial shots than expected. A better dumbbell did appear further east in the same field in 1994.

The formation could just be glimpsed from the A27 looking south-east as one drove down the hill from Coldean.

Patcham/Hollingbury, nr Brighton, East Sussex: 12 August. Two back-to-back arcs with superimposed circles in barley. This attractive fractal-looking pattern was composed of 21 circles in all. A 36' circle sat at the centre of the arcs while four tails, each of five decreasing circles (averaged at 22', 18', 12', 9' and 7'), flowed outwards. From furthest tips to tips, the formation spanned 200'.

The formation lay in a very late crop of barley just west of the road which runs from the downland beauty spot Ditchling Beacon to the A27.

The design was crisply defined. The arcs which formed the skeleton of the design were clearly visible as paths creating the backbone for all the circles, like the Stonehenge fractal of 1996. They overlaid the circles, but also acted as overtly integral pathways in-between. The largest circles of the two 'tails' on each side actually merged with each other, forming a sort of vesica pisces. Where this occurred, the lay of the eastern circle superimposed the western one.

As with the Sompting formation (below), this pattern displayed examples of individual wheat stems swept into the lay of the formation from *behind* standing unaffected stalks, an impossible effect to create with any stomper or roller.

Patcham was a major circle hotspot in the early 1990's, many of the surrounding fields having been utilised.

Plumpton, nr Lewes, East Sussex: 27 July. Six circles with rings and paths. Found below the Blackcap Downs on the B2116, just half a mile west from a formation which appeared in 1999, the six circles were very neat with notably offset centres. Averaging the diameters, the central circle was 36' surrounded by a thin ring of 60', with satellite circles of 20' (36' with ring), 20' (32' with ring), 24' (36' with ring), 32' and 36'.

The cluster of circles fit the style of the Denton pattern of 15 July, 12 miles or so south. It would be easy to write off this pictogram as dubious due to the geometric shortcomings of its connecting rings and paths, however, within both the circles and rings there were classic nodal distortions, 'magic bends' and expulsion cavities of the type identified by the work of BLT and Dr Levengood. Crop curved from circles to paths around corners, and vice versa, complete with nodal bending to effect the flow. There were also some very good cases of 'gap-seeking' (where crop is sucked into tramlines) and pits in the fields disrupted the lay for no explicable reason.

Sompting, West Sussex: First reported 10 August but probably a few days older. 6-fold flower. This attractive design of six standing petals revolving around a circle with three further standing petals within (a little like a radiation symbol) overlooked the civic amenity site (ie. rubbish tip!) on the border of Lancing, tucked into the north east corner of a wheat field first visited by a single circle in 1994.

The crop was laid largely clockwise, with the 5' wide paths (making the large 30' x 81' standing petals) spinning outwards from the centre, though the three flattened central areas were swept inwards, forming a fascinating meeting point of lay directions in the very middle. The smaller inner petals were an average of 28' across, while the overall diameter of the formation was around 140'.

Around several edges, there were more excellent examples of individual wheat stems which had been swept into the lay of the formation from *behind* standing unaffected stalks, which rules out any mechanical implement having been crudely wielded. It was as if whatever force laid the crop had trickled outwards slightly into the standing crop, pulling down selected stems, a remarkable and important phenomenon observed many times before in other formations, yet researchers often neglect to check for it. This effect was widely distributed across the design.

Sompting has been host to many crop formations in the past 10 years.

WALES

Erddig, nr Wrexham: 6 August. 'Torus knot' of overlapping arcs. This formation was made by the ubiquitous 'Team Satan' circlemaking team as (reportedly) a piece of "performance art" to be shown as part of a Channel 4 programme. Apparently making crop circles and causing criminal damage is now seen as 'performance art'... (Perhaps we can look forward to some other interesting future projects in this vein: "*Next week: a group of lads smash up some public toilets in Wigan as part of the Channel 4 arts season...*")

In this case, the farmer was actually paid and the design - which was suspiciously simple and revolved simply around overlapping arcs made from two centre points - was posted on the Internet several days before it was made. Note that this is the sort of thing they make when observed, when one might expect them to have a go at something like the Avebury Trusloe formation (below) if they were clever enough to have made that - as they say they did. And why *Wrexham..?* Team Satan are getting shy in their old age.

WILTSHIRE

Adam's Grave, Alton Barnes: 12 July. Single 'basket weave' circle with 9 grapeshot. Just below the distinctive burial mound which overlooks Alton Barnes, this formation was distinguished by being laid in a manner similar to that of the famous Bishops Cannings 'weave' of last year, if less distinct, in which the crop was not swirled but swept in a series of chequer-board criss crosses. Due to this, visitors' feet unavoidably scuffed the crop upwards as they walked around it and the lay was messed very quickly. The grapeshot had serrated edges and standing centres. This was the formation Colin Andrews stood in as he pronounced his new theory to the BBC news (see article this issue), declaring it man-made with no evidence whatsoever.

All Cannings: 7 August. 6-fold flower within a larger 6-fold flower. Russian doll-like, the outer part of this formation of six petals around a ring (petals created by paths rather than laid crop), exactly resembled the smaller motif which lay at its centre, forming an attractive floral pattern.

8 August. 150' nine-pointed standing star with 20' central circle in wheat. Though this design, found near a canal bridge, was modest compared to many, its loveliest qualities lay in the very pronounced swirls in-between each point of the star, which resembled Viennese Whirl biscuits with a standing tight knot of stems at every centre. Considered one of the best lays (oer missus) of the year.

Allington Down: 1 August. Complex 'rayed' motif. Almost indescribable in print, this circular pattern with standing shapes within it appeared on exactly the same spot as the 3-D 'cube' in 1999. Its centre was a triangle

with curved sides made up from lozenge shapes or spearheads pointing inwards to a central radiation-type symbol, while outside the curved triangle 'rays' filled out to the perimeter. In one place, three thin rays were present in the thrice recurring design element where four appeared elsewhere around the formation. This was pompously declared by several researchers, to the outrage of many, to be an "error", leading to computer-enhanced 'improved' versions on the Internet showing what it "should" have looked like with four rays, when it seems quite clear to others that the inconsistency was intentional. Arguments have been rumbled this year, not without good reason, over computer-altered images with removed tramlines, trails and now design elements not liked by the photographers...

Avebury: 13 July. 170' haloed dumbbell and smaller 66' dumbbell. Not far from the avenue of stones, this slightly crude old-style pictogram sent some researchers into paroxysms of nostalgia by reminding them of the 'good old days' of crop circling. When we are getting amazing formations like the Avebury Trusloe event (below) today, it really is hard for newcomers to understand what they're talking about. This has more to say about the state of mind of individual researchers than the phenomenon. The early 90's 'golden age' of the phenomenon is a mythology. Even pre-Doug and Dave there was a lot of hoax talk and ego battles in the cripplow world (read Jim Schnabel's *Round in Circles* if you must), which people conveniently forget. When the crop circles are looked back on in years to come, it is more likely to be NOW that is hailed as the golden age, in terms of the amazing complexity of designs.

16 July. Ring with three elliptical spokes in wheat. This resembled three encircled skittles placed with their bases meeting in the middle and their spherical tops protruding outside the ring. This appeared on Avebury Down, overlooking the village at a distance, and could be seen clearly from the north-east hedge. The circles had markedly played centres, which have become a more common feature in recent years.

Avebury Trusloe: 22 July. Highly complex 'magnetic fields' pattern (PHOTO p10). The universally accepted masterpiece of the year, this circular design of hundreds of standing and flattened diamonds splayed outwards from two centres resembled nothing less than two bar magnets being placed beneath a tray of iron filings, creating radiating interference patterns - perhaps ironically given Colin Andrews' 'magnetic' theories this year (see article this issue). Despite its mind-bending complexity, the pattern is based on fairly straightforward recognised mathematical principles which have produced this pattern in other design mediums. It is also what is known as a 'Moire', a strobing optical illusion which fits in with other designs we've had this year, many of which are known to occur from specific calculations (see Nick Kollerstrom's letter this issue). Its execution as a crop formation was mind-boggling, though, given its high level of accuracy (apart from a slight inconsistency in the long thin diamonds to one side of the centre).

On the ground, one was entirely unaware of what the pattern actually looked like and despite the known principles which can produce this effect, the notion that this could be knocked up in a dark field overnight severely stretched the minds of even some of the more sceptical researchers. This didn't stop Team Satan claiming the formation in the *Mall on Sunday* newspaper, though. The fact that no evidence for this was given and that they couldn't even get their measurements and mathematics right in what was claimed in the article, left many, understandably, unconvinced by the latest in a long line of unsubstantiated claims. Astronomer Jack Sullivan, well-known to SC readers, writes: "*John Lundberg* (of Team Satan) *states that they*

used a 140' tape to create the basic outer circle. This puts his overall diameter at 280'. A glance at any of the many available aerial shots shows that the formation spans three spaces between 'tramlines' which are around 15m apart. This makes the real actual diameter of this formation approximately 150 to 180'. It is impossible for it to be 280'. He then goes on to say that they used a 120' tape to produce the inner circle and made marks on this 4' apart to give 60 divisions. This statement betrays a total lack of understanding of the simple mathematics involved in the relationship between the angular division of 6 degrees, the diameter of 240' (2 x 120') and the distance between the points. Simple trigonometrical formula, which anyone with a calculator with tangents can quickly apply, reveals that 4' intervals on a 240' circle would result in 188.49 divisions! To create 60 divisions, the marks would need to be very accurately positioned at 12.65 apart. Incidentally, even the slightest error in setting this dimension would cause accumulated error resulting in massive distortion of the design. Lundberg's stated spacing of 4' could only be correct if his inner diameter circle was exactly 76.4' in diameter and, for the record, if the real crop formation was measured at 180' outside diameter, the spacing between the outermost points of the standing crop diamonds would be around 7.75'. This dimension is roughly confirmed by estimating the relationship between the human figures and the points spacing in aerial photos.

Another Lundberg statement which can be proven to be nonsensical is his claim to have scattered iron filings in crop formations, which he says explains why compass needles are sometimes found to "quiver wildly". This is another revelation of his total ignorance of the physics involved. A magnetic compass held at waist height would not be perceptibly affected by a scattering of iron nails at ground level or even iron cannon balls, let alone "quiver wildly", as even the most cursory experiment will prove."

Incidentally, once again, despite on many occasions stating unequivocally that they never claim specific formations (quote from the Circlemakers web site: "Part of our circlemaking procedure involves not disclosing the individual formation we have made"), note that this is yet another example of Team Satan claiming a specific formation... Hypocrisy and untruths reign.

7 August. Two small circles, one with an emanating path. This modest formation appeared further up the same field as the above, but nearer the Crooks Plantation woods.

Barton Down: 29 July. Two triplets. On the road from Ogbourne to Rockley Down lay two old-style configurations, side by side, each of two smaller circles either side of a larger one.

Bishops Cannings: 26 July. 5-fold motif of overlapping rings, semi-rings and semi-circles. Looking rather like an antique carpet-beater, this very neat pattern arrived in the same field as the 8-fold mandala (see last issue) of 27 June and was further north. More standing knotted centres were found across the formation.

Blacklands, nr Calne: 30 July. Bizarre complex of straight lines, rings, crosses and squares. This formation was not very compelling, being geometrically inharmonious and rather rigid-looking, its haphazard look being at odds with most other designs this summer. The floor lay was generally untidy and many were dubious, though it was certainly unusual. Reports say it appeared over two nights.

Broadbury Banks, nr Wilsford: 5 August. Ringed circle with seven-armed 'spinner' inside. This formation began as a simple ringed circle and then slowly developed! After

its initial appearance, an outline of a 7-fold pattern then appeared around the central circle... It was then 'completed' on 13 August, the outline arms and elements of the centre becoming laid crop.

13 August. Ringed triangular triplet. On the same night the 7-fold was completed, another, new, formation appeared next to it. Essentially a thin ring with ringed circles placed in a triangular configuration upon it, a complex centre of 3-fold lozenges and triangles lay at the centre. A great view of the shapes could be had from the road below the field, as they sat at the top of a sloping field. The same field received a large 'thought bubble' design in 1994, at which strange light phenomena was videoed. This year's formations, it must be said, seem crude in comparison and some have seen their growth as suspicious.

Cherhill, nr Calne: 6 August. 11-fold 'crazy paving' pattern. Looking like a shattered circular rose window, this was an 'interference pattern' created by many intersecting lines leaving many straight-edged (roughly triangular) standing areas and eleven marked points around the perimeter. 11-fold geometry, as predicted by Michael Glickman, has not appeared to this degree before and is another step in the phenomenon's development.

One circle enthusiast asserts this formation was man-made, claiming to have been present at its creation, along with attendant tales of drug-taking and of a ritualistic ceremony conducted by the perpetrators beforehand. No evidence beyond this testimony attests to this and some claim subtle geometrical elements would make this pattern tricky to manually create. On the other hand, there are inconsistencies in its construction. Debate continues.

Cherhill has had several formations over the years.

26 August. Cartoon figure. This formation, just below the carved white horse, one must assume was man-made, an undeniably cute-looking 'man' apparently wearing rabbit ears (!). Perhaps more subtle than it sounds, the artistic proportions used and the interestingly stylised face at least make this an honest piece of art rather than anything intended to deceive. Or maybe this is some very important message from another dimension and we've all missed the point... Anyway, this, as far as we know, was the last complex formation of the season, rather appropriately in a year which has seen an unfortunate rise in mischief making and the deliberate spread of confusion by people who really should have something better to do with their lives by now.

East Kennett: 15 July. Heart ringed by circles and grapeshot. It seems incredible, given the evidence (and SC readers know how reluctant we are to talk hoax without reason) that barely any reports on this formation have mentioned that it was very probably man-made. This wilful avoidance, when, for once, there seems to be good evidence to support this view, is unhelpful. Appearing next to the astonishing 1600-component 'grid' formation (see last issue), the admittedly pretty heart seemed crass and over-obvious in comparison. Neatly, though basically, laid, its closer adherence to most people's idea of what constitutes a 'crop circle' has perhaps led some to blind themselves to the genius of the accompanying grid which was less satisfying to walk around because of its mind-numbing complexity and rectangular geometry. Falling back on the good old experience of walking curved lays, many preferred the heart to the grid from the ground.

So why was the heart suspicious? Answer: in the run-up to its appearance, some crop circle web sites were sent e-mails stating that a 'wedding' formation would appear in the fields soon. The next weekend, the heart appeared. A lesbian wedding took place within it on the Saturday. The

'best man' was one Rob Irving, claimed human circlemaker of old. The farmer was reportedly paid for the crop and the formation was commissioned specifically for the wedding. Aerial shots reveal the formation's deficiencies. The inner ring of small grapeshot (though they were neat inside) is geometrically very poor. The main ring of connected circles has an error in it, a smaller circle squeezed in to link it up properly. The heart itself is skewed.

Geometrical errors do not a hoax make (see Plumpton, East Sussex report), but put together with the other evidence, one must be prepared to accept that this was almost certainly man-made. Controversy ensued when the Wiltshire group chose this formation in which to carry out their closing ceremony, but the heart symbolism seemed to have the right vibe for the occasion (especially as it was probably made, for once, with a good intention) and its origins were deemed irrelevant for the purpose, though some were squeamish about this. But why have all subsequent reports played down or not even mentioned its probable background? This is just the sort of thing sceptics jump on, and the cripple world should be careful in these areas.

29 August. Single circle. Tucked into a corner at the bottom of the same field as the grid and the heart, this modest effort seems to have been the last word for the 2000 season in the Wiltshire area, with no further formations known of since.

Etchilhampton: 29 July. Ringed circle. Little more is known of this simple design.

Everleigh Ashes, nr Milton Lilbourne: 19 July. Celtic cross of quartered circles around a round barrow (PHOTO p9). Almost to illustrate just how far the phenomenon has come in the last 10 years, this very unusual formation recalled the 1989 formation at Winterbourne Stoke which confounded then fresh-faced researchers by being a circle split into four quarters of linear crop lay instead of a conventional swirl. The Everleigh Ashes formation of 2000 saw four such quartered circles aligned as a Celtic cross orbiting the ancient barrow which made up the central component of the pattern. On the mound itself, nettles and grass had been swirled to complete the effect. This was a very rare case of the landscape itself being overtly utilised to form part of the pattern, impressing once again the interactive quality of the circles with sacred sites.

Giant's Grave, nr Oare: 3 August. Complex 3-fold design. Another in the 'carpet-beater' range, this very pleasing design was essentially composed of three double semi-rings in a triangular configuration, with curved inner paths and a central ring. Superimposed across the whole formation was a wider ring touching the centre of each double ringer. There was an inconsistency in the semi-rings; one had a complete flattened ring, but this could well have been intentional and not the accidental aberration some cropies have arrogantly branded it, which even as we speak is probably being computer-tweaked back into good order on the Internet. The lay in this formation was very impressive.

Golden Ball Hill, nr Alton Barnes: 14 July. 6-fold 'flame' design with central 'spinner'. A striking pattern which resembled a flaring star - coincidence, given the coverage (not least by SC) this year surrounding the possible connection between crop circles, solar flares and human evolution (see SC 90)? On the eastern side of the formation, there was what looked like a legless human figure with its arms raised, like someone falling into the star, while a thin path emanated outside the formation (branded another "aberration" or mistake by some), which simply bulged at

this point where geometrically another arm of 'flame' might have been expected.

Levengood-type 'magic bends and 'gap-seeking' were found in the formation.

Green Street, nr Avebury: 19 July. 'Scroll'-type dumb-bell with thin forked path. A very 1990-style pattern, this consisted of two nicely swirled circles, 23' and 11', linked by a thin arc. The strange thin path which emanated from the main circle culminating in a type of claw may have been a later addition.

Hodson, nr Chiseldon: 23 July. Large double-ringer, grapeshot and smaller 'cat's eye' motif. The double-ringer lay 200' or so away from the grapeshot and motif, which was a circle with four standing chevron-like crescents, two large and two small, the smaller ones in the central oval area giving the cat's eye effect. The rings were thin and very accurate, though together the designs had an aesthetically unsatisfactory quality to them. One of the three grapeshot was superimposed by a smaller one on one side.

Honey Street, nr Alton Barnes: 8 July. 4-fold fan-blade design. In essence, a ringed cloverleaf shape with four smaller standing semi-circles at the centre, this neatly compact formation appeared in the field just north of *The Barge* pub and the canal which runs alongside. Three grapeshot lay outside the main design.

27 July. Single circle. This appeared very close to *The Barge* again, but exactly where isn't clear.

Horton, nr Devizes: 6 August. Ringed circle with 'magnetic field' lay and orbiting pentagram. This at first simple-looking design turned out, on closer inspection, to be one of the most astonishing formations of the year. Basically a ringed circle, a smaller circle with a standing pentagram was superimposed on the slightly uneven ring. But most dramatically, the lay inside the main circle was a beautiful radial burst starting on one far side of the circle, sending crop lay swooping in all directions right around to the geometrically opposite side of the circle, where it suddenly came back together into a large knotted clump, like an old-style haystack. This clump was so tightly wound, it was impossible to separate the stems. From aerial shots, it became apparent that the lay resembled nothing less than the same effect (particles swarming around two magnetic poles) as that displayed at the Avebury Trusloe 'magnetic fields' formation (above), but this time denoted in the medium of laid crop. For many, this was the most impressive floor pattern they had ever experienced. Truly a wonder.

Martinsell Hill, nr Clench: 10 August. 10-fold flower design with five central petals. This very beautiful pattern was very well-defined, 10 circles orbiting a flattened middle with five inner standing pear-drop-shaped petals around a small central standing ring. A flattened ring intersected each petal. A thin ring had clearly been laid first, visible in aerial shots, forming the centrepiece of every outer circle. The S-shaped swirls in each circle were exquisite.

North Down, nr Beckhampton: 25 July. Ringed circle with 11 curved spokes. This unusual formation was another of the 11-fold shapes to have appeared for the very first time this season. Essentially a central circle, partly swirled, but with a rectangular strip of 'basket weave' within its lay, the spokes curved at an angle to the circle and tapered outwards before meeting the ring.

Pepperbox Hill, nr Salisbury: 15 August. Configuration unknown.

Pewsey: 7 August. Ringed circle with standing crescent and pentagrams. This very clear-cut pattern, directly below the Pewsey white horse carving, reminiscent of the 1994 'galaxy' designs, had an astronomical feel to it, spoilt only by the tendency of the long crescent to give it the impression (we think unintentional) of a huge grinning face. Inside the central circle, the three very accurate standing pentagrams clearly seemed to represent stars, while orbiting on the outer very thin ring was a superimposed circle with an extremely thin offset standing ring (a mere curtain of one stem's width) within it. The positioning of this ring made the orbiting circle look a little like Jupiter with its red spot... coincidence? The way the crop flowed around the standing elements in all parts of the formation, with nests and whorls at various intervals, was impressive. Very striking.

Picked Hill, nr Woodborough: 15 July. 3-fold mandala. A ring encompassing three semi-rings, three large lozenge-like petals, and three small ones. This neat emblem appeared next to the ancient hill, which provided a good viewpoint, though it was not so accessible to visitors, requiring a long walk. Note that this appeared at *Picked Hill*, NOT 'Pickled Hill' as our friends at *Crop Circle Connector* insist on calling it, being pickled themselves, perhaps, when writing up that particular report...

Potterne, nr Devizes: 24 July. Corporate logo. This squiggle symbol, a small 'r' within a capital 'D' if you look carefully, was made by somebody or other for the Radio Digital company, whoever they are, for advertising purposes. When are firms going to get the idea that logos as crop circles are now cringingly *passé* – barely a month goes by without somebody new trying it, either by manual creation or computer graphics. This year alone has already seen British Gas (maybe real but no-one ever saw it in the fields) and Touchstone farm products (artwork only) get in on the act, with the London Science Museum also apparently planning such a stunt. Show some originality, chaps.

Rough Down, nr Marlborough: 27 July. Small circle with three emanating snaking paths. This curious, if unspectacular, design was another in the genre of what could be considered stars giving off solar flares, the blobby paths calling such phenomena to mind, however erroneously. The formation was situated on a very steep slope, and visitors had a hard time standing upright.

Shaw Hill, nr Ludgershall: 16 August. Triple-armed radiating circles. This simple design threw out four diminishing circles on two arms, and three small circles, two of them ringed, on the remaining limb. Inside one of the circles was a very thin standing ring at the centre, while two others had standing centres. The lay was complex.

Shaw Village, nr Lockeridge: 16 July. Basket-weave ring with 13 grapeshot. This was the first known case of an entire ring being constructed in the now increasingly familiar 'basket weave' technique. The 13 small circles of varying size were scattered with 11 inside the ring and two outside, all with distinct standing centres, one of which had been tightly knotted at the top. The design also faintly recalled the 'galaxy' formations of 1994, though without the same majesty, and some have speculated that the scattered circles might have represented a star field, as yet unidentified. The village of Shaw, incidentally, doesn't exist as such – it is the historical site of a medieval settlement now long gone.

Silbury Hill: 6 July. Triplet. This straightforward formation of two small 17' circles either side of a larger 54' one appeared directly opposite the Hill itself. Rather muddy inside when first found, there are general suspicions about this formation, despite the continuing gushings from some about the beauty of older-style simple formations. On the night this appeared, a lady whose camper van was parked in the car park below Silbury was woken around 2.30am by cars drawing up outside. Peering out behind her curtains, she watched some known alleged circlemakers arriving, implements in hand! This formation was there the next morning. If this is the level of their handiwork, however...

24 July. Circle with six standing 5-pointed stars within it. This very pleasing formation appeared in the same field as the above, making a good comparison with something rather more ambitious. Each star was made from five triangles placed base to base at their points. One of the stars was broken though – one triangle lay aloof from the others, randomly placed, leaving one of the stars 'open' – clearly intentional and not an "error". This was the only star with a small standing centre. Aerial shots reveal the stars were placed within a pentagon in the lay.

This pattern appears to have appeared sometime after 4.30am – in clear morning light and in full view of the A4. An early bird Japanese tourist reported that it was not there when he visited the field to view the triplet design around 4.30am. When he came by again after 8.00am, the new emblem was there, complete. This is yet another report of a daylight formation appearing within a short time period, fully visible from a road which by 5.00-6.00am would have had many cars passing by – enough for drivers to have spotted any team at work...

Stanton St Bernard: 16 July. Circle with blobby 'ears'. Appearing next to Stanton canal bridge, this looked rather like a teddy bear head, one large circle with one blob-shape attached at one point, and two connected circles attached further round.

29 July. Small 'thought bubble'. A double ringer with a tail of four circles at a curved angle appeared in the same field as above, towards the edge of the field.

16 August. Trail of small circles. A scattered trail of seven different-size circles, again near the bridge.

Strawberry Hill, West Lavington: 18 July. 33 interlocking rings. This had the intriguing appearance of a complex piece of wire mesh or netting, but was let down by its rather crude execution and poor geometry. At the very centre of virtually every ring, there appeared to be a small roughly downed area in the standing crop where feet might have shuffled, which understandably aroused suspicions.

West Amesbury, nr Stonehenge: 19 July. 10-circle 'thought bubble' with separate small circle. This large, if rather plain, formation was the latest to get vandalised by the farmer before anyone could get to it. Oddly, however, in this case the farmer mowed out the lay of the crop (without cutting the field), but didn't erase the edges, leaving it just as visible as before... Stonehenge itself could be seen from the top circle.

West Overton: 25 August. 7-pointed star with two smaller stars within it. This formation was almost certainly constructed by the same disruptive 'team' who have been intimidating individual cropplers this year (see article this issue). A copy of the planning diagram was e-mailed to US UFO researcher and broadcaster Whitley Streiber 12 hours

before the formation was made, though some have questioned the claim's validity. The design, though generally tidy, had a hard-looking quality about it and there were geometrical discrepancies in the central star – which had to be 'tidied up' with computer graphics on the Internet!

White Hill, nr Lockeridge: 19 July. Double-ringed circle with superimposed 3-blade 'propeller' motif. At the centre is what looks a little like a radiation symbol. A grapeshot with a standing centre lay just outside the perimeter ring.

Windmill Hill, nr Avebury: 7 August. Pictogram of circles, rings and a ringed cross. Many liked the interior of this formation, with its neat lay and standing centres, but from the air it was geometrically poor, with wobbling rings and a hard mechanical quality to it. In the central circle, a curtain of crop had been created from the meeting of two opposing crop lays coming together, messier but not unlike the Horton 'haystack' (above).

12 August. Line of 15 scattered circles. These very crude circles were in effect little more than grapeshot, with the exception of one larger circle, which had a 'ratcheted' lay. Seven of the grapeshot lay in a merged cluster like a rattlesnake tail.

19 August. Line of nine scattered grapeshot. Very similar in 'design' and quality to the above, replete with a notably notched lay in the largest circle. Some of the circles were again merged with each other, this time as if superimposed one on the other. Further away, three further circles of a similar ilk appeared.

Woodborough Hill: 19 July. Ringed chevron with central standing ring. A modest design utterly dwarfed by its successor in this area...

13 August. Highly complex 'torus knot' (PHOTO p10). This staggering arrival took the style of the Avebury Trusloe formation and the other 'Moiré' patterns of the year to new heights with a tightly wound spirograph of intersecting arcs based around a 22-fold geometry (or 11/11...) creating the effect of 13 rings with a small circle at the centre. Its accuracy was quite fantastic. The design also recalls the 1997 'torus knot' at Alton Priors. Two swirled nests lay in the centre circle. Viewing aerial shots plays strobing tricks with the eyes. A strong contender for formation of the year, though for many Avebury Trusloe just pips it.

LETTERS

RAW BALLS

Having suggested at the end of my review of *The Secret Nasa Tapes* (SC 91) that what was now wanted was another tape - of nothing but unedited proof of the glowing balls/objects around the Nasa shuttles - lo and behold! that's just what *UFO Magazine* has produced.

A new tape is now available, called *The Raw Footage*, which shows 90 minutes of the 'rods' and balls of light seen only

YORKSHIRE

Dodworth, nr Barnsley: 30 July. 6-pointed star within a hexagon. This very neat, chunky formation was the first for a while to utilise a hexagon so overtly. The hexagon was standing, while the star within it was made up of two flattened circles for each arm, orbiting a central circle. There were tiny grapeshot 'attached' to some of the circles. This could be seen easily from the southbound sliproad off the M1.

30 July. 'Torus knot' and circular 'grid'. On the same night as the above, two more very tidy formations appeared in a field nearby, one a quite beautiful spirograph-type pattern of overlapping rings around a central standing area, and the other a circle with a standing grid of many boxes within it, very precise, though nowhere near as complex as previous 'grids' we've seen.

West Bretton, nr Kexbrough: 26 June. Circle with standing square, inscribed with two offset square outlines. Just off Junction 28 of the M1, this tidy design arrived. The inner squares were arranged one within the other, the smaller with its points halfway along each line of the larger. Standing curtains of crop outlined the tramlines crossing the formation.

30 July. Seven circles in a ring.

OVERSEAS

A full report on the overseas formations of 2000 will appear in the next issue.

SOURCES: *Crop Circle Connector* and its correspondents, *Medway Crop Circle & SC* contacts.



FOR REPORTS AND PHOTOS OF THIS YEAR'S FORMATIONS, CHECK OUT... www.cropcircleconnector.com
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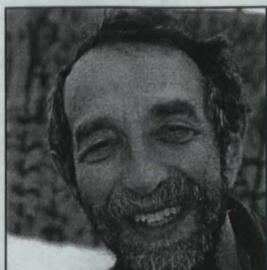
briefly on the original tape. The price is a reasonable £13.99 post paid, and available from: *UFO Magazine*, Quest Publications Int. Ltd., Lloyds Bank Chambers, West Street, Ilkley, Yorks, LS29 9DW

Sonya Porter, Surrey, via e-mail

HALLMARK OF AUTHENTICITY

The 'Country Companions' card range (SC 91) has a further crop circle reference. The envelopes feature an aerial view of a typical English village and nestling in the field in the top left-hand corner is a single ring crop circle. I wrote to Hallmark Cards to check the circle's validity and they confirmed their designers deliberately added it for artistic reasons, but that they adopted no opinions on the circles...

Kevin Constant, Bedford



cornography

with Michael Glickman

The season is marked as usual by the short visit of the Colin Andrews Circus. Always fun, especially for the children, this year's programme was notable for the unusually outrageous performance of the ringmaster, "Dr" Colin himself. Playing a "scientist", he unveiled his latest novelty ideas which had audiences in stitches, especially when there were TV crews waiting there to record his amusing prattle!

He has returned to Connecticut for a well-earned period of rest and recuperation. Oh, what fun we had! Is it any wonder that he is the favourite of the young-at-heart everywhere? But don't worry, boys and girls. Dr Colin's Scientific Circus will be back next season with his reliably predictable antics!

I have always found it hard to decide which of several crop circle researchers caused the most damage to crop circles. Year by year the odds fluctuated with an appalling statement by one or the other. But this year, I think we can all agree, as outlined in other articles this issue, there needs to be a joint first prize for mindless self-destruction. In some cases this gives a cast-iron reason for a few to do what they have promised for years: to leave crop circle studies. Those who having positioned themselves so squarely (and proudly) with the criminal hoaxers, surely have little choice. We wish them all every success in whatever new endeavour they choose. There is the bitterest of tastes in "I told you so". While I notice that people do not comment on my "anger" or "obsessions" anymore, my overwhelming feeling is compassion. What on earth could motivate these once-strong researchers and voices to behave in this way? The community - finally - will miss them.

And all this, remember, with the most inventive and varied season we have known. After the slowest possible start to the season, things speeded up to a crescendo which left researchers breathless.

Exquisite formations dropped like confetti. The furious Bishops Canning farmer who cut out last year's basket weave in anger was persuaded (largely by his wife) to leave the Octagram and put up an honesty box. I was asked to approach him to discuss a visit by two coaches from the Glastonbury Symposium and - to my astonishment - he agreed. A few days later, the circlemakers, to reward him I guess, delivered another formation into the same field. He was not delighted. He still believes all circles are man-made and, of course, many of our own supposed colleagues will support him in that misguided opinion!

Reading through this column, I realise that once again I have dealt largely with gossip and bad politics. I am ashamed and I apologise. In mitigation, I must reiterate that, while the formations were astonishing, while it was wonderful to spend time again with old and new friends, while it was as much fun as ever, I emerge from the season feeling bruised and shaken.

I suppose that there are many questions to be answered and many conundrums to be pondered through the winter. As they say in California, there are issues to be processed.

One thing stands out. For years I thought that while I could not expect others to share my reverence for the subject, I assumed that they would at least respect it. The 2000 season has shattered that illusion. The way to wisdom, they say, is through lost illusion and expectation.

While Janet Ossebaard stood taking photographs at Alton Priors, a car drew up beside her. "Janet, Janet," said Matthew Williams, the amateur hoax claimant (for it was he), "I want to show you something."

Janet, wishing to leave as quickly as possible, muttered something about needing to get away, but our Matt, showing both the insensitivity and persistence which have endeared him to so many, insisted. "This won't take a minute," he said portentously, deftly unlocking the car boot. The lid opened to reveal a plank of wood wrapped in black plastic tape. "Hoaxing equipment!" he said with the air of one revealing the secret of the Universe. Janet, deeply worried about the poor man's mental health, hurried away.

Discuss this episode briefly (it's really not worth more than a few words) in terms of:

- Social dysfunction
- Psycho-sexual symbolism
- Rural petty criminals
- Desperate boredom among the unemployed
- Evidence of attention-starvation during childhood

MG