

P R Thomas

# Crop-circle hoaxers enter ring to find best fake



THE CREAM of Britain's crop-circle hoaxers did battle yesterday displaying their craft in a bid to win £3,000 for the best fake.

In a competition organised by landowner Edward Dashwood, a dozen teams worked through the night on fields hired out for the event in West Wycombe, Bucks.

They used baseball bats, pipes, ladders and planks to

**FAKES:** Entries in the crop-circle competition.

forgo their work, but the most unusual tool was a three-foot Pyrenean mountain dog called Yeti whose owners had trained him to pull a plank to flatten the corn.

Mr Dashwood confessed his interest was not scientific. "I'm doing it to try to stop them invading during the night and ruining my crops.

"We had a couple of circles last year and I'm fed up with it. The farm manager tracked down one of the groups and, over a pint, they told him they'd been paid by one of the television companies to make it.

"They don't do loads of damage," he said. "It's everyone who tramps on it afterwards that causes the problem."

The contest attracted a global array of scientists, including Professor Igor Rokityansky from the Ukrainian Institute of Geophysics.

He will also attend the first International Crop Circle Conference in Winchester, Hampshire, later this week.

But lining up with the hoaxers was physicist Dr Robin Allan who fooled most circle experts last year with his effort in Wiltshire — despite leaving two

blits of string as a clue!

"They came in and said it was one of the best natural ones they'd ever seen," he said. "But we had a film of us making it. They even flew over a French medium."

The laurels eventually went to a three-man team from the Westland Group in Yeovil, Somerset, led by design engineer Adrian Dexter, aged 27.

He said they would use the prize money to buy more equipment and added, "It proves that some of the circles could be hoaxed although I do believe there is a natural phenomenon."