

Expert's probe: But flattened oilseed rape will cost farmer £600

# Whodunnit? Crop circle astonishes lorry drivers

By **Chris Wood and Natalie Crockett**

THIS elaborate crop circle near Chepstow may be amazing drivers, but a farmer says it has left him out of pocket.

The circle, which is 220 feet in diameter, was spotted by lorry drivers coming across the old Severn Bridge on Friday and has been created in a field of oil seed rape on the Welsh side of the river near the New House industrial estate.

Who created it is a mystery.

The discovery was reported to the Devizes-based Wiltshire Crop Circle Study Group (WCCSG), set up in 1995 to look into such phenomena.

Its photographer, Olivier Morel, took to the skies in a light aircraft on Saturday, taking these photographs of the circle, for it to be studied.

He says it is only the second crop circle ever to be reported in Wales – with the other appearing two miles north, near Woolaston Grange, last October.

He said: "The first-ever crop circle reported in Wales was the last of the season last year in a field of wheat. And now, this one two miles away, is the first of the season this year."

But farmer Paul Rymer said the damage would cost him around £600 in lost sales of the crop.

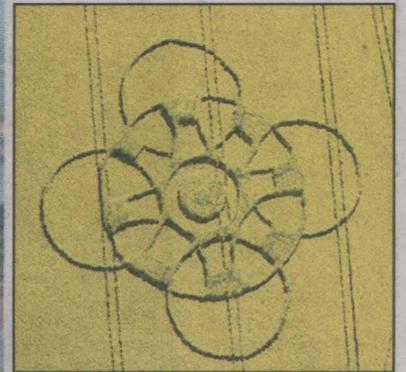
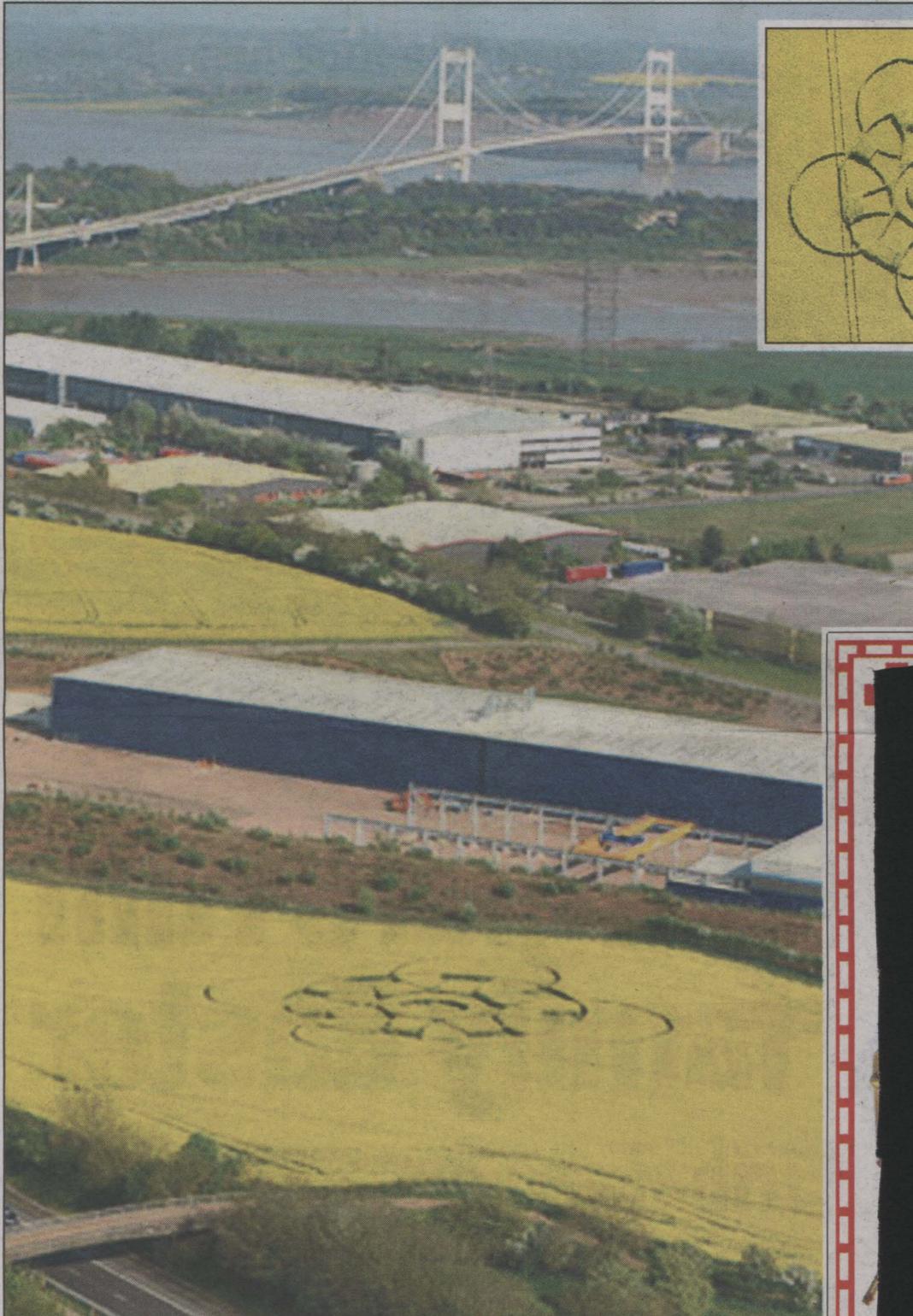
Mr Rymer, 46, who has farmed the land for the past 12 years, said the flattened crops would die and weeds would grow, contaminating the damaged area.

He said: "I am not too impressed, I am annoyed about it. They don't know how much of a problem they have caused."

Mr Rymer said he had now installed surveillance cameras on the land in a bid to catch any would-be vandals.

He added: "We do not want them starting it anywhere else."

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**'VANDALISM':** The crop circle discovered near Chepstow, in detail above

Pictures by: Wiltshire Crop Circle Study Group

## Pranksters, wind, or little green men?

TWENTY-SIX countries reported 10,000 crop circles in the last third of the 20th century, with a large number reported in southern England.

Despite rumours of alien landings, in 1991 self-pro-

fessed pranksters Doug Bower and Dave Chorley told reporters that they had started the phenomenon in 1978 by making circles in crops with the use of simple tools like boards and string.

Some people have suggest-

ed that crop circles are the result of extraordinary meteorological phenomena like cyclonic wind patterns, while others are paid for by companies who use them as advertising.

WCCSG says it gets

reports of around 50 crop circles each year, mainly in Wiltshire, but also in Dorset and Warwickshire.

The crop circle in Monmouthshire was described by Mr Morel as "fairly small".