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## An Investigation into the Contact Experience

By [Colin Wilson](#)

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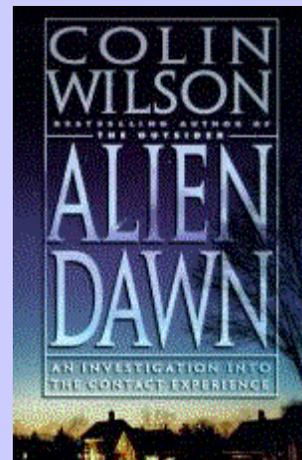
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### Publisher's Synopsis

"This well-researched and riveting book should cause even the most cynical skeptic to think again." --  
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"Has all the compulsiveness of a potboiler novel. It's enjoyable just to be caught up in Wilson's anecdotal chase for answers to the many riddles thrown up by this most fascinating of subjects." --Birmingham Post

"A remarkable and thought-provoking book by a respected author whose credentials in occult research are well-established." --Sunday Independent

When bestselling writer Colin Wilson met Harvard psychiatrist John Mack at a conference in 1995, he was propelled on a journey of discovery into one of the most daunting mysteries of our time -- the UFO phenomenon. Mack had written about his work with people who believed they had been abducted by "aliens." This launched Wilson -- who was initially skeptical -- on a full-scale investigation into everything he could unearth about the mysterious and bizarre events related to "alien" visitations. Groundbreaking and compelling, *Alien Dawn* describes Wilson's remarkable search for the intriguing clues in a vast body of documented research involving strange and unexplained phenomena, including poltergeists, lake monsters, ancient folklore, time slips, mystical awareness, and psychic travel to other worlds.

Drawing on a vast variety of resources -- from William James to Carl Jung, from Jacques Vallee to Erwin Schrödinger -- Wilson takes us on a fascinating and in-depth journey into the world of alien visitations, embracing the history of UFOs (they have been reported for hundreds of years), as well as out-of-body experiences, and the accounts of Uri Geller and Andrija Puharich about the aliens who chose them to deliver a momentous message to earth. He probes into people's claims that they had experienced contact with beings possessing supernatural powers possibly from other dimensions of space, and even time. The result is a vast, complex jigsaw puzzle of encyclopedic dimensions -- the most comprehensive birds-eye view of the subject undertaken, with conclusions sure to startle the reader, believer or skeptic.

### About the Author

**Colin Wilson** is an enormously prolific writer with some 80 major works to his credit which deal with a wide variety of subjects: philosophy, religion, occult and supernatural phenomena, music, sex, crime and literary criticism. His biographies include works on Bernard Shaw, Hermann Hesse, Wilhelm Reich, and Jorge Luis Borges. His *The Outsider* was a world-wide bestseller. His last book was [From Atlantis to the Sphinx](#). He lives in Cornwall, England.

-- From the Publisher

### Excerpt...

The following is an excerpt from the book *Alien Dawn: An Investigation into the Contact Experience* by Colin Wilson

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Westbury, fifteen miles from Stonehenge, is a small weaving and glove-making town, whose most famous feature is the great White Horse cut into the turf of Bratton Down. It was first cut to celebrate King Alfred's victory over the Danes there in 878, but was recut in 1778 in a form that looks like an exceptionally tired and dispirited carthorse.

The farm of John Scull lies within sight of the White Horse, on the Wiltshire downs. In mid-August, 1980, Mr Scull was walking around the edge of his oat field when he was outraged by the sight of what looked like wanton vandalism. Someone had been trampling his oats on a vast scale. But, when he surveyed the damage at close quarters, he realised that it was more organised than it looked. There were three immense circles, each sixty feet in diameter, spread out over the field. The ripening oats had been neatly flattened in a clockwise direction, yet without breaking the stalks -- the horizontal oats were continuing to ripen.

It looked as if some practical joker had worked out an elaborate hoax -- elaborate because the circles must have been produced manually rather than mechanically; there was no sign of the disturbance that would have been made by some kind of machine. In fact the circles were surrounded by undamaged oats, which made it hard to see how anyone had approached. But then, all cornfields have 'tramlines' -- double lines made by the farmer's tractor as he adds fertiliser or weedkiller -- and a careful hoaxer could have trodden carefully along the tramlines without leaving any signs of disturbance.

But to what purpose? What kind of a madman would want to spend a whole night making three sixty-foot circles -- presumably with long planks, or a piece of rope stretched from the centre?

The *Wiltshire Times* printed the story on 15 August 1980, together with a photograph. The report brought Dr Terence Meaden, editor of the *Journal of Meteorology*, to Mr Scull's farm. And, as he examined the three sharp-edged circles, Meaden realised that they had not all been made on the same night, but on three different dates between May and July. John Scull had simply not noticed them.

But made by what? Meaden was baffled. The only suggestion he could come up with was a summer whirlwind. But that seemed unlikely. Many country people have seen a summer whirlwind -- a spiral of dust that dashes around a field and sucks up anything in its path. But summer whirlwinds are not usually sixty feet across -- that would be a tornado. Neither do they stay in the same place. A summer whirlwind would have made a random path through the crop. Meaden's explanation was untenable even at the time, but it was the best he could do.

Later, he was to elaborate his theory, suggesting that when a gust of wind meets a hill, it forms a vortex, which meets the stationary air on the other side of the hill to create a spiralling column.

The next expert on the spot was another magazine editor: Ian Mrzyglod. He carefully measured the circles, and made the interesting discovery that they were not circles, but ellipses. Radiuses drawn from the edge of the circles to their centres varied by several feet, from twenty-six and a half to thirty-five. So the idea of a man with a long plank or a length of rope had to be abandoned.

If anyone had been interested, they might have learnt that John Scull's circles were not the first -- that other farmers in the south of England had found their corn flattened in a clockwise circle since 1978. But, since there is something oddly boring about a mystery with no obvious solution, nobody had paid much attention. And now, for the same reason, everyone soon forgot the three circles in the Westbury oat field.

A year went past. Then, in August 1981, it happened again. This time it was in Hampshire, in a natural amphitheatre called Cheesefoot Head, where Eisenhower had addressed the troops before the 1944 D-Day landing. In dry weather, the foundations of some old building, possibly Roman, show through the turf. And when it is used for wheat -- as it usually is -- the great circle of golden yellow stands out sharply among the surrounding green hills.

In this 'punchbowl', on 19 August 1981, there appeared three circles in the wheat. Unlike the Westbury circles, which had been spread all over the field, these three were neatly in line: one large circle, about sixty feet across, and two smaller ones, about twenty-five feet, placed neatly and symmetrically on either side. They were again slightly elliptical. And they had been made on the same night.

If they were caused by a whirlwind -- as Meaden still maintained then it had to bounce three times. In fact, the Cheesefoot Head circles seem almost designed to refute Meaden's theory, as if they are saying: 'No, we, couldn't be due to whirlwinds, because we are in a straight line, and are of different sizes.'

The following year, 1982, was quiet, with only a few single circles over southern England. Then, in 1983, once more in the punchbowl field at Cheesefoot Head, no fewer than five circles appeared on the same night: a large central circle, and four circles spaced neatly and symmetrically around it. This was the *coup de grace* to the whirlwind theory -- although Meaden refused to acknowledge it. There was obviously no way that a whirlwind could bounce five times in a neat pattern. And, as if delighted to have made its point, the invisible prankster went on to make 'fivesomes' all over the south of England -- one below the White Horse, another below the Ridgeway, near Wantage, in Oxfordshire, and another at Cley Hill, near Warminster, a town that had been noted for its sightings of UFOs.

Suddenly, the media discovered crop circles. The British press often refers to summer as the 'silly season', because for some odd reason, there is often a shortage of good news stories in the hot months, and the newspapers have to manufacture stories out of events that would be ignored in the winter. Crop circles were ideal for the purpose, and they were soon featuring regularly in most British newspapers, then all over the world. 'Artistic hippies' were widely suspected, although UFO enthusiasts insisted that the only plausible explanation was flying saucers.

When yet another 'quintuplet' found below the White Horse turned out to be a fraud, the sceptics seemed to be justified. Bob Rickard, the editor of the *Fortean Times*, a magazine dedicated to 'anomalies' and the memory of the late Charles Fort, was one of those who went to look at this new circle, and noted that its edges seemed less clear-cut than in most circles. He pointed this out to Ian Mrzyglod, who proceeded to investigate, and soon uncovered a hoax. The *Daily Mirror*, irritated that its rival the *Daily Express* had scooped so many crop-circle stories, had paid a family named Shepherd to duplicate the 'quintuplet' below the White Horse. They did this by entering the field on stilts, and then trampling the corn in a circle. Yet the fact that they *needed* to enter the field on stilts, and that their hoax was so quickly detected, seemed to argue that the other circles were either genuine or created by far more skilful hoaxers.

Now crop circles were reported not only from England, but from all over the world: Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway, the United States, Canada. In fact, Canadian circles had been reported from as early as 1974. On September 1974, Edwin Fuhr, a farmer, of Langenburg, Saskatchewan, was driving his tractor in a field of rapeseed when he noted a round, shiny disc, about eleven feet across, whirling above the crop and causing it to sway. Then he noticed four more, all doing the same thing. He sat frozen with fear, and watched them for fifteen minutes, until they took off, going straight up in a grey vapour. And his rapeseed had five crop circles, eleven feet in diameter. They drew crowds of journalists.

Circles that appeared in a field near Rosssburn, Manitoba, in 1977 seemed to refute Meaden's whirlwind theory, in that they were in flat prairie land, with no hills to form vortices.

As the number of circles also increased, so did their variety. There were circles with 'rings' around them -- flattened pathways that ran around the outer edge -- double rings, triple rings, quadruplets, quintuplets, sextuplets, even swastikas. It was as if the circle makers were trying to outflank the sceptics. When someone pointed out that all the circles had been flattened anticlockwise, a clockwise circle promptly appeared. When someone suggested that the circles could be made with the aid of a helicopter, a circle appeared under a power line.

In August 1991, a British couple were present when a circle was formed. They were Gary and Vivienne Tomlinson, and they were taking an evening walk in a cornfield near Hambledon, Surrey, when the corn began to move, and a mist hovered around them. They reported a high-pitched sound. Then a whirlwind swirled around them, and Gary Tomlinson's hair began to stand up from a build-up of static. Suddenly, the whirlwind split in two and vanished across the field, and, in the silence that followed, they realised they were in the middle of a crop circle, with the corn neatly flattened.

This certainly seemed to support Meaden's whirlwind theory, and he had himself photographed with the two witnesses. Meaden's response to the question of why, if the circles are formed by whirlwinds, they started in the late 1970s, and were not (apparently) found before that, was that they *had* been. He cited a pamphlet of August 1678 called *Mowing Devil*, concerning a field in Hertfordshire in which a circle was found in the corn, and attributed to a demon. But this still failed to explain why no crop circles were found between 1678 and the modern outbreak.

In a book called *The Goddess of the Stones*, Meaden speculates that the spirals often found carved on old stones were inspired by crop circles. But again, the problem is: why, in that case, do we not find references to crop circles in ancient literature?

Bob Rickard's interviews with witnesses -- people who claimed to have been present when circles were made -- may or may not be taken as confirming Meaden's whirlwind theory: these are a patchwork of their comments:

Suddenly the grass began to sway before our eyes and laid itself flat in a clockwise spiral ... A perfect circle was completed in less than half a minute, all the time accompanied by a high-pitched humming sound ... My attention was drawn to a 'wave' coming through the heads of the cereal crop in a straight line ... The agency, although invisible, behaved like a solid object ... When we reached the spot where the circles had been, we were suddenly caught up in a terrific whirlwind ... [The dog] went wild ... There was a rushing sound and a rumble then suddenly everything was still ... It was uncanny ... The dawn chorus stopped, the sky darkened ...

In Bolberry Down, Devon, on 16 June 1991, a ham radio operator named Lew Dilling heard a series of high-pitched blips and clicks that drowned Radio Moscow and the Voice of America. He had heard them before -- at the time of crop-circle incidents. The next day, a seventy-foot circle, with a 'bull's eye' in the middle, was found in the centre of a nearby field. But this differed from earlier crop circles, in which no serious damage had been done. In this case, the owner of the field, Dudley Stidson, found his corn burnt, as if a giant hot plate had been pressed down on it.

The landlord of the local pub, Sean Hassall, could work out what time the circle had been made from the fact that his spaniel had gone berserk in the night and had begun tearing up the carpet, doing considerable damage.

A few days before this, a Japanese professor had announced that he had solved the crop-circle riddle. Professor Yoshihiko Ohtsuki, of Waseda University, had created an 'elastic plasma' fireball in the laboratory -- a plasma is a very hot gas in which some electrons have been stripped away when atoms collide violently. Fireballs, or ball lightning, are still one of the unsolved mysteries of science. They are created during storms, and drift around like balloons before exploding -- often causing damage -- or simply vanishing like a bubble. So Ohtsuki's achievement in manufacturing one in the laboratory was considerable. His fireball created beautiful circular rings in aluminum powder on a plate. This certainly sounded as if it could be the solution to the crop circles that everyone was looking for. Then someone pointed out that many of the latest crop circles had had rectangles associated with them, and that one at Alton Barnes (of July 1990) had keylike protuberances sticking out of its side. (In fact, this one was so complex that it should have taken far more than a night to create.)

A critic had pointed out to Professor Ohtsuki that most fireballs are about the size of grapefruit, and that a seventy-foot fireball would attract attention for many miles around. Besides, no fireball of that size had ever been known.

Stories of crop circles began to appear in the Japanese media. On 17 September 1989, on Kyushu Island, a rice farmer named Shunzo Abe found two wide circles in his fields. He thought at first that they were caused by a wild boar, then noted that there were no footprints in the soft earth.

Back in England, another curious phenomenon had been noted: that the 'circle makers' responded to the suggestions, and even the thoughts, of the investigators. In August 1986, Busty Taylor was flying home near Cheesefoot Head, when he remarked to his passenger George Wingfield that he would like to see a pattern with a central circle surrounded by satellites and rings. In his mind, he said, were the words 'Celtic cross' -- a form of cross with arms emerging from a central circle. The next day, flying over the same spot, he was astounded to find a Celtic cross in the field below him. Colin Andrews, another of the first 'cereologists' (as crop-circle students came to be called) lay in bed one night and visualised a Celtic cross, literally asking for it to appear in a nearby field. The next day, a local farmer rang him to

report an elaborate Celtic cross in his field.

On 18 June 1989, six investigators, including George Wingfield, were in a crop circle at Cheesefoot Head when a trilling noise began. It seemed to circle around the group in the corn. A female member of the group said: 'If you understand us, stop', and the trilling stopped for a moment, then resumed. Then Wingfield called: 'Please will you make us a circle?' The following morning, a new circle had appeared 500 yards away, in the direction in which the trilling noise had finally moved away.

The six also noted that when the trilling stopped their watches showed them -- to their astonishment -- that it had gone on for an hour and a half, far longer than any of them remembered.

At exactly the same time the following year, 1990, a group including George Wingfield, John Haddington (the present Lord Haddington) and the publisher Michael Cox decided to set up a vigil at Wansdyke, near Silbury Hill. On the first night, Wingfield and Haddington saw lights along Wansdyke, while elsewhere Michael Cox again recorded the trilling sound. The following evening, the sound began again, and the lights moved from Wansdyke into the middle of the cornfield where they were standing: 'They would flash on and off very quickly,' wrote Haddington, 'and were an orange red or greenish hue.'

Then, as they watched, hundreds of black rods began to jump up and down above the wheat. (In 1987, Busty Taylor had succeeded in capturing this phenomenon in a photograph.) Michael Cox tried to pursue the trilling sound with his tape recorder, but was suddenly overwhelmed with nausea, and his knees gave way. He had to stagger to the fence and sit down; but he had again captured the trilling noise on tape. Haddington remarks: 'To the human ear this most musical sound has the most beautiful bell-like quality, really indescribable as it is so high-pitched. This does not translate on to a tape in a true fashion, coming out covered by a harsh crackling, static-like noise which is presumably caused by the discharge of high energy.' He is obviously correct: there is no reason why a tape recorder should not accurately record any sound, unless the sound is a by-product of some energy vibration that spoils the recording.

When the American television investigator, Linda Moulton Howe, was in England in 1992, Colin Andrews told her the story about visualising a Celtic cross, and remarked that he thought investigators could influence the circles. On 22 July a group of them went out circlespotting, including a 'psychic' named Maria Ward. She told them that, on the previous day, she had received a mental impression of a design of a triangle with a circle at each of its points -- she drew it on request. She added that she felt it had to do with Oliver Cromwell. Two days later, this exact design was found in nearby Alton Barnes, in a wheat field below Oliver's Castle Hill, where Cromwell had fought Charles I in 1643.

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