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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Doug and Dave

From: **Jenny Randles** <nufon@currantbun.com>
Date: Mon, 5 Jul 1999 16:07:03 +0100
Fwd Date: Mon, 05 Jul 1999 16:54:22 -0400
Subject: Re: Doug and Dave

Hi,

Whilst I have been away doing ufology in Washington (no - it wasn't a holiday - I got about five hours free to see DC thats all) I note how the debate on Doug and Dave and crop circles has hotted up. Rather like Washington did last weekend, both with sweltering weather and some of the hot air emerging at the MUFON conference (although there was some very good stuff too which filled quite a few pages of my notebook).

Anyway, I wanted to give my take on this as someone who was involved in circles from around 1981 (before any of the names referred to in one of last weeks e mails bar Meaden). The point was made that cerealogists were not faking circles in the 1990's but were just insisting they could not be done by humans whilst trying to flog books.

First point is that we at BUFORA rapidly made clear to all our investigators that faking circles was a sackable offence. It was against our code of practice governing how we intereact with the public and one clause regarding damage to property. Whatever the intention hoaxing a circle is a criminal act and we were very clear at BUFORA not to either condone nor encourage that. So this was not something merely 'never done'.

It is also not quite true that circle researchers were claiming humans could not do it. Ian Mrzyglod, Paul Fuller and I (who between us in the early/mid/late 80's - beginning even before anyone had heard of Andrews and Delgado) were exposing hoaxers across the UK and writing about it. Ian found the first big one in 1983. In 1986 Paul and I co-edited the first ever publication on the topic for BUFORA ('Mystery of the Circles') - later expanded to 'Controversy of the Circles' and our mass market (well - book - mass market is certainly pushing it as few have ever heard of it!) - 'Crop Circles: A mystery solved?' In each of these we increasingly emphasised the role of hoaxing from a little to a fair bit and ultimately to a lot as its extent became obvious. We devote chapters to the subject. We cannot be fairly accused of ignoring it. All of this predated the arrival of Doug and Dave. Indeed, by wonderful irony the day the Doug & Dave story broke in the UK I was in Australia flying to Cairns to look into the 1966 Tully case that these guys later stated was their inspiration!

At a public symposium to launch our strategy in London (hosted by Mike Wootten - who had a big hand in this early work too) BUFORA brought together for the only time ever all the key people - Meaden, Andrews, Delgado, and, of course, our BUFORA team. We also invited the serious media and got good stories in the likes of the Telegraph, as I recall. We then staged a full debate and had an audience vote. The audience supported the

stance that Paul and I put forward for BUFORA based on our work. Circles were the result of two things - a natural atmospheric - weather based - force and hoaxing, the extent of which was likely to be greater than suspected. That such an open vote on hoaxing was taken 13 years ago is something few of you seem to have any recall about.

This remarkable event - a triumph for serious ufology - was three years before the media discovered circles in a big way, 'Circular Evidence' appeared and the furore began. It has been utterly ignored by 'scholars' of crop circles and rarely even gets a mention anywhere and figures in few supposedly well researched history books. Of course, our objective approach was seen as anathema. I suggest you check what Creighton said in Flying Saucer Review around that time where he abused, ridiculed and frankly libelled Paul and I to high heaven as he apparently could not perceive our research in the terms that it was conducted. That hurt me as I had been very closely involved with FSR for a decade when Charles Bowen was editor. I attended board meetings, dealt with admin work and was working to build a bridge that linked BUFORA's NIC with FSR to provide objective UFO reporting in their pages. All that went out of the window when Creighton reacted with horror at our position on circles.

So I take exception to the suggestion that this kind of rational work did not happen. It did and for not the only time BUFORA stood tall, did a good job and got dumped on from a great height for doing so. Now all those brave efforts are being expunged from memory as if it is too awful to think they really happened! Sorry but they did. Maybe we should get ufology to a regression hypnosis expert to trawl through the screen memories implanted over the truth?

I met Ian Mrzyglod in February for the first time in several years. He was driven out of ufology by the stupid, callous way his hard work was treated by others. He feels nothing much has changed since . I worry that ufology is in danger of losing another great asset - Paul Fuller - for similar reasons as he must have better things to do than this.

As for Doug & Dave. I was personally satisfied by them that they created a few circles, but probably nothing like the hundreds the media alleged. They themselves never suggested they made even more than a small fraction of them all. the media - as ever - hyped their role to make it into a story. It always was a cumulative effort involving dozens of people from the cynical trickster to the 'lets have a spot of fun' brigade that became like a snowball rolling down a hill. It gathered pace and size the minute many people first took the hoaxes seriously and the media began to report them.

It is possible that there are genuine, even complex, circles. I accept that but am not convinced . The trouble is the hoaxing madness has left the field so full of spurious data that it is virtually worthless chasing case after case. Thats the main reason I dropped any pretence at investigating circles about 1993. Whilst the phenomenon has the culture that it has today then it will create far too many red herrings to make study more than just a hopeless search through tall tales . If and when this craziness dies away I may return. But there are better ways to spend your time right now.

As stated earlier, Doug & Dave claim they got the idea to make circles from the reed bed swirl at Tully, Queensland in 1966. They admit they did not make this mark. I found strong evidence in Australia that no human did. These circles (for there were several more than the one D & D knew about via the press in Oz at the time) appeared in inhospitable terrain far from prying eyes. No hoaxer would have been mad enough to dare the deadly taipan snakes to fake them. And there was an aboriginal tradition of glowing lights tied in with the stories.

One of the things that Paul and I did post D & D was reason thus. Hoaxing was clearly rife regardless of how many and of what kind D & D made. The media farce was ensuring that there was a huge incentive. So we decided to seek out any known examples of circles pre both the invention of the term 'crop circle' (and thus any publicity for it) - ie 1980 - and the first alleged crude hoaxes by D & D about five years before that.

We scoured many sources, from scientific journals, to UFO archives and Paul did a brilliant job of tracking down land survey aerial photpographs of the UK from earlier this century hunting out suspicious anomalies.

The result? Sufficient cases, both of actual circles and eye-witnesses to their formation, to prove to our satisfactions that a small level of circle activity has always occurred. We found circles, by the way, in many mediums. Crop fields simply record them semi-permanently better than most for technical reasons. But there have been good examples in grass, sand, snow, ice, hay, dust and even wet road surfaces. Tully - as noted - was matted reeds atop a waterlogged region.

However, here's the rub. All of the pre D & D circles and all of the eye witness accounts of formation related to single, simple circles. There were no complex patterns and certainly no pictograms. Such was the bias that it seemed suggestive of only one thing.

Conclusion? We decided it this way. There was a phenomenon creating the simple circles and it always has done so. It can generate spin off UFOs too. We show this, I believe, in the 1995 updated (partly rewritten and expanded) book from Robert Hale. The complex formations are post D & D and crop circle culture and so - most reasonably considered hoaxes. Of course, I am open to persuasion otherwise. But at this point in time that seems a hypothesis to best fit the evidence.

Often a book titled 'mystery solved' is absurdly labelled (and it was not our idea to use this emphasis here). But I genuinely believe that the case Paul and I set out for the twin track - hoaxing of complex patterns and a genuine atmospheric phenomenon producing occasional simple circles - is not far from the mark. I don't often get off that fence and come down firmly for one view of a phenomenon, but here - unless the evidence changes - I do. To me crop circles are right now a mystery solved and Doug and Dave have frankly got little to do with it either way, except as one of many self-confessed hoaxers of complex circles. They are a distraction from the real evidence pointing to an underlying real phenomenon that is out there if you care to look for it. But I see no reason to even suspect there is a need for that real phenomenon to be alien or mystical in origin. It has perfectly consistent characteristics within atmospheric physics.

Best wishes,

Jenny Randles

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