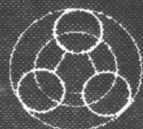


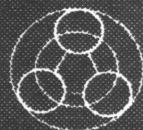
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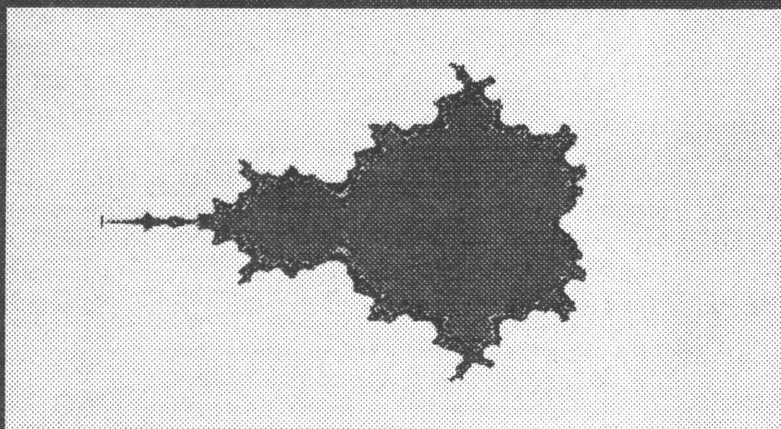
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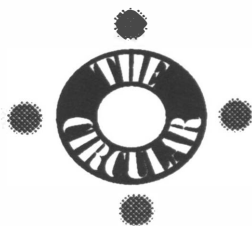


In this edition :



The shape of things to come?

Volume 2
Number 3



September
1991

The Quarterly Crop Circle Magazine

Editor
Bob Kingsley

Design & Layout
John Brocks

Consultants

Editorial Adviser: Alick Bartholomew. **Field Operations:** Richard Andrews, F.C. (Busty) Taylor, George Wingfield. **Research Panel :** Diana Clift, Montague Keen, Leonie Starr, Dr. Roger Taylor.

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INTRODUCTION

BY

BOB

KINGSLEY

There's a small change to the layout in this edition: watch for the CCCS logo or initials on main articles and smaller items. This indicates that they are CCCS-generated. Articles not displaying the logo are included through the editor's own choice - any comments, therefore, in short courteous letters to me! There are close and mutually beneficial connections between *The Circular* and the CCCS, with both sides wishing the magazine to maintain its editorial independence. (Hence the slight change to the wording on the cover, too.) I hope this clears up any confusion about whether or not a stated view is CCCS policy. Neither the CCCS nor *The Circular* wish to ally themselves with any particular viewpoint; publication is not intended to suggest endorsement.

Now to business. Another packed issue, with 28 pages instead of 24. I'm sorry it's been held up, but a story broke just as we were going to press and it couldn't pass without comment. The CCCS has issued the following statement regarding claims of hoaxing by Mr. Bower and Mr. Chorley as reported in *Today* newspaper, 9th - 11th September 1991:

In response to the recent claims made by the above, the CCCS would like to make the following comments:

Mr. Delgado is not a member of the CCCS. He speaks solely for himself.

The CCCS is studying with interest the claim made by Mr. Bower and Mr. Chorley that they have committed trespass and criminal damage on about 200 farms since 1978. It must be mainly for the police and the landowners concerned to consider what steps should now be taken. If, however, we accept the statements attributed by the Press to Mr. Bower and Mr. Chorley, about 1800 events remain unexplained.

The crop circle phenomenon has been under systematic study for 12 years, beginning in 1980. Over this period, something like 2000

events have been recorded, mainly in this country but also - very reliably - from Australia, Canada, the United States and Japan; and - less reliably - from several other countries.

In the UK, the events have tended to cluster heavily in two or three areas in Wiltshire and Hampshire, but they have also been reported since 1988 in other counties of the UK - and in considerable numbers in 1990 and 1991. Reports have ranged from Cornwall in the south-west of England through Somerset, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Kent, Essex, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and - more sparsely - to counties further north. Roughly speaking, about a quarter of a million square miles of this country have been 'visited'. If this is a hoax, it has taken place on a gigantic scale.

Many events have been very complex and very large. Some circular events have been larger than 300 feet in diameter. Some linear events have been as long as 250 feet from end to end. If this is the work of hoaxers, their dedication and energy is little short of marvellous. Simple events would have been enough to satisfy the ordinary malice of ordinary hoaxers; the exuberance of what we have seen needs much further explanation.

Many of the simpler events - singleton circles, ringed circles, simple groupings of circles - have been repeated quite often (though sporadically) during the 12-year history of the subject, but the complex events have tended to be unique on every occasion. We now have a bewildering collection of several hundred of these very large and very elaborate occurrences, hardly one of which repeats the details of previous events.

We have had many reports of events occurring on the same night across a wide range of British counties. If hoax is the explanation, we must assume either that Mr. Bower and Mr. Chorley were able to travel hundreds of miles in the few hours of darkness, rapidly making events at each stop, or that a country-wide network of 'corn artists' were all at work at about the same time, all making events of astonishing elaboration.

Against this background, the CCCS considers that the hypothesis of hoax as a general explanation for the many complex events which have been recorded since 1980 is far more implausible than any other hypothesis. We are ready to be convinced otherwise if the evidence is forthcoming.

We are quite unconvinced at present.

We have been well aware for some time past that hoaxing is taking place. This is a great pity. It muddies the scientific record. But we are not too surprised. A good deal of prize money is now on offer for anyone who can 'solve the mystery'. In any case, a certain kind of prankster is always drawn to remarkable events of the kind we have been studying.

It is essential for scientific study that we can successfully distinguish between hoaxed and genuine events. We are therefore interested in the techniques used by hoaxers. Study of what they can do will improve our ability to distinguish reliably between hoaxed and genuine events. Experiments of our own, carried out this summer on the farm of the Convenor of our Crop Effects Research Panel, Mr. Montague Keen, are already providing us with improved 'diagnostic' methods. But we would welcome discussion with any serious researchers who claim to be able to replicate the more complex events, especially in night-time conditions. Subject to suitable terms, mutually agreed, we would meet the costs of attempted replication, guarantee anonymity to those involved, and indemnify them against all claims.

That concludes the CCCS statement.

Claims regarding the origin of crop circles cannot be verified through newspaper clippings alone. All the evidence has to be considered. *Today* was apparently presented with evidence that convinced them the story was accurate. I was informed by *Today* during a telephone conversation with the Assistant Editor that this included the creation of several replicas before they made the the publicised formation.

Today also stated in its article on Monday 9th September that a 'week-long investigation' of the claims had been conducted. "*They briefed us* for about six days," Doug revealed to me on the 'phone, "and they were convinced after about thirty minutes that what we were saying was quite true." It was a short week. They'd contacted the paper on Tuesday 3rd; a journalist came to see them the following day and the Kent hoax was allegedly perpetrated on the Thursday, the day Pat Delgado was asked to come and look at it. Three days later, he was told of the claimed hoax. Doug said that they did not make any other formation for the newspaper.

Monday's TV news programmes showed Doug and Dave 'creating' a formation. Viewers were not given much chance to see

the end product, but what was shown didn't convince many. *Today* reported that the alleged hoaxers didn't complete their demonstration because there were too many media people tramping around; that this accounted for the scrappy and unconvincing crop lay. A second meeting the following day was called off.

The overall impression given by *Today's* reporting is that *all* crop circles are hoaxes and that the mystery is therefore solved. The alleged hoaxers have so far claimed: 100 formations over 13 years (*ITN News at 5.40*, 9/9/91); or between 325 and 390 (according to Doug on a *Radio One* interview conducted by Nicky Campbell, 10.40pm, 9/9/91: "We average about 25 to 30 a year"); or 200 (*Today*, 10/9/91). Taking even the highest estimate, that still leaves a minimum of 1,610 events yet to be accounted for in this country alone, about 2,000 having been recorded.

As things stand at the moment, publicity over this story seems to have waned again. For some, though, crop circles continue to provide some light relief. The *Sunday Mirror*, for example, continues its Corn Circles Challenge, with the 15th September edition providing explanations put forward by two contestants apparently in line for the £10,000 prize: one woman thinks it's mice circling like a gigantic wheel, their internal magnets affected by parasites, and there's a chap who reckons it's rabbits, which are actually intelligent life forms from a planet called Bunnous, you see. They're signalling to their fellow ... er... Bunions, I guess, requesting evacuation -

But hang on. The *Sunday Mirror* thinks these 'explanations' are worth printing - and yet Doug has told me that their story was turned down when it was offered to its sister-paper, the *Daily Mirror* (which tried to catch up by printing a piece the day following the *Today* 'scoop'), a week or so previously! Another source has informed me that it was, in fact, the *Sunday Mirror* itself that checked into the story. Evidently, they decided not to run it. Perhaps the judges consider magnetized mice or alien bunnies to be a more likely explanation when compared with the hoaxers' claims - but whatever the reason, doesn't it show us what a funny old world the tabloids live in?

Doubtless the saga will continue in December's *Circular*. For now, the hot news from Doug is that we can expect a book about their antics in the near future. Well, well. What a surprise. That should keep MBF Services, copyright owners of Doug and Dave's story, happy. For two cheeky chappies who 'aren't in it for the money', they're learning fast. Watch this space!

CROP FORMATIONS

1991

Surveys of the 1991 crop circle phenomenon, measured and drawn by John Langrish, now include the following:

Litchfield Insectogram (1/7/91)
Alton Barnes Pictogram (2/7/91 & 5/7/91; same sheet)
Hackpen Hill Pictogram (12/7/91)
Barbury Castle Wheelogram (17/7/91)
Alton Priors Pictogram (19/7/91)
West Kennett Pictogram (Alton Priors type) (26/7/91)
Lockeridge Fish (26/7/91)

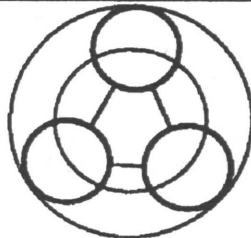
The following formations have also been surveyed and will be available as soon as they have been drawn up:

Longwood Warren Double Ringer (14/6/91) and Ringed Dumbbell (4/7/91 - same sheet)
East Kennett Lurkeley Hill Dumbbell
Ogbourne Malsey (both formations 11/7/91)
Beckhampton Firs Farm No 1*
Beckhampton Firs Farm No 2 Fish (1/8/91)
Beckhampton Firs Farm No 3 Frog (3/8/91)
Silbury Hill Dumbbell (27/8/91)
Cheesefoot Head Flower (15/8/91)
Cheesefoot Head Dumbbell (17/8/91)
Froxfield Fish (14/8/91)
Froxfield Frog*
Froxfield Serpent*

(*Dates not yet established)

All surveys are drawn to scale and produced in A3 format. They are fully dimensioned and where possible include compass bearings onto local landmarks (to aid accurate locations to be established). Surveys of complicated shapes are done by triangulation and/or distance and bearing and in some cases offsets from a reference line. Details of the direction and lay of the crop and crop type are included.

SHEETS ARE SUPPLIED IN A SEALED TUBE (POST FREE) AT A CHARGE OF £2.00 EACH, £1.50 FOR 3 OR MORE, AND £1.25 FOR 6 OR MORE. CHEQUES OR POSTAL ORDERS SHOULD BE PAYABLE TO: J. F. LANGRISH, HART STUD, HULFORDS LANE, HARTLEY WINTNEY, BASINGSTOKE RG27 8AG UK.



STATEMENT FROM THE CCCS

A CCCS member, Mrs. Rita Lorraine-Gould, has been the victim of a fraudulent complaint to the CCCS. In early July, we were telephoned by a supposed Mrs. Robinson who told us that Mrs. Lorraine-Gould had trespassed on her farm near Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, claiming to be there by right as a CCCS member. An oral apology was at once given to the caller and we invited Mrs. Lorraine-Gould to comment. It will be understood that the CCCS had no reason to doubt that the complaint had some substance, and we were

naturally concerned at the apparent damage to our relations with the farming community. Mrs. Lorraine-Gould has since assured us she has at no time trespassed on private property, and our attempts to trace Mrs. Robinson have failed. (The telephone number given to us does not exist.) We take this opportunity to make clear to anyone who may have heard of the supposed trespass by Mrs. Lorraine-Gould that we entirely accept her statement. We much regret the trouble to which she has been put by a malicious and fraudulent caller.

We are also aware that rumours have been put into circulation, identifying a celebrated UFOlogist as the fraudulent Mrs. Robinson. We are satisfied that this absurd story is entirely without foundation (and we are not repeating here the name of the unfortunate UFOlogist involved, since we are concerned not to give further currency to the rumour). We ask members to ignore any further stories of this kind. We would also welcome any information which might lead to identifying 'Mrs. Robinson', whose ill-intentioned action has been a great nuisance to all concerned.

CAN YOU HELP?

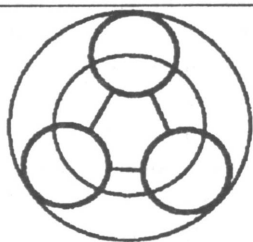
Diana Clift, heading the CCCS Physiological & Psychological Research Panel, reports that there has been an excellent response to the questionnaire asking for details of any unusual physical or emotional states experienced in crop circles. Of course, the season has been so busy that the Panel has only covered a small fraction of people visiting circle sites, and a large number of respondents is required to enable accurate assessment of any possible effects being reported.

So if you have been circling this year (or in previous years) and have experienced any kind of physical response (an easing of some medical complaint, perhaps? Did you feel nauseous or get a headache?) or a change of emotional state - say, rapid mood-swings, unusual elation or depression - during or after your visit, Diana would like to hear from you.

Please write to the following address. A detailed questionnaire will be sent to you, which you can complete at your convenience. By doing so, you will be aiding the CCCS research panel to unravel some of the mysteries of crop formations.

CCCS, Lucy Pringle, PO Box 44, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 2BT UK.

OVERVIEW OF 1991



A FIRST SUMMARY BY THE CCCS

Compiled by Ralph Noyes

This report is going to press in the third week in August. It can only be the barest sketch. Events have overtaken us repeatedly in recent weeks with breathtaking speed. We shall need the autumn and winter to digest and analyse this amazing season. In the meantime, here are some highlights (many of them illustrated elsewhere in this issue).

The weather in May and June was atrociously cold and wet. Perhaps this is why the season started later than last year: the 'sketch-pads' were sodden! Yet even under the torrential rain and lowering skies events began to form. To some of us the ability of the circle-making agent to leave its ragged but decisive mark in these most dismal of conditions has been as impressive as anything else we know about it.

The first reliably reported event was probably the pictogram reported at Yarnbury Castle, Wiltshire, on 10th May. Two other pictograms of a 1990 kind followed at Pepperbox Hill on 28th May. Then, at the start of June, something completely new occurred at Upham to the south-east of Winchester, a pattern which some immediately called an 'insectogram' and others a 'laddergram' - a glance at photo one will show why. As the season progressed other insectograms followed, initially in that classically haunted countryside to the east and south of Winchester, later near Litchfield. And a 'westward march' brought more of these strange (and, to some of us, repugnant) forms to the

vicinity of Stonehenge. All had the same basic form, but the number of 'rungs' in the 'ladder' differed from one case to another. People reported uncomfortable effects from these formations, including in one case severe nausea. Later in the season, marks in grain which resembled the three-toed footprint of some large beast were found on adjoining farms near the Devon/Cornwall border. Imaginative folk suggested - jocularly, though with a trace of unease - that some old Cornish dragon had sniffed in the wind the westward advance of these unappealing insect-forms and was marching up to Salisbury Plain to do battle! If hoaxers were at work, they were acting with remarkable imagination. (But to the general question of hoax we return below.)

Up to about the end of July, it looked as though 1991 would differ markedly from 1990 in giving us relatively few events outside Wessex. After that flurry, mainly of 'insectoids', near Winchester, and the sporadic events elsewhere, the action moved decisively to Wiltshire and, in Wiltshire, to a small area which can be fairly precisely defined on the Ordnance Survey Landranger Map No. 173 by drawing a line from Cherhill (near Calne) to Wroughton (near Swindon) and then to Marlborough, Pewsey, Devizes and back to Cherhill. Within this small, charmed polygon hardly a day has passed since about mid-June (and up to the date of this report) without some new and often startlingly novel event; and outside this magical territory very little indeed appeared to be going on in June and July.

CCCS members began to 'phone us during July to ask what - if anything - was happening. Their national newspapers were telling them nothing; they were beginning to wonder whether their subscriptions were worthwhile! All we could do was to tell them to go to the Waggon & Horses pub at Beckhampton (between Marlborough and Cherhill on the A4), which had virtually become *the* centre for crop

circle studies, and to ask any of the interested observers who were congregating there (citizens of the USA, Canada, Japan, Sweden, Germany, France - we Brits were beginning to feel outnumbered!) where the action was. Above all, we advised them to get in touch with Mrs. Una Dawood, who knows every farmer, every event and every authority in the area.

Beckhampton... In that very small polygon of countryside (defined above) there have been many major events, probably amounting to about 50 in the space of roughly 90 days. Some themes have become common in this area, for example many pictograms consisting of a row of circles-in-line (2, 3, 4, .5..), joined by a connecting shaft; and some events which seem 'fat and fishy' in that the circles or ringed circles at each end are joined, not by a shaft, but by a 'fish-body' (complete with 'fins' in some cases!). In addition, there have been events of a geometrical complexity which only aerial photographs can illustrate; plus one event which seemed to some observers like a mathematician's symbol for infinity (a figure eight lying on its side); plus an amazing event near Barbury Castle (south of Wroughton), the authenticity of which has been vouched for by CCCS Field Officers. This was second only to the event from Cambridgeshire reported below in its mathematical references (some would say mathematical 'messages').

These events from around Beckhampton, together with the insectograms from the Winchester area (and further west), the dragon footprints from Cornwall and a few other sporadic events would have been quite enough to keep the CCCS fully stretched, however disappointingly localised they might have seemed to members in other parts of the country. In early August, to meet the printing deadline for *The Circular*, we were about to go to

press with a summary based mainly on these few areas, apologising to members elsewhere in the country for a year which appeared to have overlooked them. And then it began to happen ... We have been stopping Bob's press ever since. It is our fault, not his, that *The Circular* is a little behind schedule!

In the past twenty days (as at 21st August) our telephones have been almost too hot to handle ... Apart from continuing occurrences in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset and Cornwall, events have been reported from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Essex, Kent and other areas. In many cases these have been picked up from the air by private pilots or reported in the local Press. It is heartening that so many people, by no means all of them CCCS members, have not only heard of us as a serious research organisation but have been so willing to send us information. Even more heartening has been the immediate readiness of CCCS members to get to an event on the ground as soon as asked and to compile reports, illustrated in many cases with lavish photographs and good measured diagrams. (*An attempt is made at the end of this piece to acknowledge all their enthusiasm, skill and dedication.*)

It will be months yet before we can catalogue and analyse this wealth of data (or even to make a reliable estimate of total numbers). But some striking features can already be identified.

Firstly, there have been relatively few 'simple' events. Singleton circles, ringed circles and even that favourite of past years, the simple quintuplet (or quincunx), seem to have been greatly outnumbered by far more complex formations. In 1991 we have come to regard as 'simple' (and almost to ignore as commonplace!) the unembellished dumbbells, usually with one circle notably larger than the other, which have turned up in various parts of the country.

Secondly, most of the complex events have differed from those of 1990, and many have been strikingly novel. Although pictograms of a 1990 kind were seen in Wiltshire fairly early in the season, notably at Alton Barnes/Alton Priors (the area of the most famous double-pictograms of last year), they have been relatively few; instead, a great variety of new forms have made their appearance. The insectograms, dragonish footprints, fish-forms and shafted circles-in-line have been mentioned above. In addition, we have had shafted quintuplets (i.e. those in which the satellites are joined to the central circle by passageways); a

quintuplet in which (for the first time, we believe) the central circle is smaller than the satellites and the whole is encompassed by a great ring; shafted quintuplets in which one of the four satellites is distinctly different from the remaining three as though giving an orientation to the whole pattern (not a wholly new phenomenon but one which seemed to be given extra emphasis this year, the maverick satellite becoming in one case an arrow-head rather than a circle!); a segmented ring, the four segments of which are joined by shafts by a central circle; a six-ringed circle, the outermost ring of which had a diameter of 100 metres; the large geometrical event at Barbury Castle already mentioned; that possible 'infinity sign' in the Beckhampton area; other quasi geometrical weirdities; and (as we go to press) an occurrence near Ickleton in Cambridgeshire which startlingly resembles the computer-generated graphics of a remarkable mathematical entity which goes by the name of the Mandelbrot Set (see plate 3 in James Gleick's *Chaos: Making a New Science*, Penguin Books, 1987; or an article which appeared in *New Scientist* on 3rd August 1991).

Thirdly, there has been a tendency for different novelties to cluster in different areas: insectograms near Winchester (anyway to start with); shafted quintuplets in Buckinghamshire; dragonish footprints in dragonish Cornwall... The point should not be pressed too far until the events of 1991 have been fully logged and analysed, but there are strong indications, as in 1990, of a distinctly 'county flavour' to the manner in which the phenomenon manifests.

Fourthly, for the first time events happening outside Wessex have ceased to be wholly 'simple': complexity has spread to the rest of the country. It will be remembered that hardly anything at all was being reliably reported from outside Wessex before 1989, and that the ultra-Wessex events of 1990 were generally of the simplest kind.

Fifthly, not nearly as many circles as in 1990 have appeared in the USA and Canada. There have been several in

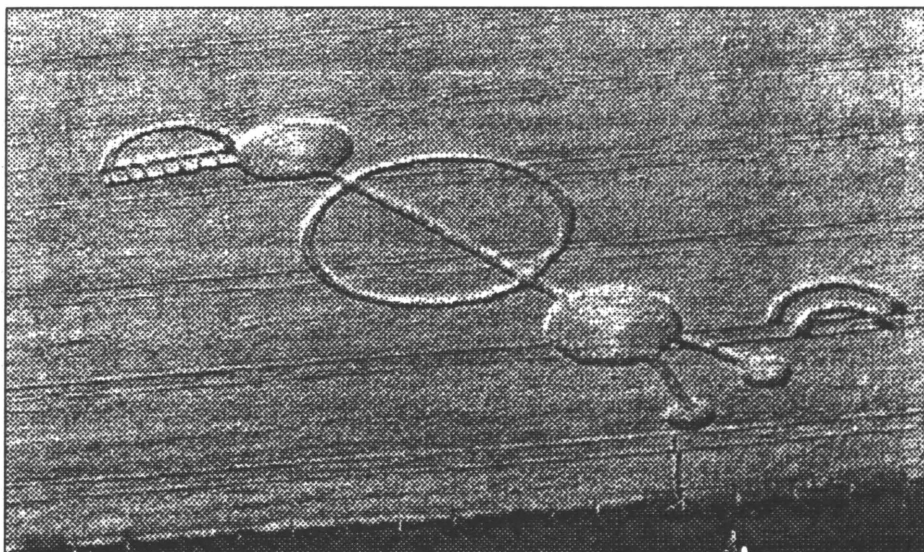


Photo 1 : Insectogram at Stonehenge
Picture by George Wingfield

Japan and also in Germany, although two of these were admittedly hoaxes.

Sixthly, the 'quality' Press and media at national level were very slow to carry reports (perhaps still shaken by the brazen and successful hoax at Operation Blackbird last July). This fact added to our problem of communication with members living outside Wiltshire; their newspapers were giving them no news! We seemed to be witnessing almost a conspiracy of silence or of very perfunctory ridicule. *The Times* of 12th June, for example, printed a brief statement that Professor Ohtsuki of Japan had finally clinched the discussion in favour of Dr. Meaden's Plasma Vortex by producing rather small luminous events in his Tokyo laboratory, capable of producing miniature swirled occurrences in aluminium powder, and that small ringed circles had also been found in grime on the walls of the Tokyo underground railway system.

The paper declined to print a moderately worded comment from the CCCS that it seemed premature to extrapolate from these mini-events, occurring in highly specific circumstances, to the enormous variety of very large crop circle patterns which had appeared under the open skies of 1990 and 1991, wholly without prior prediction and in a remarkably wide range of weather conditions.

On 16th July *The Times* carried a somewhat flippant report on the first of the four 1991 events which had occurred near Alton Barnes (close to the site of the most spectacular of the 1990 formations) hinting, none too delicately, that it had been made by human hands for the sake of charging an entry fee to the public. After substantial pressure the paper eventually printed a CCCS letter in which we said that the formation had been swiftly examined by us and possessed all the hallmarks of a genuine event. This meagre Press cover has slightly improved in quantity, though not much in quality, as this article is being written. Those who argue that 'media hype' is a strong factor influencing the number of circles reported will not find much to support them in the history of 1991.

It seems to many of us in the CCCS that 1991 has demonstrated yet again the great unlikelihood that any explanation will ever be found in terms of the current scientific paradigm, despite the valiant and twelve-year struggle by Dr. Meaden and his associates to ascribe the circles to the operation of a 'blind' atmospheric disturbance, however novel in its attributes and whether or not it is now to be regarded (as Dr. Meaden has recently argued - see elsewhere in this issue) as partly governed by local effects at ground level. The effortless ability of the circle-making agent to escape prediction and to invent and re-invent the forms in which it will manifest mark it as something which may only be understood if we are willing to enlarge and refine our predominantly Newtonian models to include the possibility of purposiveness (in whatever quarter purposiveness is to be sought).

Hoax remains a serious and increasing problem. Far too much of the time of hard-pressed CCCS researchers has had to be devoted this year to looking for trickery rather than studying the genuine phenomenon. But we believe that we and other research groups have come far in developing good diagnostic methods (provided we can get to an occurrence quickly); and the CCCS in particular is cooperating closely with the Wiltshire police in seeking to eliminate the nuisance of trespass and criminal damage. Hoax as a general

explanation now stretches credulity far more than any other hypothesis, given the number and complexity of events occurring across the country and the extensive surveillance which is being undertaken, especially in the Beckhampton area. It is striking that despite what we understand to be several years of police surveillance in this area (including aerial surveillance), so little has been detected in the way of hoax. It is also striking that despite careful precautions against hoax taken by Dr. Meaden's crop-watch on Morgan's Hill, two formations were found within view of his site after the lifting of the mist on a morning in early July. (Dr. Meaden will no doubt be recording in the *Journal of Meteorology* in due course whether those events were accompanied by significant changes in the several meteorological and other variables which his watch was monitoring: our impression is that they were not.)

Moreover, throughout the several weeks in which the Beckhampton area has undergone its plethora of events, CCCS observers and other watchers have been stationed about the locality in substantial numbers without getting more than a few sporadic indications of suspicious activity (which we reported to the police). Finally, the Royal Naval Aircraft Yard at Wroughton, which borders Marlborough Downs to the north and maintains a 24 - hour watch, tell us that they detected nothing suspicious on the

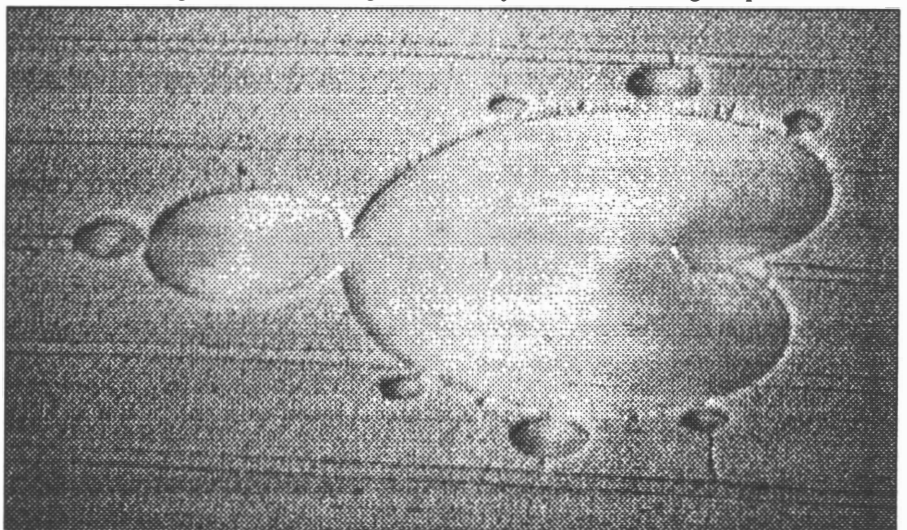


Photo 2 : Mandelbrot at Ickleton, Cambridgeshire
Picture by George Wingfield

night of 16/17th July, when at least three events occurred on the Downs, including the remarkable formation near Barbury Castle.

Apart from the great variety of new patterns seen this year, the CCCS is amassing much evidence for the occurrence of unusual luminous aerial events in the Beckhampton area (and elsewhere) during the 1991 season, one of them caught on video by John Holman of Yorkshire and his son and considered by a firm which makes flares for the Army not to be an instance of the latter. This very interesting material (which includes a surprising variety of luminosities) is being carefully evaluated. The CCCS hopes to report further in the next issue, both on this and other reported events of an apparently anomalous kind.

In summary, 1991 has surprised us yet again by the diversity of its formations, their occurrence across a wide area of the country (though with the usual distinct appearance of local clustering), the richness of the local concentration in the Beckhampton area, and the effects associated with these many events. If one event above all is to be picked out for its potentially revolutionary implications, it is probably the 'Mandelbrot Event' in Cambridgeshire (see cover and photo 2). This will be the subject of a special booklet to be published under CCCS sponsorship later this year. The CCCS research panels are hard at work on much other material. We shall publish findings as soon as we can.

I must ruefully add that the several predictions of 1991 events lodged with me at the beginning of the season by courageous members using various forms of non-conventional divination have proved no more successful so far than anything ever attempted on behalf of atmospheric physics; the phenomenon continues to 'do its own thing'. (But hats off to those who had the spirit to rush in where 'hard science' feared to tread. Perhaps the latter will one day have the courage to lay its own forecasts on the line.)

This summary has been compiled from material provided by the Directors of Field Operations (Richard Andrews,

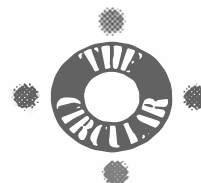
Busty Taylor and George Wingfield); Stanley and Sue Morcom; Una Dawood, Arthur Mills, Alan Rayner and other members of the Beckhampton Group (which has been a tower of strength in this busiest of areas); and numerous others, including: Brian Grist of Bristol and his companions; George Bishop of Cornwall; L. J. Saunders on a visit to Devon; Tony Caldicott, Mike Carrie and John F. Knight of Nottinghamshire; Omar Fowler of Derbyshire; Paul Bolam of Buckinghamshire; Beth Davis of Cambridgeshire; John Holman and his companions for a remarkable video clip; CCCS members in Essex and Suffolk; private pilots Leslie Banks and David Coe; and (very particularly) Dr. David Wilson of the Cambridge University Aerial Photographic Unit and Steve Barker, private pilot, for aerial cover of the Mandelbrot Event, and Beth Davis of the CCCS Cambridgeshire Branch for the swift action which ensured the collection of vital data about this extraordinary occurrence. Local press cuttings have been drawn upon (though we may well have missed many of them - see appeal on page 16). Other helpful people have not been mentioned, either because their final reports are not yet with us at the time of going to press, or because they prefer anonymity, or because I have carelessly overlooked them (and if I have, I offer every apology). Any corrections or expansions to this summary will be most gratefully received, c/o George Wingfield at his published address.]

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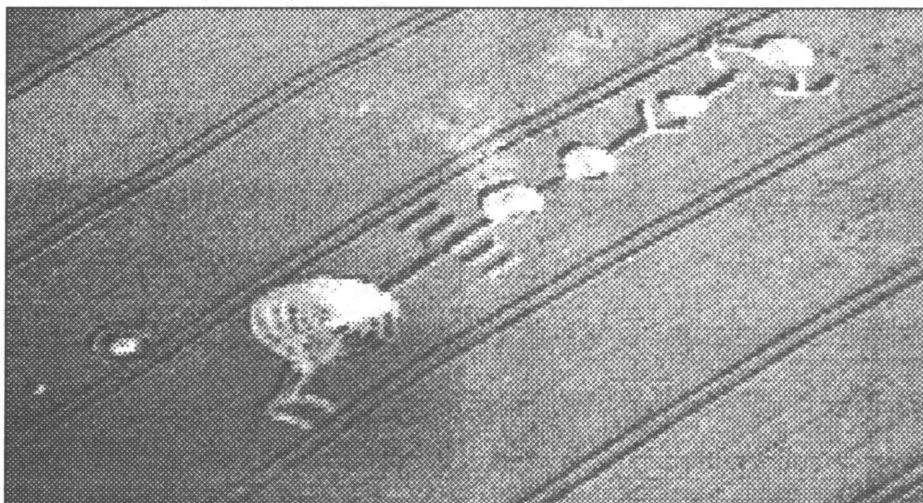


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MAJOR
DEVELOPMENTS
IN
CROP CIRCLE
RESEARCH
1990

BY

G T MEADEN, CERES (Circles
Effect Research Group), TORRO

This article, reprinted (with kind permission) from the Journal of Meteorology Vol. 16, No. 159 (May/June 1991), completes a brief report on the 1990 circles season as compiled by the CERES Organisation. The first part of the report was published in the same journal in February 1991 and the second part in April. The present section includes preliminary theoretical reasonings and some analytical work about the vortex-line systems of 1990. Further details with illustrations and additional articles from other CERES investigators is given in the new book Circles from the Sky published by Souvenir Press in June 1991.

Some Theoretical Consequences

The 1990 season was outstanding with its great variety of wholly unexpected natural vortex-circle types and groups. Moreover, further unimpeachable evidence was forthcoming in the form of eye-witness sightings (as discussed in *Circles from the Sky*). This has helped to confirm that, aside from a low number of obviously faked circles, the evidence is overwhelming in favour of a natural atmospheric origin for the circles effect, and it is certainly the case that all truly open-minded, unbiased people who have properly studied the facts accept that this is so.

Indeed, the proof is overwhelming that the circles are the result of locally gale-strength or hurricane-strength winds spinning as partially-ionised vortices (recall that conventional whirlwinds

are ionised too) - and occasionally these circle-making vortices produce sound and light at the same time. We fully expect that considerable theoretical advances will ensue in the coming years as the analyses proceed, especially for the more extraordinary groups such as the much-publicised Alton Barnes circles. This displays interesting aberrations from circularity which positively helps the generalised vortex theory.

For instance, it has been suspected for some time that vortices can have complicated but symmetrical internal structures which upon impact with the crop and ground lead to the well-known quintuplet formations or the broad multi-ringed systems, but at Alton Barnes crop and ground impact of *unstable* vortices gave rise to less regular patterns and exposed for analysis something of the satellite-forming and ring-forming elements in a 'miscarriage' situation. By studying imperfect cases like these we are learning more quickly than expected the working details of the complex vortices, and are also demonstrating how effective a research tool the study of imperfect circles can be.

In this context one further circle requires special mention because although it was only a single circle it had the unusual characteristic of being a circle of the 'radially-inward suction' kind. This, the first truly 'radial inward' circle in our records of circles (which by April 1991 totalled 1750), happened at Braishford, Hampshire, in August. The five - metre circle was characterised by a ring of bare earth created by an inward parting of the wheat whose heads all lay 'towards the centre as though it had been combed'.

This directional motion produced a conical centre of unflattened wheat protruding upwards from the bed (*Romsey Advertiser*). The circle therefore demonstrated the whirlwind phenomenon of vortical spin-up, in the manner already explained by John Snow in *Circles from the Sky*. At the same time a considerable theoretical advance was made by Dr. Tokio Kikuchi who recently performed computer simulated modelling of the impact of a spiral vortex (or nanoburst)

with a plane horizontal surface, and discovered that the rotational flow at the point of impact rapidly leads to the appearance of a counter-rotating ring, as occasionally seen naturally. This important discovery is being announced at the Twentieth General Assembly of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics in Vienna, Austria, this August under the title 'Nanoburst: Microburst by a spiral vortex of micrometeorological scale.'

Strange Attractors

Whereas prior to 1990 due caution demanded the conclusion that there was then insufficient evidence to make statements about the possibility of circle-system alignments with tractor lines, enough additional data emerged in 1990 to permit such an announcement. In fact, a surprisingly large fraction of the linear circle-sets (spurred singles, dumb-bells, triple sets, and Alton Barnes - type extended complexes) were found aligned parallel or perpendicular to tramlines. A few were centred precisely along tramlines, and some others were angled at 45 or 60 degrees to tramlines (while others, to be sure, were not).

Analysis is incomplete but one can already say that it appears that a degree of circle alignment with some sort of inherent, largely-veiled but regularly-spaced *grid system* can occur (figure 1). The right-hand drawing is an approximate scale drawing of the six circles in the Stanton St. Bernard complex which form the *linear part* of the chain. The smallest circle is 'out of step' being centred 6.5 metres from the next, but after that the next five centres give centre-to-centre distances of respectively 17.4, 27.2, 18.3 and 36.6 metres which correlate well with points on a *nine-metre network* or a semi 18-metre network.

For Alton Barnes the correspondence is almost as impressive. From bottom to top the first four inter-centre distances give 10.4, 18.4 and 27 metres, a reasonable start for a basic nine-metre grid (or semi 18-metre grid), but then comes a non - 'integral' spacing at around 21 metres, followed by a quasi-nine multiple at 35 metres. For the purpose of the drawing, instead of

deforming the grid at this point we have, for convenience, reduced the non-integral spacing of 21 metres to 19 metres to allow for this single irregular offset. I should point out that a distance of 17 - 17.5 metres commonly corresponds to the spacing *between* adjacent pairs of tractor marks, and this leads to an overall network-repetition length close to 18.5 to 19 metres when adding the paired tractor-line widths themselves (the tractor's width of about 1.6 metres creates pairs of lines which are often around 1.6 to 1.8 metres across.) Wider spacings of 21-23 metres arise from the use of longer boom lengths. On some farms the spacing was 18 metres for many years and then a switch to longer booms was made.

The overall centre-to-centre length of the *principal* five circles at Stanton was 99 metres compared with 101 metres for the Alton set. It should be recalled that the two circle sets were located three kilometres apart and were angled in quite different directions with regard to the magnetic meridian (098 and 346 deg respectively). Despite this, the circle complexes have remarkable similarities as noted here, and others besides.

The clawed fins for instance egress primarily at around 30, 45 or 60 degrees to the main axes (which may suggest they aimed at various points on the inferred grid system). Also there are four circles or rings in each set, eight in all, each having a diameter close to 15 metres. This tends to suggest the existence of a preferred diametral size related perhaps to a well-defined Larmor radius, the consequence of the magnetron effect (the spiralling of high-velocity charged particles in the direction of an external magnetic field). The suggestion that preferred circle sizes exist seems supported by the observation that so many of the big circle diameters and ring diameters found in 1989 and 1990 were clustered about diameters of 31, 62 and 93 metres. In earlier years I had noticed a slight tendency for circle - diameters to occur at 4, 8 and 15 metres.

It would seem that the proposed *grid* (which sometimes corresponds to the visible tramlines) could act as a *guide for the local orientation of a vortex*

line or sheet. This would further intimate that electrical effects play a major role in this singular correlation. I propose that the primary vortex if electrified - as indeed I have inferred it to be for other reasons anyway - sometimes finds itself attracted to tractor - line regions because of local electric field anomalies initiated by the repeated passage of tractors up and down the field. Tractors of the same axle width return to the same fields year after year. They begin by working parallel to field boundaries, as a result of which the boom lengths of the planting, pesticide and fertilising machine assure, in some field systems at least, a repetition of the tractor ways up and down the field. Where ploughing and planting is done at right angles in alternating years a species of square-based grid could result. To this novel phenomenon - the electric-field anomaly link with tramlines - I have given the name *strange attractor* (*J. Meteorology*, vol. 15, 317-320, 1990) a name chosen via its use in chaos theory by which a degree of order seems to appear under somewhat unexpected circumstances.

Reasons for the development of electric-field anomalies, if that is what they are, have yet to be evaluated. I suggest that one is that the repeated passage of heavy farm equipment leads to compaction of the thin chalk-dust laden soil to depths approaching the bedrock. This would affect the flow of sub - surface water and hence modify the electrical conductivity of the dry chalky soil and therefore the local geo-electrical field. Such effects would be worse in the prolonged dry conditions of the hot summers of 1989 and 1990.

Another possibility is that effects arise from sub-surface electric currents induced by corresponding currents in the upper atmosphere. These effects would be more important at peak times of the eleven-year sunspot cycle, as pointed out by George Nehls (see below and in *Circles from the Sky*). 1990 was a year with unusually intense sunspot activity and for some months since 1989 there have been spectacular outbreaks of the aurora borealis as a result. While the Earth's upper-atmosphere activity is likely to be less strong in 1991, the circles effects in the

crops might be nearly as bad if the summer is again dry.

On the other hand, a very wet summer might arrive at dampening out the strongest of the anomalous circles effects observed in 1990. In Australia this spring scientists were monitoring an amazingly strong and persistent sub-surface electrical current which traversed the continent between the chief basaltic plates for a distance of some 5,600 kilometres! It may be the same in certain zones in the Northern Hemisphere.

The foregoing argument concerning the use and effect of tractors may help to explain why the circles effect in its advanced form, i.e. as evidenced by recent complex-circle discoveries, is a modern development in what is otherwise an age-old problem. Plain circles and simple ringed circles date back to the early agricultural era; the complex circle sets could be a recent manifestation related to farm-machinery usage in the field, especially over the shallow, dry chalky soils, combined with changes in agricultural practise. The latter embraces the uniformity of seed production and the evenness of crop height which results from identical stem-lengths, seed-planting in neat rows by today's well-designed agricultural machines, a level spread of fertilisers, and a lack of spurious weeds. These factors help make for a uniform field growth in which it is easier to detect small circles, narrow rings, narrow spurs, etc., than ever before.

From the time of the Napoleonic wars until the Second World War much of Wessex was down to sheep farming. Cereal fields did exist but they were much smaller than today's fields. Only in the last fifty years has 'prairie' farming of cereal crops become widespread. Centuries and millennia ago the seeds were broadcast unevenly by hand, the manure scattered likewise. Until fifty years ago horses were pulling the plough in many areas. Now the tractors are heavier than ever before, and so is the farm machinery, especially the combine harvesters which follow the same tracks made by the tractors and compact the subsoil so

thoroughly. Maybe more complex circle systems appear as a result, and this is what leads some people (notably the alien-intelligence brigade) to speak of an 'evolution' in crop-circle complexity as though it was caused by paranormal happenings.

We certainly accept that it is possible that some relationship with the eleven-year sunspot cycle may exist. George Nehls of Minnesota has mentioned that the frequency of power breakdowns in some areas may relate to an increased ionisation in the atmosphere from this cause. I have written at length about the natural ionisation of vortices and the way they could link with electric field anomalies. Gordon Garrould has discussed ionisation levels in crops from various causes (*J. Meteorology*, vol 14, November 1990), and Professor Hiroshi Kikuchi has written theoretically on naturally-formed dusty plasma vortices as a possible origin of crop circles (EHD Vortex in the Atmosphere with Helical Turbulence in Electric and Space-Charge Fields). This may all suggest that the number and complexity of crop circles may have peaked with the maximum in the sunspot cycle which happened late in 1990, or the peak may come in 1991 before it tails off again.

The crucial factor in the end may be the character of the season's weather as explained above. It seems that the present sunspot cycle has been unusually strong, while the one which peaked in 1980-81 was weak. In returning still further into the past (by looking at the cycle maxima of 1970, 1959, 1948, etc.) one moves progressively towards quite a different farming regime, as explained before - one which was very much less developed from what it is now.

Needless to say there are people who continue to close their minds to explanations that could be so rational - chiefly because rationality equates with the scientific - and they prefer to bang their empty drums in support of their groundless fairy-tale beliefs. Of course they have never produced any proof to support their wishful thinking. Their ideas are what dreams are made of, and this leads them to be carefree and reckless when it comes to observation

and reporting - blindly ignoring, as well, the extensive eyewitness evidence of spinning winds forming circles.

The chalk hills of Wessex are the home of the circles phenomenon, just as in the Neolithic and Bronze Age they were the home of the sacred stone rings, timber rings and circular round-barrows. Our ancestors found simple circles and rings in their crops and in the grass, and they worshipped them. The results of the author's study into this fascinating facet of circles research, begun in 1980, and put in writing from 1983 onwards is set out in considerable details in two books published elsewhere this year. The first of these, entitled *The Goddess of the Stones*, [was] published in June by Souvenir press, London. This work establishes without doubt very extensive proof that the circles effect has always happened, and always will as long as there is suitable vegetation to display it or witnesses near enough to see it.

The Work Continues

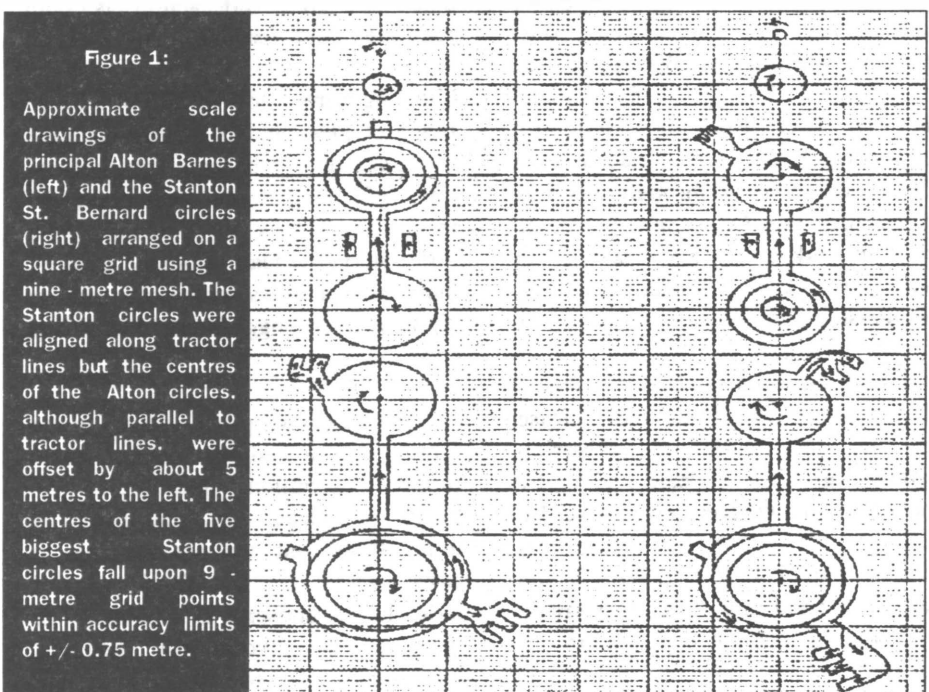
1991 has begun well. Professor Christopher Church (Miami University) has modelled the Cheesefoot Hill region and set it up in a wind-tunnel using smoke streamers to demonstrate the windflows. Dr. Tokio Kikuchi (Kochi University) has pursued his theoretical calculations and proved by computer-simulation that

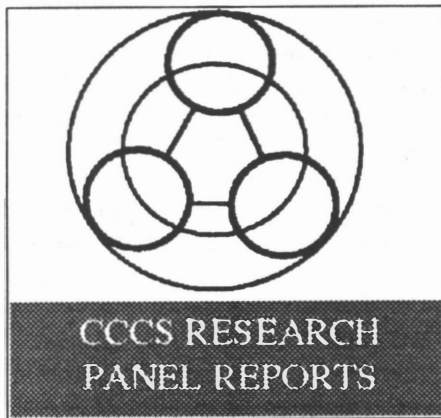
upon impacting a horizontal plane spiralling vortices create circles with outer rings. Sheldon Wernikoff (CERES) has photographed quintuplet circles forming as a result of plasma vortices impacting an anode in an ionised gas. And Professor Y. H. Ohtsuki (Waseda University) has confirmed by direct experiment that when plasma vortices impact a charged, powder-covered metal plate, circles with concentric rings are produced!

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the very considerable number of people - including all those named in this report and in *Circles from the Sky* - who by their participation as part of the international CERES operation, or in collaboration with CERES, made possible this important collection of detailed scientific data on the circles effect.

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*The CCCS Research Panellists have been snowed under with work, as you can imagine - so some reports here are quite brief. More detailed reports will hopefully be ready for the December issue of **The Circular**. But first, Leonie Starr presents an update on the Non - Conventional Hypotheses Panel, postponed from the June issue.*

It is with some difficulty that I find myself complying with Bob's request to give a brief report upon the work of the panel for Non - Conventional Hypotheses. By its very nature the scope of the remit held by this panel is enormous and the diversity of ideas, thoughts and even findings that it encompasses cannot be simply listed as a set of objectives and methodologies as would be the case for the more focused (and possibly one should say contained) panels.

First I should like to describe the mechanisms by which the panel receives information. We utilise the main CCCS Post Box for general enquiries (PO Box 146, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5JY UK). Indeed most letters now coming through this box (some fifty per week) are concerned with the work of this panel rather than more mundane subscription or membership matters.

(If I may digress to a note of practical administration for a moment, please note that subscription and membership matters are now dealt with by Specialist Knowledge Services of St. Aldhelm, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset BA11 1DX UK. Back to the matter in hand now, after that cri de coeur on the subject of misdirected mail!)

The variety of correspondence relating to the scope of this panel work has been truly overwhelming and has been presented in all shapes and sizes. This range embraces anything from long texts to drawings, posters, numerical and 'scientific' hypotheses. The subject matter contained in these different presentations is equally diverse and overlapping. It certainly is proving a challenge to assimilate or even roughly categorise. A mundane issue that has occasionally presented difficulties to us has been the variety of languages in which received information has been written (and I do in this instance use 'received' in the context of posted!).

So how is such a large volume of information handled? At present the first sift of this daunting task is being carried out by myself together with responders to my note requesting assistance in the last issue of *The Circular*. We categorise all information into various groups. That which should more properly be sent to other panels is so directed. That which clearly falls within the particular area of expertise of another individual, be this a Council member of the CCCS or another person within or outside the CCCS, is dispatched to these individuals with a copy usually being kept for the main record file that we are creating. Much of the received correspondence cannot be said to be suited to either of the above methods of handling. Their contents are noted and acted on (if overt action is both requested and feasible). As with all endeavours of this type it is only by allowing a free flow inward of a broad range of ideas and cogitating on these that links start to become apparent and lines of thought and enquiry reveal themselves. It is very strange how different individuals separated often by thousands of miles write with similar view points, suggestions, ideas and experiences.

The nature of the 'panel' utilised in the foregoing procedure needs some further description. Because of the blend of ideas and the flow of information that we are seeking to assist there is no fixed set of individuals chosen to monitor or appraise the worth of received information. To use such a system

would inevitably colour the viewpoint taken about the validity or value of some received correspondence. All of us have our blind spots and prejudices however enlightened we may consider ourselves to be. Thus, insofar as it is possible to devise an evaluation system free of these constraints of subjectivity, we have attempted to ensure that the persons known to us to be most open to the views and subject matter contained in a given item of correspondence is the one to receive such. To do otherwise would be a form of censorship that is certainly against the philosophy we espouse.

Since the ideas received by PO Box 146 thus find themselves spread far and wide it is certainly a fact that much subsequent discussion (and correspondence) needs to occur to register the thoughts of the ultimate recipient. Of course it has to be said that implicit in the system of evaluation and dissemination described above is the need for us at PO Box 146 to impose our regime upon the categorisation and redirection of received ideas. We, like everyone else, can be guilty of dismissing or underestimating the value of ideas received through ignorance and/or personal prejudices. I hope however that the description above of our modus operandi at least indicates that we have an intention to eliminate this occurrence as much as possible.

Having now grasped the nettle by conceding that personal prejudice needs to be actively countered by devising evaluation systems to minimise it, I feel a useful and logical footnote to this would be a brief introduction to my own background. From this training you will possibly glean what my personal interests are, and maybe even my prejudices, both for and against in certain areas! I have for some twenty-five years been studying Astrology as a particular discipline and for the same period of time I have delved into that group of areas best described under the umbrella heading of Mysticism. This has included psychology (particularly Jungian); symbolism, in particular its progress through successive civilisations; psychical research including mediumship / clairvoyance

and more recently channelling, palmistry and numerology. I find the most unexpected connections arising across these areas as I continue to study them and they spur me onto embrace new areas of study, such as the crop circles phenomenon.

In this introduction to the 'Non-Conventional Hypotheses' I have described the process by which we are receiving and disseminating information and hopefully I have assured you that all opinions, ideas and observations are welcome and catered for. Obviously it is impossible to comprehensively list the areas of study, theories, etc., that we are currently engaged in or know other persons to be pursuing internationally. The broad bands of study however can be summarised below, although this is by no means an exhaustive list.

On a visual level, the symbolism and interpretation of the increasingly complex patterns now forming is a rich area of study. This can only increase as the formations become even more complicated and numerous.

On a spiritual level, the feelings of individuals - both those experienced in proximity to 'circle' events and the channelled materials people feel they have received - are all being reviewed.

The concept of 'Earth Energies', much dismissed by some conventional scientists, but nevertheless adhered to by so many people are also being investigated. There is much work being done by leading dowsers on the relationship of ley lines to circles. Also the idea that the planet has a 'consciousness' which manifests these events is the belief of some.

We have received and are aware of research into the effects of other planets upon ours, whether that is based on ancient philosophies such as Astrology or other bases.

I would like to conclude this brief introduction to and report on the Non-Conventional Hypotheses panel by assuring all who feel they have something to offer by way of experience or philosophy that we are happy to receive any contributions.

However, please be patient for a reply and do not send anything you want returned. If you need a copy make one *before* you send it to us!

Leonie Starr, August 1991.

Next, a short note from Dr. Roger Taylor (Physical Phenomena panel).

Physical Effects

As the season draws to a close, I am spending as much time in the fields as possible. Most of the instruments which I carry in my black bag (Geiger counter, detector of magnetic or static signals, ultrasonic detector, neon discharge tube, compass) have not yielded anything interesting so far. The only signals which might be significant are detected on the untuned UHF radio. Two sounds have been heard: a harsh continuous buzz, and a regular unmusical bleep, rather like certain grasshoppers, at 5 to 6 second intervals. These have usually been heard separately, but sometimes together.

I have put some time into mapping them. They are by no means limited to circles, and have been heard off the coast of Dorset. This, and the fact that they were absent from some of the freshest circles, leads me to suspect that they are some kind of man-made radar signal. The buzz is highly directional, so one might perhaps be able to track it down to its sources.

I have looked at the buzz on an oscilloscope. Basically it is a sharp biphasic spike repeated at 50 Hz. This leads one to suspect it comes from high tension mains somewhere. But on testing the instruments near some pylons, I found the static detector (which doesn't detect the buzz) would pick up mains at well over 500 yards, whereas UHF radio lost it by 50 yards.

It will be very interesting to analyse and photograph the wave forms of the various sounds which people have picked up, either by microphone or radio. For this purpose Rodney Hale has kindly offered his oscilloscope and expertise. Thus I am now appealing for anyone who has recorded an interesting sound to send me the tape. (This would preferably be an original - I undertake to return it undamaged, and to respect the owner's wishes as regards copyright). Tapes should be accompanied by details of where and when recorded, and any other relevant circumstances. Please write to: CCCS, Dr. Roger Taylor, Madgwicks, Brook Lane, Albury, Guildford, Surrey GU5 9DH UK. Thank you.

CCCS WINTER WORKSHOPS

A series of winter workshops is planned, giving you the opportunity to discuss the meaning of the crop circle phenomenon with other people in your locale.

CCCS Chairman Michael Green will be localising these regional meetings, at which the CCCS membership can discuss their own experiences in the crop circles and consider what lies behind these baffling events.

The meetings (starting at 10 am and ending at 4 pm) will be held at regional centres and each will begin with a review of local (or, in the case of London, the nearest!) 1991 crop formations. There will be a charge of £10 per person, payable at the door. (Please bring your own packed lunch.)

If you would like to attend the workshop in your area, please write to the relevant person listed below **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**, sending a S.A.E. You will be advised of the date and venue.

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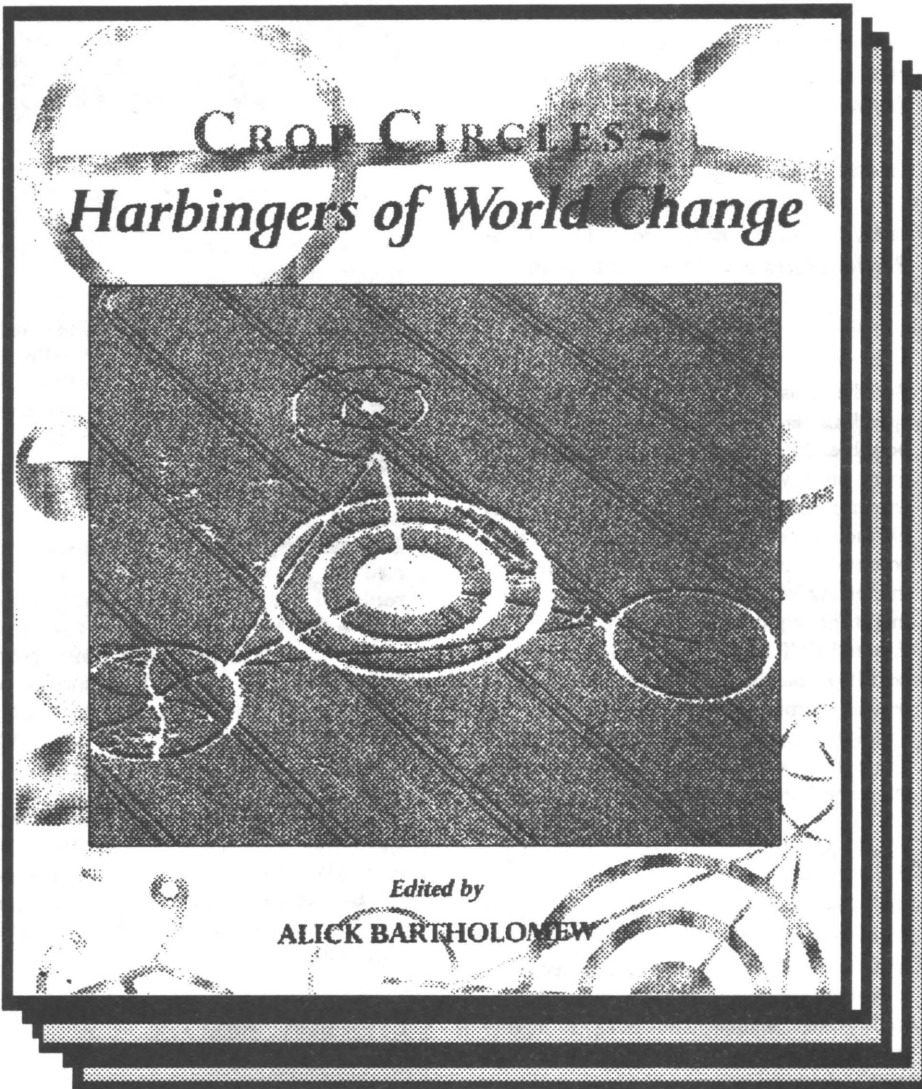
Gloria Wingfield
Haame House
North Wootton
Shepton Mallet
Somerset
BA4 4HW.

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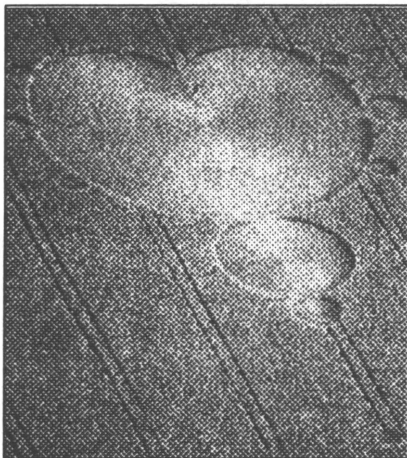
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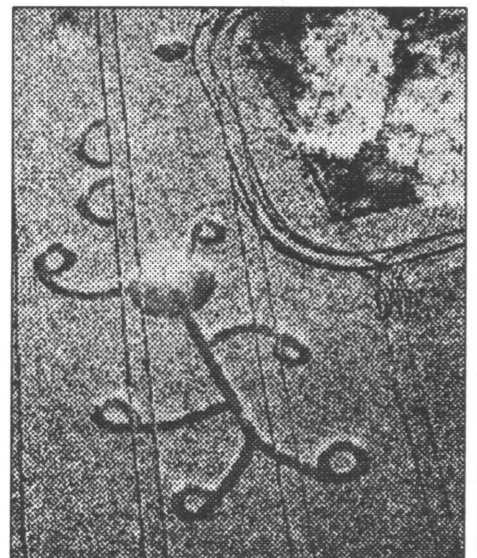
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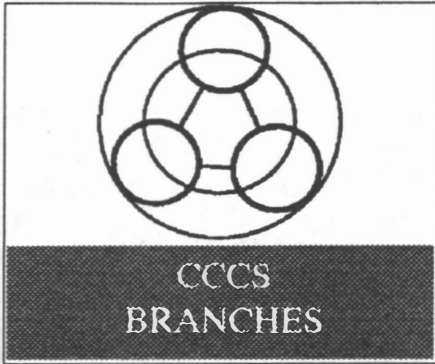
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Patrick Palgrave-Moore
Council Member & Branch Organiser

CCCS membership claims of secrecy and lack of opportunity during the current season have been reaching us. Perhaps this is a good time to really examine what we are trying to accomplish and what is on offer. There is no doubt that our members want nothing less than open and immediate access to all circle formations at all times and that feelings over this position run high. From the viewpoint of mass appeal and the opportunity of boosting funds with new membership the CCCS could easily encourage this feeling and be provided with much needed funds, without which there can be little serious research and equipment purchased. Life in reality is never as simple as we would like so we have to be practical. We want all our members to share the experiences - but at the same time we have to safeguard our relationship with the farming community.

We have set out to examine the crop circle phenomenon scientifically while at the same time keeping an open mind in our approach to any esoteric hypothesis. To do this requires access to information, access to equipment with access to and acceptance by the scientific community. Any group attempting to encourage scientists into abandoning their fixed ideas of the known universe can expect a lukewarm response. Where that group is also prepared to share its research project with esoteric answers to the enigma, then the scientific response becomes almost dry. However, we are beginning to attract scientists of high calibre to take these sightings seriously and we have no doubt that the list will grow. The sightings, of course, are our biggest asset. There can be no dispute that they are there and despite some feeble attempts to provide a scientific explanation, generally the scientific community is still afraid to recognise the limitation of its present knowledge.

Interest in the phenomenon has matched the growth of sightings throughout the world. This has led to several problems, not the least of which has been the development of

a need for restricting access to information. Bearing in mind our policy to encourage membership participation, this has become a difficult decision to take. Reputations with the farming community have been built up over many years and any risk of fracturing these relationships could jeopardise our own access to vital data. It is quite understandable why farmers do not want open public access to their land. This is their livelihood and the prospect - a very real prospect - of this being destroyed by invasions of hundreds of 'potential scientists' has made it necessary for us to recognise their wishes and with old some specific site information from the general membership and the Press. Of course, where our farming contacts have agreed to outside visits, we do our best to pass on information to our members. We honestly don't expect to retain the enthusiasm of our members unless they too can obtain at least some first-hand experiences.

However, a few more serious factors are at work here. We are regularly approached by opportunists throughout the world who want site information purely for self-glorification or for profit motivation and in this respect some security of our database has to be made. We are aware of individuals working in the field who encourage farmers to give site access only to themselves and we know of others who attempt to destroy the pristine nature of formations and negate their energy fields once their own research has been completed. This is all rather sad. How nice it would be if all interested parties could work happily together without a few individuals feeling that they alone have prior rights.

Let's now consider what else is on offer. A good organisation will not only attract members automatically but will be alive and active enough to retain membership interest. Obviously, you get out of an organisation what you put in. The flow cannot be one-way. Our idea of a branch structure serves as a bridge. Based generally on county boundaries CCCS members are allocated to branches automatically, according to their geographical residence. The branch serves as a focal point for members to meet and exchange views, to widen their horizons by talks, field trips and sessions involving training in dowsing and other techniques. Most of this activity takes place outside the crop circle months and serves as periods of preparation and analysis. Perhaps of more importance is that it serves to encourage an openness of mind to the challenge. Branches are autonomous and can encompass any related activity within the guidelines of the CCCS, but they need the active support of all members to be productive.

There have been difficulties, of course. At first, everyone wanted to be the Branch Convenor in the southern counties as if some kind of franchise was on offer. Once it was realised that being in charge of field work was not the principal object of forming a branch, offers diminished. Several important branches have been formed already and many other convenors have been appointed but there are still obvious gaps, particularly in Hampshire, Surrey and Wiltshire, where we are looking for members with organising flair and tact.

Looking at circle formations is obviously important but apart from any esoteric experience gained, this alone will not solve our problems. There will be some who in ten years time will still be systematically recording different and more complicated patterns but will be none the wiser as to their origin or meaning. This is only a part of the operation and even if research work at branch level duplicates work at national level, than at least we will be working together for a common cause. Can those complaining the loudest ask themselves what contribution they are making to their local activity?

The following CCCS Branches are in operation:

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

(including HUNTINGDONSHIRE):

Beth Davis,
 11b Fitzwilliam Road,
 Cambridge CB2 2BN.

DORSET:

Secretary- John Lincoln,
 6 Braemer Avenue,
 Hengistbury Head,
 Southbourne.

ESSEX:

Chairman - Neil Durant,
 Quincies Cottage,
 The Gore, Rayne,
 Braintree CM7 8RL.

KENT:

Convenor - Robert Davison,
 2 Tufton Road,
 Rainham ME8 7SH.

NORFOLK:

Secretary - Suzanne Crisp,
 11 Bathurst Road,
 Norwich NR2 2PP.

SOMERSET & AVON:

Convenor - Alick Bartholomew,
 The Hollies,
 Wellow,
 Bath BA2 8QJ.

Convenors have been appointed in the following areas to whom supportive contact should be made:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE:

Ann Appelmeik,
1 Strathmore Cottages,
Walkley Wood,
Nailsworth GL6 0RZ.

ISLE OF WIGHT:

Patricia Rhodes,
Seawinds,
The Broadway,
Totland Bay.

LONDON & MIDDLESEX:

Stanley Morcom,
56 Ranelagh Road,
Ealing W5 5RP.

NORTHUMBERLAND & DURHAM:

Daniel Moss,
181 Sandyford Road,
Jesmond,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE:

Anthony Caldicott,
31 Pelham Street,
Newark
NG24 4XD.

OXFORDSHIRE:

Secretary- Mazalee Gibson,
59 Freeland Road,
Oxford OX4 4BS.

SCOTLAND:

John Plowman,
131 Stirling Drive,
Bishopbriggs,
Glasgow G64 3AX.

WALES:

Roger Palmer,
Manledd Y'fan,
Llanidloes,
Montgomeryshire SY18 6NP.

WEST MIDLANDS:

incorporating WORCESTERSHIRE,
WARWICKSHIRE, STAFFORDSHIRE:
Raymond Cox,
4 Lulworth Close,
Halesowen,
West Midlands B63 2UJ.

Inaugural meeting to be held in
Birmingham, Saturday 19th October.
Details from the above. (0384 66383)

YORKSHIRE:

John Holman,
20 Newton Gardens,
Ripon
HG4 1QF.

DONATIONS TO THE CCCS

The CCCS would like to thank the following for their generous donations towards general & research funds:

I.R.H. ALLAN, Amanda BAGLEY, Alick BARTHOLOMEW, Franche BLACK, D.L. BLOMFIELD, Andre BOLIANY, Peggy BUNT, Derrick CARVELL, A.D. CORNELL, Beth DAVIS, Joan DAVIS, Eva-Maria DEMUTH, Tom DUNFORD, Anne DRYSDALE, Dale E. GRAFF, Michael GREEN, N.J. GRIFFEN, L.P. HENDON, Chris HITCHEN, Dorothy JORDON, Montague KEEN, Jurgen KRONIG, John LAWSON, Stuart LAYCOCK, Drew LEITH, J.S. MACKAY, Kathleen McCRAY, Ewan McCSCOTT, Hans Christian MEISER, Clive NADIN, Elizabeth OGILVIE, Keith PALMER, W.T.G. PERROTT, Chris PHILLIPS, Lucy PRINGLE, Ernest RAGER, Martin RAYMENT, Sheila McCABE REAY, Kathy REES, Mr. & Mrs. RUSSELL, G.N. SALWAY, Ewan SCOTT, Alan SESTIC, Mrs. A. SMITH, David SMITH, Lester SMITH, Sue STOREY, Ann WALTON, Annette WILL, Terry WILSON.

A generous gift of two of their excellent business products has been made to us by Business Planning Systems International of High Wycombe, Bucks., and will be put to good use by the CCCS.

RAFFLE WINNERS

Some time ago the CCCS organised a fund-raising raffle. The first prize was a flight over the crop circles of 1991. Lucy Pringle took off with the lucky winners :-

I was fast asleep, the telephone made an insistent drilling sound down my ear; reluctantly I grasped the nettle. 'Busty here. We fly tomorrow at one o'clock!' Great news! Being the raffle organiser and a light weight to boot, I was to be included in this outing.

The next morning dawned fine and clear. I soon found myself down at Thruxton, chatting happily to Donald and Brenda Sherriff from Winchester, who had been nominated by the winner - Mrs. Dorothy Stonor - to take her place, not being a flyer.

Busty Taylor joined us, having dealt with all the flight procedures and soon we were winging our way through an unblemished sky towards Wiltshire. The beauty of the countryside flowed beneath us like an endless Aubusson tapestry, the colours and contrasts in light and shade depicted with clarity and brilliance. Donald and Brenda Sherriff, who had never been up in such a small plane before, were quickly reassured by Busty's expertise and soon overcame any nervousness they may have had.

'One minute to go' boomed Busty through his mouthpiece to our connecting headpieces. I had already set my Pentax MX at the ready - and just as well, for suddenly under the port wing of the Cessna appeared the pictograms at Alton Barnes, The Firs, Beckhampton, Avebury and Lockeridge. A whale with two eyes; three vesicapsices; another whale and another. Shapes with keys abutting - 'hold your camera steady,' I willed myself as excitement nearly overtook me. I had been into nearly all the formations by foot, but seeing them from aloft is quite another thing.

Busty, skilled pilot and comrade of the crop circles, placed us over and over again in the perfect position to press our camera buttons. Only the air turbulence may have marred his efforts. It certainly almost gave me a bloody nose as I clung to my camera and snapped the PERFECT picture; a sudden unavoidable lurch and my camera hit out at me like a southpaw! Tears streaming down my face, my vision was momentarily blurred, but not for long and only my pictures will reveal whether my hands remained true and steady.

Donald and Brenda Sherriff were also quick on the button and only stopped when they ran out of film. We finally turned and Busty pointed the nose of the Cessna back towards Thruxton. He made a perfect landing and as we unbuckled our seatbelts, words seemed inadequate to express the sheer unforgettable joy and wonder of what we had seen.

The unanimous verdict was that it was a thrilling experience. For me, the magic of that 30 minutes has stayed ever since. What story were we being told as we flew over the pages of *The Crop Circle Mystery*? Hard to say as we have not come to the end of the book and I refuse to look at the last page!

CCCS INFORMATION

Ralph Noyes
CCCS Hon. Sec.

Hot Lines

The CCCS would be grateful if you would go on using the contact points and hot-lines shown in the last two issues of *The Circular* if you have information about a crop circle event or something to contribute to research.

Newspaper Cuttings

The CCCS has not yet been able to afford the cost of a professional cuttings service. But newspaper reports, national or local, are of great value: they tell us about Press attitudes, and sometimes identify events we haven't heard of. You will help the CCCS greatly if you can send cuttings to the address below (and we'll credit you in future issues if you enclose your name and address). Cuttings from past years will be of as much interest as cuttings from 1991.

Membership Subscriptions for 1992 93

At the AGM last March CCCS members asked that they should be given plenty of time to think about membership subscriptions for future years. A proposal was made for reduced rates for 'family membership'. Taking into account the rising costs now facing us, together with the urgent need to press on with research and to fund a range of expert publications, the Council now proposes an individual rate of £15 (UK) from April next year (with suitably related overseas rates) or £20 (UK) to cover two membership cards (and one Circular) for any two members of the same household. A formal motion will be put to the 1992 AGM next March. But please tell us in the meantime if you see any strong objections.

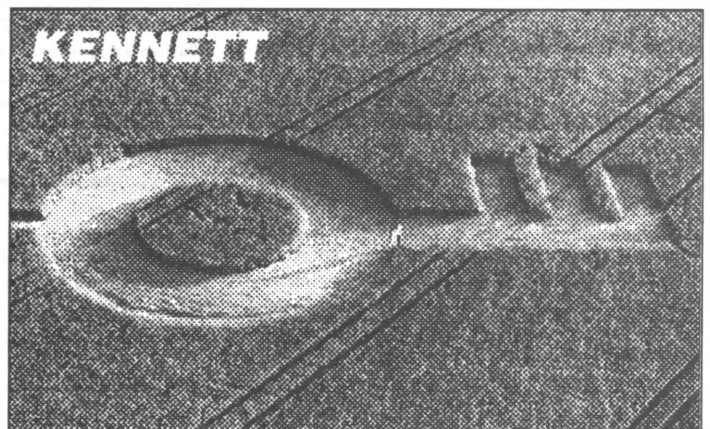
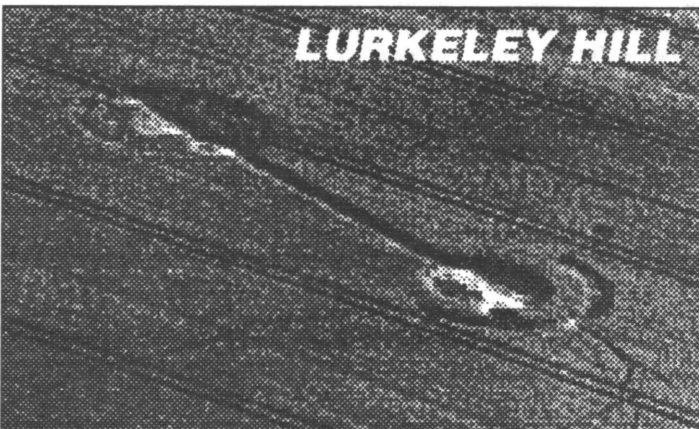
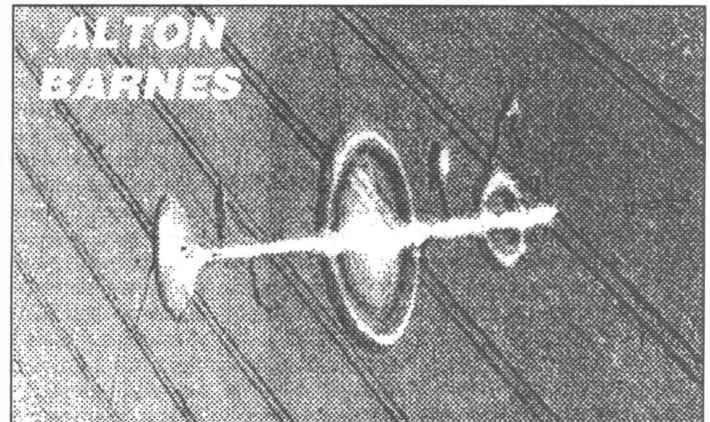
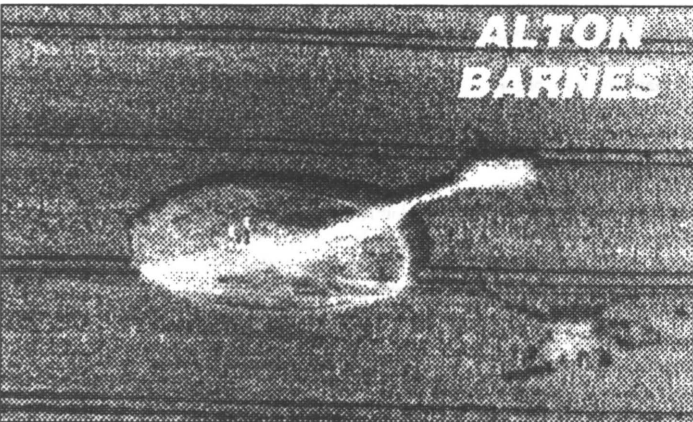
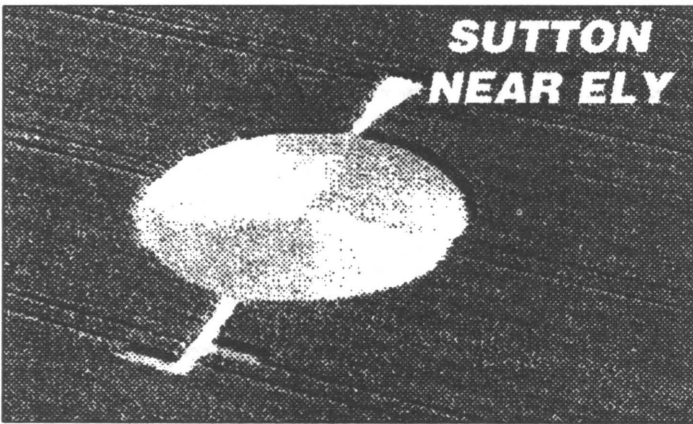
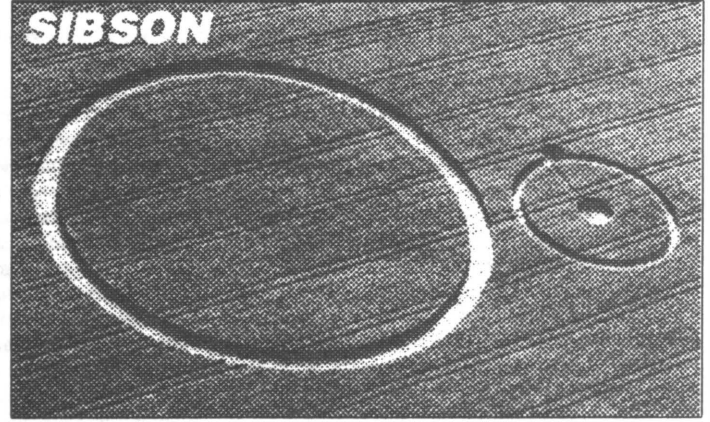
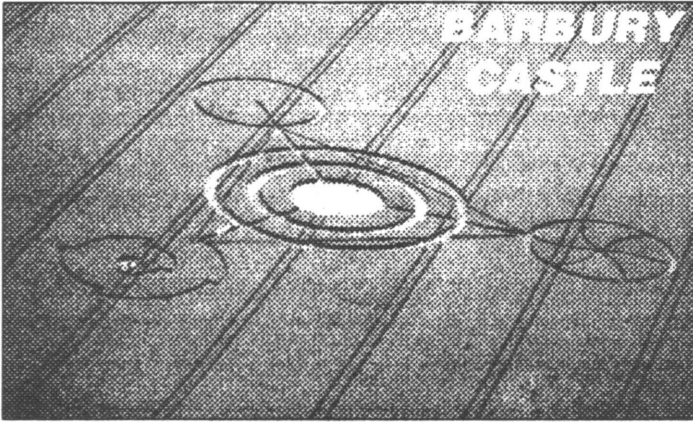
Elections to the CCCS Council for 1992 93

Under the CCCS's outline constitution, four members of the present elected Council will be standing down at the end of 1991 92 (although they will be free to offer themselves for re-election). Any CCCS member may run for election to fill one of these four places for 1992 93. Nominations will be accepted up to the end of January 1992, but it is not too soon to consider whether you would like to offer your name. If you wish to do so, please write at any time to the address below, attaching the signatures of two CCCS members who are willing to sponsor you, together with a brief description of yourself and your policies for the CCCS in not more than 300 words (and written exactly as you would wish your details to appear on the ballot paper).

The address for communications regarding any of the above items is as follows:

Ralph Noyes,
9 Oakley Street,
London
SW3 5NN.

CROP CIRCLE GALLERY '91 - GEORGE WINGFIELD



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

With Circular Readers

Decoding

Dear Editor: I don't suppose there's anything inherently wrong with trying to 'translate' crop circle 'pictograms' into ancient Tifinag, as Jon Erik Beckjord did in the last issue of *The Circular* (Vol. 2, No. 2, June 1991). After all, it beats crossword puzzles, and with it having rained 29 days in June alone, cerealists certainly need something to do when the weather turns foul.

I just hope your readers don't take such linguistic exercises for anything more serious than the totally subjective interpretations they are. For one thing, it's interesting to note that Barry Fell's own Tifinag alphabet and translations based on same are not necessarily universally accepted among other students of the subject. For another, Beckjord's own transliterations of Tifinag are so subjective as to warrant the appellation Tifinag B in order to distinguish it from Tifinag (Fell).

A case in point is Beckjord's transliteration of the central circle found in the Hazeley Farm/Barn Field 'pictogram' as 'circle holding two bars', which he renders as 'LL' for *llki*, or 'like'. In fact, there is no such letter in Tifinag! (I'm working from page 103 of Fell's *Bronze Age America*, which is the same source as Beckjord cites.)

From what I can tell, there is indeed a single L for *llki*, which is represented by two vertical bars or two side-by-side small circles. There is also a letter W which is represented by two horizontal bars, or two small circles, one above the other. So which are the two bars in the middle circle of the Hazeley Farm foundation: horizontal or vertical? Since we have no way of knowing how the formation is oriented, we must rely on Mr. Beckjord's subjective say-so. Again, how do we know that it isn't *three* bars inside the circle? Furthermore, what about the circle itself? Fell shows that a circle represents the letters HR, for *hringr*, or 'ring'. So what is the central circle figure at Hazeley Farm? Is it a circle holding two bars, three bars, or simply a circle *and* two (or three) bars? If the latter, the central segment would transliterate into Tifinag as either R,L, or L,R; or W, L or L, W.

When I asked Mr. Beckjord about this Tifinag anomaly in correspondence (the lack of a letter or figure represented by two bars inside a circle), he replied that the circle or ring was only there for emphasis! Surely this is another totally subjective assertion, or perhaps the ancient Norse, unbeknownst to Fell, developed the first use of italics? In fact, the entire house of this particular 'translation' is built entirely on such subjective cards, each stacked one atop the other. How, for example, do we know it is supposed to be broken down into individual (subjectively determined) components, rather than 'read' as a whole? How do we possibly determine the original formation's 'intended' orientation, other than, again, wholly subjectively? And so on, I'm

afraid, throughout every step, and we haven't even started adding vowels to the consonants yet.

Mr. Beckjord would respond (and has) by saying that we have to take the approach that best 'makes sense'. But sense to whom, Mr Beckjord? I could just as easily come up with my own contrary 'translations', which I suppose would then have to be catalogued in Tifinag S, for this is just the sort of subjective infinity in which direction such an approach points us. We might as well call it 'Build your Own Tifinag Grammar' and sell it as a game kit. Interpret crop circles in your spare time. You supply your own initials. As superficially intriguing as such 'translations' might be, I suggest that most cerealists have better things to do with their time and energy. If, of course, it ever stops raining.

Denis Stacy, San Antonio, Texas USA.
(Editor of the *MUFON Journal*.)

Dear Circular: I can't pretend to understand the language of Tifinag, which Jon Erik Beckjord uses to decode a couple of crop pictograms but, I have a nodding acquaintance with the English language and its origins and would take issue with the meanings he attaches to his decodings.

Beckjord decodes the first Cheesefoot Head pictogram as 'This is the place of the Devil, an evil place'. To get to this he translates the Norse *Orm* correctly to 'worm/serpent', then bafflingly asserts that its modern meaning is 'evil'. He also translates 'R-D' into 'Dire' which he then modernises into 'evil'. Any student of Earth Mysteries knows that Worm or Dragon does not mean 'Devil' - the later, Christian overlay - but is synonymous with the earth current (as Simon Burton points out in his 'Gnawing at the Roots' in the same issue). Likewise Dire does not mean 'evil' but 'fraught' or 'desperate' (in dire straits), deriving not from Old English as Beckjord asserts but from the Latin *dirus*, meaning 'ominous', and Greek *deos*, or 'fear'. His Danish *Darlig* and Berber *Diri* may, of course, share a common - presumably Indo-European - source with Latin and Greek.

A more plausible translation of Beckjord's Tifinag decoding might thus be: 'This dragon place is in dire straits', or 'This dragon place is threatened', or 'This sacred spot is in danger'. Likewise, when *The Circular* decodes a second Cheesefoot Head crop pictogram by Tifinag, you come up with 'This roadstead or anchorage is an evil or dangerous place' or 'This is a dangerous place to camp'. You correctly identify Old English *Red* (from Old Norse *Reith*) as meaning 'road' or 'roadstead'. In effect these two terms are opposite, 'road' meaning 'open way', while 'roadstead' means, as you say, a sheltered anchorage or camp. An alternative and more plausible translation from Tifinag would thus be: 'This open way is in danger' or 'This site is 'threatened'.

As regards 'camps', *The Circular* team waffles on about whether the spot is a good place for circles watchers to pitch canvas, ignoring the more

obvious presence of Wessex's numerous military camps. Taking your own version of 'dire' as 'evil' the meaning could thus be: 'The military camp up the road is evil and threatening'. A message, perhaps, for the special Army squad Ralph Noyes assures us has been assigned to monitor crop circles.

George Staverton
(address withheld by request).

Don't involve 'The Circular team' (how many of us do you think there are?!) in this, George! Beckjord's translations are nothing to do with us; we merely published his work in an effort to get some dialogue going (pardon the pun) about whether or not crop formations yield any significant information when such methods are applied to them. We do not have any feelings one way or the other about Jon Erik's thoughts on the subject (and this was an article published with no endorsement whatsoever from the CCCS). Your letter, taken alongside Denis Stacy's, shows that much more careful assessment of translations is needed and I thank you both for responding. (P.S. - there are just two of us directly involved in *The Circular's* production: myself and John Brocks.)

Paradigms

Dear Mr Kingsley: I hope it's not too late to make comment on an article published in the March edition of *The Circular* under the title 'Paradigms', by Jenny Randles.

Firstly I'd like to remind readers of the book by Randles & Fuller called *Crop Circles: A Mystery Solved* (Hale, 1990), in which I found the pompous style of writing - to the effect that anyone who disagreed with their point of view became the subject of snide ridicule - most discomforting. Ms. Randles seems to be so intent upon proving that we are not being visited by aliens from outer space that it would appear she has relegated any theory differing from her own view on the cause of crop circles to the same 'lunatic fringe' dustbin as the 'men from Mars' hypothesis.

Her 'Paradigms' article would have slotted nicely into the aforementioned book where phrases such as 'party trick' (to explain the effect of dowsing crop circles) turned up with such scornful regularity that I found it hard to believe she was looking objectively at the phenomena in question.

In the March article Ms. Randles, if somewhat caustically, attributes all pictogram crop forms to 'aberrant hoaxes' which she tells us cannot be thought of as genuine phenomena yet, in her usual 'mightier than thou' tone. Surely such a single-minded attitude - which fails to take in any evidence or theories which aren't convenient to its cause - can only be detrimental to the advancement of our understanding of crop circles.

Jenny Randles is very good at disproving the case for alien visitors (not a hard thing to do) but

seems unable to deal adequately with the theory that some kind of intelligence is creating UFOs, crop circles, ghosts, etc., except by mocking anyone who might try to explain these things in terms which do not come within the rigid framework of modern science. Her pseudo-scientific standpoint is no better than the stoically-minded scientists, in that it pretends to be open-minded and willing to bend some scientific rules but in reality is no more than a cunningly disguised facade behind which lies the old scientific intolerance of anything which goes beyond the bounds of understanding.

Forgive me if what I have said sounds like a personal attack on Ms. Randles. That is not what it is supposed to be. Rather it is a bemoaning of the 'bloody minded' attitude of many researchers who are so determined to find a natural solution to phenomena of all types, that they feel the necessity to label anything that might be considered paranormal as 'artificial mythology'.

All I can say to people who may think the same way as I do is that they should take comfort in the fact that there are many eminent researchers into the mysteries of our world who are perfectly willing to take on board all types of thinking, from conventional science to New Age mysticism and not pre-judge either - John Michell, George Wingfield, Jaques Vallee and C. G. Jung to name but a few. Compare their open-minded, academic arguments with those who adhere to a policy of disbelief in anything that might turn their narrow vision of the world into something they don't want to see.

Thank you for a superb quarterly.

Neil. S. Rushton,
Netley Abbey, Hampshire.

The article referred to was given the title 'Paradigms' by myself and was a composite of two letters which Jenny had sent to me in reply to my enquiries as to her standpoint on crop circle research. In fairness (and with hindsight) it should not, perhaps, be taken to be her definitive view on the subject. In the light of this year's events, Jenny may feel the need to re-evaluate her views. The Circular would be happy to carry any comments she may care to make.

Craters

Dear Bob: In July 1963, something very odd happened in a potato field at Charlton, near Shaftsbury, Wiltshire, which got a lot of publicity when the police and Army Bomb Disposal Squad were called in. (This information was found in the book *Unidentified Flying Objects* by Robert Chapman - Mayflower 1970.)

One morning farmer Roy Blanchard arrived to work in the potato field and found a crater among his crops. It looked as though it had been scooped out by an enormous spoon. The crater was eight feet in diameter. There was nothing to show what had caused it.

The Army at first thought it was a bomb, as their instruments had been detecting metal; however, after some digging a 'fused-looking' half-pound lump of rocky substance was dug up and the Army came to the conclusion that a meteorite had

caused the crater - a suggestion favoured by most orthodox scientists at the time. The matter seemed settled.

Not everyone was satisfied however, and on 29 July 1963 Major Patrick Wall (then Conservative M.P. for Haltemprice) asked the Secretary of State for War what the findings of the Army team had been and whether there was any evidence to justify the notion that the Charlton crater was made by an extra-terrestrial source.

Mr. Godber: The Army Bomb Disposal team which excavated the crater at Charlton has found no conclusive evidence regarding its cause. The small object which was initially thought to be a meteorite appears in fact to have been a piece of local rock and was not the cause of the crater.'

Major Wall then asked what the findings were of the two Royal Air Force officials' who investigated the crater and whether investigations were continuing.

The reply: From my enquiries I have no reason to think that anything happened in the area which could justify further investigations by the Air Ministry.'

On 1 August, Major Wall tried again. He asked whether the crater was still of interest to the Army. Mr. Godber replied: The Army was concerned to discover whether the crater could contain an unexploded bomb. Nothing of this nature was found and the Bomb Disposal Unit left the site on 26 July.'

From the foregoing it is evident that the authorities were only too anxious to wash their hands of the Charlton affair; but what is interesting to other people, particularly those with a bias in favour of flying saucers, is the admission that 'no conclusive evidence' was found to account for the crater. This admission was considered 'highly unsatisfactory' by the late Waveney Girvan, founder and former Editor of *Flying Saucer Review (FSR)*, and easily the most persistent investigator and critic of his time of Whitehall policy on UFOs. The crater, he wrote in a detailed report, was a complete mystery - and that was official.

It was Girvan who published the first description of the crater. It was no simple hole in the ground: The marks comprised a saucer-shaped depression or crater eight feet in diameter and about four inches deep. In the centre of this depression there was found a three-foot-deep hole, variously described as from five inches to one foot in diameter. Radiating from the centre hole were four slot-marks, four feet long and one foot wide.

Mr. Girvan, who also interviewed farmer Roy Blanchard - 'a man of sound common sense' - attributed to him these words: There isn't a trace of the potatoes and barley which were growing where the crater is now. No stalks, no leaves, no roots. The thing was heavy enough to crush rocks and stones to powder, yet it came down gently. We heard no crash and whatever power it uses produces no heat or noise. I believe we have received a visit from a spaceship from another world.'

In this connection, Girvan drew attention to the fact that a local policeman, PC Anthony Penny,

had reported seeing an orange object flash through the sky on 10 July and vanish near the field in which the strange marks were found. As regards the half-pound 'meteorite' (which he had never believed to be a meteorite in the first place), Girvan reported that it had in fact been found to be a piece of common-or-garden iron stone which could be found all over southern England. It had been identified as such by Dr. F. G. Claringbull, Keeper of the Department of Mineralogy at the British Museum...

I would say that in all probability a machine of unknown origin landed in Farmer Blanchard's field some time in July and then took off again ... The sense of the matter rests with Farmer Blanchard who, when faced with conventional explanations replied: "But where have my crops gone?!"'

In his search for the truth of the Charlton story, Girvan looked around for (and found) other instances of holes and craters appearing mysteriously in the British Isles. There were in fact several which had been discovered either just before or just after the Charlton crater. Of these, probably the most significant was at Flamborough Head. A young man cutting hay on his father's farm had come across a ten-foot-wide shallow hole which had not been there when the land had been top-dressed in the spring. The hole had been reported to the police but neither they nor anybody else could suggest anything to account for it satisfactorily. The hole had jagged edges and was surrounded by cracks. In addition, earth had been scattered around it.

On the slopes of Dufton Fell, Westmorland farmers Bill Richardson and John Rudd had discovered two craters, one of them about sixty yards across and about two feet deep. There was evidence in this case that soil had been washed away along a narrow gully but some local people had recalled that similar craters had appeared on the fell tops, mystifying their parents more than half a century ago.

At this time also, a park area in Bristol had been roped off for Bomb Disposal men to investigate a hole in the grass discovered by employees using a mower. It was believed that a meteorite was responsible. And on 27 July the BBC Scottish News reported: Three more mystery craters. A Bomb Disposal Squad have been having a look at them in a field ... in Dumfriesshire. No trace of metal or explosives has been found. The craters are similar to those found on a hillside in East Lothian; scientists were having a look at them today.'

No explanation was ever found and as far as I know the mystery has never been solved.

Peter Boughan, Luton, Beds.

I'm grateful to Peter for sending this in. I'd like to add some comments of my own: It should be remembered that Waveney Girvan's statements about a 'machine' having landed in the Charlton field were made in the 1960s, when most investigators thought they were dealing with 'nuts-and-bolts' spacecraft. (We might still be, but some evidence seems to suggest otherwise.) And if something had landed in the field, crushing rocks to powder as it did so, and had then taken off again, why did it not also

flatten the crop under itself? Why did it 'remove' the vegetation to a place unknown before 'landing'?

There have been reports of 'holes in the ground' on the European continent since about the early 1970s to the present day; some have turned up more recently in America, I believe. While the American versions are similar to the Charlton 'scooped-like-a-spoon' type, in Europe they appear to have been caused by something taking a 'core sample' - a cylindrical lump of earth many feet across and quite deep, with straight, vertical sides going down to a flat bottom. In the European cases (where other explanations, such as collapsed mining-shafts, have proved to be non-viable) there seems to have been no trace of the hundreds of tonnes of soil that were removed; while in America there have been cases (I believe) where the soil has been found as a complete 'scoop', deposited some distance away and undamaged, the vegetation still rooted into the soil on the top.

With reference to the crushed stones and rocks reported at Charlton: in the American MUFON UFO Journal Number 275 (March) 1991, Michael Strainic (MUFON's Canadian Provincial Director for British Columbia) reported a similar occurrence in Marian Marcotte's back yard. She'd been out to call the dog at about 5:00 pm on 1 September 1990. When he didn't come, she went back indoors and busied herself with some chores. The TV, she noticed, was picking up some unusual interference - a 'herringbone' pattern - typical, says Strainic, of electromagnetic interference.

At 7:20 pm, she went outside again and found 'a large ring in her driveway which had not been there the last time she was out. It was a very large ring, pressed into the hard dirt and gravel of the driveway only 12 feet from her window - the very window she had been washing earlier ... She had heard nothing. The ring was exactly six inches wide ... but with a diameter of exactly 39 feet. The circular impression etched in the yard was about one inch deep, and the exposed soil beneath was still damp. Some of the rocks in the ring were crushed to a powder, and others were pressed flush into the ground. These could be pried out of the ground and then placed back into the irrespective holes like fitting pieces into a jigsaw puzzle. Some of the rocks had scrape or scuff marks, and a residue on them resembling aluminium or some other metal. A considerable amount of dirt was displaced from the ring. The overall appearance of the area was as if someone had turned a huge drinking glass upside down, pressed the rim firmly into the ground, and then twisted it just slightly. The ring was 12 feet from the window of the house, and 12 feet from an embankment directly across from the window. It was also positioned 20 feet from an embankment to the left, and 20 feet from a truck parked off to the right, which had not been moved in several weeks. With all the spacious, available area around the Marcottes' house, the ring chose to centre itself perfectly in the limited area of the yard.'

Dowsing at Alton Barnes 1990

Dear Mr. Kingsley: [I should like to] tell you about our experience connected with the Alton

Barnes pictogram of last year. I am now 64 and have been a member of the staff of the Ministry of Defence at the Royal Aerospace Establishment, Bedford, for 38 years where I now run the Electronics Training School for technical apprentices...I believe [my wife and I] are considered by those who know us to be fairly level-headed and not given to flights of fancy.

For the last 15 years we have become increasingly interested in dowsing and I am considered a competent exponent of the art, having attended basic and advanced courses and being a member of the British Society of Dowzers. As well as successfully dowsing for many objects ranging from water to the sites of World War Two aircraft crashes, I have for many years been interested in research involving earth energies at ancient sites.

We first became interested in crop circles after hearing a lecture presented by Ralph Noyes at the Leyhunter Moot held at Gloucester in 1989, but it was not until the following year that we actually saw one when we went down to visit the Alton Barnes group on 26th August 1990, getting there about 9.00 am before the crowds and were thus able to have the site virtually to ourselves for an hour.

Being a serious dowser I naturally surveyed the whole thing and was surprised by the results which might be of interest to you. I expected but did not find any dowsable signals over the great majority of the flattened area but I did get a strong deflection over the exact centre of each circle. The thing which took me by surprise was a very strong signal detectable around the whole perimeter of the pictogram which enabled me to follow accurately the original shape as it was prior to its distortion by the public. This indicated to me that although the whole figure was centred along one line there had originally been two groups and they had been joined in the middle later on, a supposition confirmed from newspaper pictures later. The annular rings had dowsable signals at each inner and outer perimeter but not over the flattened wheat and we were intrigued to discover that the direction indicated by the rods at the perimeter was always in opposition to the direction in which the wheat lay.

There was also some kind of a dowsable narrow line detectable along the centre of the whole group, extending at least as far as the road but this did not seem to be of the same origin as the circles themselves and had to be dowsed for separately. Ears of wheat taken at various sampling points from within the figures and control ears from areas outside exhibit the same dowsable characteristics as the locations from which they were taken.

I offer a thought which crossed my mind the other day possibly linking the present circle activity with occurrences during the Bronze Age. The most intense density of round barrows is in roughly the same area as the majority of crop circles, and these barrows come in a variety of styles - saucer, ring, bowl, etc., the odd thing being that many, if not most, do not contain any burials or other artifacts.

Might it not be these barrows indicate the sites of phenomena similar to crop circles which appeared during the Bronze Age, the style of

barrow representing the form of the marking? Seeing these happenings as messages from their deity and possibly being aware of the energies which I have dowsed, might they not try to retain them in some way? If this postulation is correct then the inference is more than a bit worrying, for just about that time, so archaeology tells us, there was a marked alteration in climatic conditions which brought about major cultural changes!

We brought back to Bedford with us a stone from within that pictogram and in conjunction with three other people did some dowsing work with it which we found to be both interesting and - to my way of thinking - very important. We set up a simple question/answer session in which I operated a pendulum whilst a colleague held the stone and directed the questions. Quite obviously we realised that it would be only too easy to influence the results with our previously held beliefs on the subject but we tried to be as objective as possible under the circumstances.

We soon came to the conclusion that at least part of the reason for the pictograms was to convey a message. This message, we were told appeared in many legends and traditional stories throughout the world and could be found, amongst other places, in the Bible. (I must hasten to add at this point that whilst we respect the Christian path as we respect all paths, we have no connection with what I call 'Churchianity'.) To continue. We decided to locate the passage by dowsing our way through a list of numbers which could ultimately be related to biblical book, chapter and verse, using this method rather than scanning over the pages - thus protecting ourselves to some degree from the risk of picking up subliminal clues.

The indicated passage turned out to be in the second book of Chronicles, chapter 7 verses 13/14, and it seems to me so significant I quote it here in full: 'If I should shut up heaven that there be no rain or if I command the locusts to devour the land or if I send pestilence among my people, if my people that are called by my name shall humble themselves and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven and forgive their wicked sin and will heal their land.'

Translate this passage into everyday English and I think the meaning is crystal-clear to everyone, Christian, Muslim, Pagan, Humanist or what have you.

Keith Paull, Clapham, Bedfordshire.

If you wish to write letters for publication in *The Circular*, please mark the envelope CLOSE ENCOUNTERS. The address is on page 2. The deadline for December's issue is 14th NOVEMBER.

To the gentleman who wrote an intriguing letter about Simon Burton's article on Organic Energy (Vol 2 No 1, March 1991): I intended to include it here, but unfortunately the letter went missing. Please accept my apologies for this oversight. If you write again I will make sure it gets into the December issue.

CCCS TAPES

The highlight of the afternoon session of the CCCS AGM was a talk by Rupert Sheldrake, *Living Nature and the Crop Circles*. To many who heard it this seemed like a turning point - not only for our approach to the circles themselves, but also for the attempts which many are now making to heal the centuries'-old breach between scientific reason and metaphysical insight. It was a great occasion - and the CCCS has made a recording of it. You can buy the audio-cassette of this and other CCCS lectures by sending an order to the address below.

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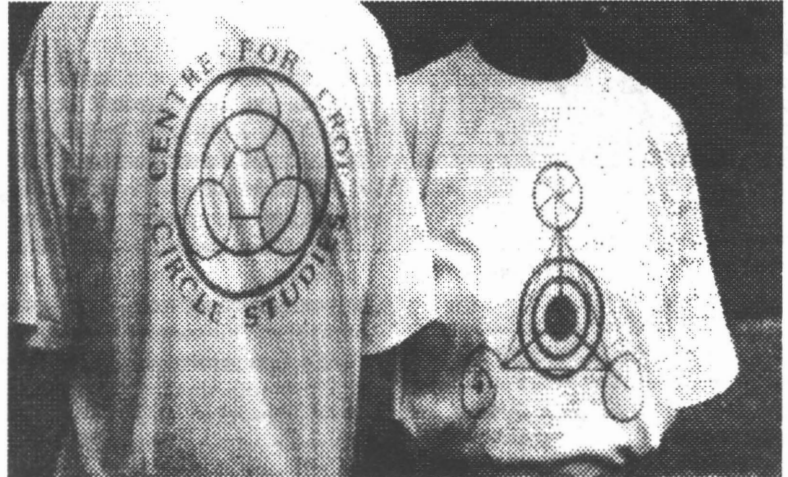
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BOOK
AND
MAGAZINE
REVIEWS

*Normally, society journals contain reviews of books carried out by people 'qualified' in the field covered by the work. As usual, **The Circular** strives to be different! Since our subject is so popular, it follows that many of the books related to it are going to be read (and paid for) by us 'ordinary' people - so who better to review them? (I'd like to stress that the views expressed here belong entirely to the individuals. If you disagree with their comments, short courteous letters explaining why are welcomed.)*

*First, Hampshire CCCS member and professional surveyor Dave Probert takes a look at **SCIENCE OF THE GODS**, written by David Ash and Peter Hewitt, and published by Gateway Books. His review was not commissioned but offered for publication.*

By now, all of us who are interested in crop circles have heard of the vortex theory, but I must caution the meteorological sympathisers not to get too excited about the theories in this new book, as the vortices about which David Ash and Peter Hewitt speculate are of a different order from those which have been claimed to form crop circles. And yet within this volume there is a possible explanation for the phenomenon...

The authors set out by stating that neither of them is a professional scientist and hint that therefore their ideas may well be scorned by mainstream science. Yet their theories may well provide a vital link between the rigid disciplines of modern science and the more esoteric beliefs of psychics, mystics, healers and advocates of the old religions, and in doing so they demonstrate an open-minded approach which is often lacking in science today. There are so many subjects and ideas covered that the reader may feel he has read a much larger work.

The main text starts with the discovery of a scientific premise by a 19th century physicist that "matter is formed out of vortices of energy"; that while we are all aware that apparently solid objects are formed by atoms and molecules which are mainly space and are therefore much less

solid than they appear, the same may be true of the apparently "solid" nucleus and electrons which form the atom - that they may indeed be formed by vortices of energy.

Having put forward some very competent arguments for this, the authors move on to suggest that "faster" vortices may be formed from 'super energy', in turn creating matter which is not perceived in our normal reality, but which could slow down sufficiently to make a miraculous appearance in our world and, just as easily, disappear. This concept leads to ideas about UFOs, supernatural occurrences, the abilities of mystics and healers, the appearance of religious visions - and on, to the power of the mind and its thoughts.

One thing leads naturally on to the next as these authors cleverly encourage us to broaden our concepts in many directions. There is a fascinating chapter about the spirits of nature, ruled by the great god Pan, and their disappointment in human beings who have forgotten that the spirits exist and ignore their importance in putting right the world in which we live and, sadly, misuse.

Another discusses the shortcomings of the theory of evolution and shows how there must be an intelligence guiding the formation of such a multiplicity of life-forms, and speculates that the DNA spiral which is the basis of all life could be a "tuned coil" acting as a receiver of electromagnetic frequencies which guide their formation.

To give you an idea of the freshness of the authors' approach, I would like to quote the beginning of chapter 11 - "The Many Bodies of Man":

"Imagine you are in a building when a fire breaks out. The fire alarm sounds and the noise of it is deafening. You 'phone for the fire brigade and within minutes firemen arrive. But to your horror, all they do is rush in with their axes and chop through the cable to the fire alarm, silencing it. They ... say, 'I am sure you feel better now that the dreadful noise has stopped!' Then they disappear into the night, leaving the fire raging."

This, they say, is how we treat the symptoms of disease rather than the root cause itself. How true.

There is not the space here to mention all the subjects that are covered in this volume, but I hope your appetite is whetted enough to read it for yourself. I found it an excellent book, thought-provoking and eminently readable.

David Ash studied physics at London University. He has taught science and practised as a consultant on nutrition and alternative medicine. Peter Hewitt studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge University. He has worked in the computer industry, in marketing and as a journalist.

SCIENCE OF THE GODS: 1990 Gateway Books, revised edition now in paperback. £5.95.

*I thought I'd have a go at this, too! Here are my thoughts on **THE GODDESS OF THE STONES: The Language of the Megaliths** by George Terence Meaden. Foreword by Dr. Marija Gimbutas. Souvenir Press.*

Much has already been said, written or implied about the apparent relationships between crop circles, henges and barrows, and the stone carvings associated with the latter, but in this work Terence Meaden examines the evidence from the point of view of a meteorologist interested in archaeology - a combination of scientific disciplines which produces intriguing results.

The preface outlines how his life-long interest in archaeology really came to the fore in 1980 when he began investigating crop circles. In combining his meteorological training with archaeological knowledge he has developed a hypothesis that, on the face of it, appears to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding the Neolithic & Bronze Age peoples who lived in the British Isles circa 4600 BC to 1000 BC.

It is, of course, based on his theory of the plasma vortex. Rather than burden the reader with technicalities, Dr. Meaden keeps descriptions of basic vortices simple, referring to them generally as whirlwinds. Indeed, the whole of chapter 2 is given over to accounts of present-day whirlwind activity, showing how they can be visible or invisible, moving or stationary, are sometimes accompanied by buzzing or humming sounds and can rotate in either direction with equal facility.

Dr. Meaden proposes that Neolithic Man would have marvelled at the sight of dust or straw rising into the air as though by magic and would have ascribed this vision to the presence of the gods - or, more specifically, the Goddess who apparently led the Neolithic pantheon of the time. (According to Dr. Meaden those who today look to the paranormal for answers to the crop circle mystery give an insight 'into the minds of the people of the Neolithic Age'.

Ouch.) This leads into the next chapter which deals with how certain types of vortices might affect standing crops and other suitable recording media such as grass.

There is little in the way of technical explanation given for the plasma vortex; indeed, it is not referred to by this name. It is simply assumed that the existence of the unusual descending vortex that allegedly forms crop circles is already proven beyond doubt - but I suppose that's understandable. There is supporting evidence for what is here called the 'circles effect', including eyewitness accounts.

Dr. Meaden explains how Neolithic Man could have come to regard as sacred the places where crop or grass circles formed, setting them aside for worship and, later, as burial areas - hence the appearance of stone circles and barrows. To back up this hypothesis, Dr. Meaden presents evidence to show how crop circles sometimes exhibit defects of circularity in common with some stone circles. He argues that explaining the construction of stone circles by ascribing superior geometrical and numerical knowledge to Neolithic Man may be unwise; more likely they were simply following the outline of a vortex-formed circle and never developed such things as a 'megalithic yard'. The work of people like Alexander Thom is therefore, according to this argument, flawed.

The next few chapters go into barrow construction in detail, with photographs and diagrams showing how the manner of burial in barrows would correspond with the body being placed in accordance with a crop circle floor pattern: off-centre, and facing in the direction of the spiral pattern.

The spiral is a primordial totem: it holds within it the symbolic connection between life and death, above and below, sky and earth; it is the archetype of the maze and labyrinth; it was the symbol of the Goddess. Dr. Meaden takes us on a trip to Newgrange and other places around the British Isles to examine the carvings on these enigmatic monuments, explaining them in terms of the Goddess cult. Then we go to Silbury Hill, where evidence from past excavations is presented to support the hypothesis that the Hill's interior contains at its heart the sacred spiral-patterned grass from a nearby location, preserved for eternity as a supplication to the Goddess and to give the Hill more 'power' as rituals were carried out on the summit. The concluding chapters detail more carvings and icons, and give a short account of turf mazes, some of which still exist.

In *Goddess of the Stones* we see a side of Dr. Meaden hitherto kept under wraps:

despite the undoubtedly methodical approach and careful presentation of the evidence, somehow his discussion of the myth and legend of Neolithic times struck me as being composed of elements similar to those cited in much of the speculation so often derided as 'non-scientific' by himself and his acolytes. Certainly, the evidence for corresponding non-circularities in crop and stone circles helps to strengthen his case in some respects - but even so, crop circle researchers will identify glaring gaps in Dr. Meaden's hypothesis.

For example: Dr. Meaden completely ignores the pictograms of recent years despite having confirmed that certain configurations were not, in his opinion, hoaxed (Alton Barnes and the two similar formations of 1990, because of their asymmetrical nature, have been cited as positively helping to explain the plasma vortex theory by exposing breakdowns). Readers who know something of crop circles will wonder why these formations have not been mentioned. After all, if crop formations are not evolving but naturally multiform, it seems reasonable to suppose there must have been a number of breakdowns recorded in grasses and crops during the 3,600 years covered by this book? (And those who don't know about pictogram development will not, therefore, be presented with all the evidence which would help them form an opinion.) The only other configurations mentioned in the book are ringed circles, quintuplets and the circle with the single spur at Pepperbox Hill in 1987 - and then only briefly.

Some people wonder why we do not see stone circles or barrows under many escarpments and low hills where present-day circles keep forming. True, the general Wessex area is dotted with constructions - but Neolithic Man was certainly obsessed with his circular henges and barrows; almost a thousand of them are known. It seems inconceivable he would have missed the opportunity to 'collect' as many as possible. Some discussion of this in the book would have been welcome.

Dr. Meaden's foray into the field of archaeology is likely to offend the experts already working there. It often happens that when scientists step out of their own discipline and stray into a different area of research they find themselves ostracised by their peers, so Dr. Meaden should be congratulated for taking such a courageous step. Convincing other archaeologists that he has the right 'credentials' for coming to such conclusions may take years, even though the evidence for similarity between simple crop circles and some stone rings is impressive. (Maybe his next book, the second of a trilogy, looking in more detail

at Stonehenge and published by Souvenir Press in Autumn 1991, will help convince them.) On the other hand, the general public will have no trouble in accepting the contents of this carefully written book. For crop circle researchers, though, it doesn't really go far enough. Nonetheless, you won't want to miss it.

THE GODDESS OF THE STONES: 1991 Souvenir Press. £18.99. ISBN 0285 630318.

*Another book by Dr. Meaden, **Circles from the Sky** (sub-titled *Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Circles Effect at Oxford*), was published at the same time as **Goddess of the Stones**. It contains post-conference additions, including an eyewitness account of circle formation in Surrey (during 1990) which (as of August 1991) is achieving much publicity in the newspapers and on television, being promoted as some kind of 'final proof' of the plasma vortex theory.*

James Chapman lives in Hampshire, and has been interested in crop circles since 1990. His interests include ley research, dowsing and circle photography. His review was submitted, not commissioned.

This book leaves many questions unanswered. While the front cover is illustrated with the astonishing 1990 Allington Down complex, inside no attempt is made to explain the amazing features this huge double pictogram displayed.

In presenting an explanation for the dumbbell features that were so common in 1990 and that have continued in 1991, Dr. Meaden vaguely suggests the dumbbell features were (and are) the results of 'instability, a consequence of an unstable and complex vortex (or double vortex) making a powerful impact with the crop and the ground'. If this is the case, there were certainly a large number of 'unstable and complex' vortices hurtling their way around Hampshire and Wiltshire in 1990, and again in 1991.

His attempts to explain the rectangular 'boxes' are also less than convincing. Apparently, they are the results of the 'translatory motion of a "rainbow arc" or semi-circular arc across the field'. This is an example of a slightly disturbing tendency of this book. Dr. Meaden uses 'complex' or 'scientific' phrases and sentences, especially when he is on shaky ground, to convince his readers that he is correct. Certainly, Dr. Meaden is all too quick to point out that he and his colleagues are the only 'scientists' researching the crop circle mystery, and all

other researchers are 'non-scientific' and 'paranormal-flavoured' - a favourite phrase of Dr. Meaden's, which he uses to describe all researchers who do not support the plasma vortex theory.

For example: in his book and magazine review, typically called an 'annotated crop circles bibliography', he describes his own book, *The Circles Effect and its Mysteries*, as a 'scientific appraisal...using logic and the scientific method' (Dr. Meaden's italics). *Crop Circles: A Mystery Solved* (a somewhat presumptuous title) [explained by the authors as being at the publisher's insistence - ed.] by Jenny Randles and Paul Fuller (and condemned by many) is 'highly recommended' by Dr. Meaden - not surprising really, as it comes out in support of the plasma vortex. *Circular Evidence* by Pat Delgado and Colin Andrews, however, is condemned by Dr. Meaden as 'biased, paranormal-flavoured'; and as for Delgado and Andrews themselves, they are 'opportunistic non-scientists taking an anti-scientific stance'. Their book is, apparently, 'loaded with errors', and Dr. Meaden cannot resist attacking even the colour process used to reproduce the photographs - 'an inferior 3-colour process instead of the conventional 4-colour method'.

It is, perhaps, unfair of me to mention that *Circles from the Sky* has no colour photographs.

The Cerealogist is described as 'non-scientific' and 'paranormally-flavoured' (there's that phrase again), and *The Circular*, which presents all viewpoints of the crop circle mystery (unlike *Circles from the Sky*), is described as 'superficial'. Also, the *Centre for Crop Circle Studies* is described as 'wishing to be objective and impartial' - however, Dr. Meaden feels 'most of its leaders have paranormal inclinations and susceptibilities'.

Sometimes in this book Dr. Meaden stoops to the ridiculous to embrace all the evidence that has been brushed into the comfields under his plasma vortex theory. For example, take his attempts to explain the addition of a fourth outer ring to a large three-ringed circle at Blackland, Wiltshire, in 1990: Dr. Meaden admits that 'its authenticity is a puzzle'. He suggests it could have been 'fashioned by two people walking together, the first walking at a constant distance from a second who followed either ring 2 or 3, holding the end of a tape'. Dr. Meaden makes no attempt to suggest why two people would add this somewhat unimpressive feature to a genuine circle - surely, if someone did want to 'touch up' a formation, they would create

something a little more spectacular, such as some satellites on one of the rings?

The other explanation Dr. Meaden presents as perhaps 'more likely' is that the crop may have been weakened at the usual bending-place a few centimetres above the ground at the time of the original incident by a force circulating in "ring 4" although the crop did not topple domino-fashion until vibrated by general gusty winds a few days later. I will leave the reader to make their own judgment on this 'more likely' explanation.

This event may well be one of the most important in circles history. It tells us that whatever energy creates these formations can add to existing ones; can position *exactly* another ring around a circle and its existing rings. This is a hugely important indication that the circles phenomenon is not a randomly descending vortex (events this year at Barbury castle, where a quite astonishing triangle - circle system formed, and elsewhere - e.g. the Cheesefoot Head 'star'- have further disproved this anyway.) It is somewhat difficult to visualize a randomly descending ring vortex positioning itself around an existing formation. I do not have the mathematical ability to workout the odds against this happening, but they must be almost infinite.

Dr. Meaden also presents no explanation for the swastika patterns of late 1989 - 'these amazing findings are to be discussed on another occasion'. One gets the feeling that when they are discussed, the explanation will be even less convincing than those I have quoted here.

This book is not without good points. Dr. Meaden reproduces diagrams of interesting circle complexes in Buckinghamshire and Devonshire, and there are interesting diagrams indicating flow in some of the Hampshire dumbbells. Dr. Meaden's painstaking account of events in 1990 is also valuable. But really this book is a re-churning out of an old explanation that has been disproven by the events of the last 3 years, with a few photographs and vague explanations for the events of 1990. Dr. Meaden cannot go on crying 'miscarriage' every time a circle complex appears not to fit in with the plasma vortex theory.

CIRCLES FROM THE SKY: 1991
Souvenir Press. £14.99.
ISBN 0285 630369.

That's all on books for this issue. If you would like to present a review of a book that has crop circle relevance, please write to me at the address on page 2. Dave and James bought their own copies of the books they reviewed - and I would like you

to have done the same. It seems only fair that when you've paid for something, you have the right to say whether it was or was not, in your opinion, money well spent!

MAGAZINES

The latest issue of *The Crop Watcher* I have to hand is number 6, the July/August edition. Editor Paul Fuller continues to offer a host of material that supports the meteorological hypothesis, including the third part of David Reynold's account of how atmospheric vortices allegedly form crop circles. There are more accounts of earlier crop circles and other articles on investigations into hoaxes. Write to: 3 Selborne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 7TY UK. £1.25 per issue, £7.00 for six (1 year). (Overseas: send £2.50 per issue, £14.00 for six; I.M.O.s payable in sterling.) Payable to The Crop Watcher. Format: A4.

The Cerealogist summer edition (No 4) looks better than ever. Loads of photos and fascinating articles on this year's formations, including John Michell's geometric/numerical dissection of the Barbury Castle event. Its overall presentation is very professional, as always - but it missed the Mandelbrot Event, so *The Circular* is one step ahead in that respect, at least! I'm sure most of you will have subscribed by now. But there's been some confusion about subscription through the CCCS: basically, you can't any longer. Best to pay separately, as follows: £7.50 UK, £9.00 or \$18.00 overseas. One year, three issues. Begins with current issue unless otherwise requested. Write to *The Cerealogist*, c/o Specialist Knowledge Services, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset BA11 1DX UK. Payable to The Cerealogist. Format: A4.

Kevin McClure edits *The Wild Places*, sub-titled 'The Journal of Strange and Dangerous Beliefs'. I've only seen issue 2 so far, and I enjoyed what I found there: 'Alien Contact or Armageddon?' and 'Subterranean Homesick Greys' look at UFO contact cases from different angles; 'Talking to Strangers' deals with Spiritualism/Channelling; there are some book reviews, and a piece by Jenny Randles called 'Circular Logic', which outlines the way BUFORA - and therefore she and Paul Fuller - became involved in circles investigation. Jenny also explains authoritatively why meteorological researchers do not engage in crop watches! Oops.

The Wild Places: 42 Victoria Road, Mount Charles, St. Austell, Cornwall PL25 4QD UK. Single issue £1.75, yearly (4 issues) £6.00. Europe: single issue £2.00, yearly £7.50. USA/Canada: single issue \$5.00, yearly \$18.00. Elsewhere: no personal cheques (about \$20 US or £10 should be about right). Payable to Kevin McClure. Format: A5.

NEWSLETTERS

Pat Delgado and Colin Andrews produce the *Circles Phenomenon Research (CPR) Newsletter*. Can't tell you much about this one as I only have No. 3 (April 1991) to hand, but it's full of interesting items, as one would expect. I'm not even sure how much it costs, but write to Pat Delgado at 4 Arle Close, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9BG, UK for more details.

Lucius Farish compiles the *UFO NEWSCLIPPING SERVICE* which combines items from American as well as international (including British) newspapers. It concentrates mainly on UFOs, but crop circles get mixed in as well. Loads of stuff. Subscription rates for the UK: \$7.00 per issue, \$80.00 per year. Write to: Route 1, Box 220, Plumerville, Arkansas 72127 USA.

I'm getting more and more requests to exchange *The Circular* for other newsletters. Jim Melesciuc edits *Orbiter*, a magazine that concentrates on analysing the case work of UFO sightings. May/June includes more on Gulf Breeze, historic cases, book list and letters. Not sure about subscription prices. Write to: *Orbiter*, PO box 652, Reading, MA 01867 USA for more details

Just Cause is published by Lawrence Fawcett and deals with the alleged continuing US government cover-up over UFO-related incidents. If you like paper-chases, this one is definitely for you. Write to: CAUS, PO Box 218, Coventry, Ct. 06238 USA. Subscriptions: \$15 US \$20 foreign.

Folklore Frontiers is Paul Screeton's home-grown, A5-format, 'non-profit making magazine' (*I know what he means*) devoted to folklore, in particular 'contemporary legends or urban belief tales.' Pretty good, too - but why the need for the reproductions of page three girl photographs? Maybe I'm getting old. Write to: 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland ST25 2AT, UK. Subscriptions: £4.00 (roughly quarterly basis); single issue £1.00. USA: dollars only.

The Circular Volume 2, Number 3

A NATURAL ENGAGEMENT PHIL CORKER

Phil Corker is a Bristol-based writer who has had previous articles - arguing for a natural explanation for the circles phenomenon - published in The Circular before the tie-up with the CCCS. Phil does not belong to the organisation but his enthusiasm and support during the early days of The Circular was one of the original reasons for setting up the newsletter as a forum for open discussion.

I, personally, do not believe the pictograms can be explained in terms of weather phenomena,' Jenny Randles wrote in *The Circular* (Vol II No 1, March 1991, pp.13-14, 'Paradigms'). I wonder if I was the only person to be surprised to hear her advocating 'massive PK' [psycho-kinesis] as a serious possible cause of pictograms. It seemed to follow on from something I briefly outlined in 'The Art of Circles' (*The Circular*: Vol I No 2, October 1990, pp.18-22; Vol I No 3, December 1990, pp. 8-17) that 'quantum physics, Rupert Sheldrake's hypothesis of morphic resonance and subtle but powerful links between the human mind and its environment' might explain the apparent acceleration in the number and complexity of crop circles. I wrote this not because I seriously believed it but because I believed it was seriously worth considering - and I still do.

While I do not believe that some non-human intelligence is involved in the circle phenomenon (for reasons I explored in those articles) I believe that our own intelligence might be. This may be another shot in the dark but I do not think we should be afraid of looking beyond our present understanding of nature. Relativity and modern particle physics were not arrived at by scientific coyness or an unquestioning respect for the rule book. Besides, there are many accounts of events which suggest that we can indeed affect changes in the physical world by means of our mental

processes alone, though they are usually unconscious ones.

In his article in *The Crop Circle Enigma* (Gateway, 1990) Dr. Meaden said that luminous vortices may explain some religious visions, including those at Fatima*. What he did not say was that eventually 70,000 people witnessed the same 'miracle' at Fatima, an event in which people not only 'saw' something but experienced physical effects too.

The huge crowd had gathered at that place because six months earlier three children, Lucia dos Santos and Francisco and Jacinta Marto, had experienced a vision of the Holy Virgin there. She promised the children that if they returned to the same place at the same time of the month for six consecutive months, she would perform a miraculous feat on her final appearance. As the story spread through Portugal public interest grew and finally, on a rainy October 13th, 1917 at Cova da Iria, the miracle took place. This is not an idle fable but a well-documented event reported by - among others - Avelino de Almeida, editor of *O Seculo*, the Lisbon daily. This leading journalist of the time was not a believer, yet he witnessed and described the same event as did the devout.

Even more remarkably, the poet Affonso Lopes Vieira reported seeing the same thing from his house, which happened to be 40 kilometres from Fatima. Many others also witnessed the spectacle from a distance. As a boy of nine, Father Inacio Lourenco witnessed the event from Alburita, almost 20 kilometres from Fatima.

So what was this miraculous feat? History records that a rotating silver disc was seen to descend from the clouds in a zig-zag fashion, perform aerial tricks, change colours through the spectrum of the rainbow and then pass low over the crowd, producing a

wave of heat so strong that it dried the clothing of the soaked spectators, a sequence of events which lasted some ten minutes. If this was a luminous vortex then it was made-to-order six months previously.

What ever it was though, it seems to demonstrate better than any event I know just how powerful human expectation can be when it is concentrated in the public mind on a particular subject, especially one which is connected to a belief system. While the story cannot be accepted as scientific evidence it seems difficult to refute, and for myself at least lends credence to the idea that the human mind can influence, alter and interact with the world around it. Can this same process now be at work in our relationship with the crop circles? If so then the voice speaking to us - if there is one - would be our own voice and the beautiful shapes in the summer fields would be expressions of our hidden life, our deepest hopes, anxieties and concerns. Perhaps that is why pictograms look so tantalisingly familiar while remaining beyond the fringes of identification and memory, like that name you just cannot recall or that face you just cannot place.

Like Randles, I would say that circles were originally independent of human influence but that they may now be inextricably associated with the attention we give them due to massive publicity and the deep interest which has been generated. As at Fatima, an overwhelming degree of expectation is now concentrated on a specific type of occurrence. Our imaginations are activated, our religious impulses are stirred, our hopes are raised and our eyes are fixed. We know what to look for and we know where to look. How much energy does that create? Classical science still asserts it would produce none and therefore we have no effect.

Yet some quantum physicists insist that ultimately there is no distinction between the observer and the observed. If this were so we could now be directly affecting the progress of crop circles. We may have joined forces with and 'locked on' to whatever natural agency created circles in the first place, be it an earth energy or a Meaden-type

vortex. It would be a powerful combination, a dream ticket and a very natural kind of engagement if this proved to be true.

I don't actually believe any of this, I just believe it's possible and is at the same time infinitely more feasible than devas, fairies, spaceships or some non-human intelligence writing supposedly urgent and universal messages on a part-time and parochial basis, with Britain as the parish and Wessex as the priest.

Then again the whole thing may be completely physical, utterly blind and isolated, detached from the reach of our own innate energies. I certainly think we should pay close attention to the weather this season and do not think we should write off Meaden's meteorological theory wholesale. When the appearance of crop circles is so

seasonal I believe it is rash to assert that the climate plays no part in their formation. If we have a terrible summer - unlike those of 1989/90 - then the number of circles ought to decrease if Meaden is right. If they remain the same or continue to increase, despite a worsening in the supposedly conducive weather conditions, then Meaden will have more explaining to do. Perhaps in the end none of us will be entirely right and none entirely wrong. A combination theory - taking account of climate, geology, landscapes and some 'X' factor yet to be established - may put us on the right track to a solution.

But what about the incredible shapes? Randles, while still cautiously favouring the hoax theory, suggests that electromagnetic waveforms may be the key and hints that Meaden may even think this too. Sound waves can



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produce elaborate patterns, so it is not too difficult to imagine waves of electromagnetism achieving the same kind of result. Whatever it is, the same question needs to be answered: How and when are the shapes determined? This is certainly a big problem for the hypothesis I've been outlining. Just how would random and presumably disordered human thoughts form a discrete and well-defined shape in an energy pattern? To be honest, I haven't the faintest idea, but perhaps our influence, if it exists, plays no part in formulating the actual shapes we see, but rather provides an impetus to an otherwise independent and self-organising process - a natural one.

In an obvious sense, what we are seeing in the countryside causes us to catch our breath and step back in awe; to wonder, speculate and examine our world in ways we have previously not felt necessary. Yet on another level we should not be that surprised to see our beautiful and mysterious visitors. After all, geometry (from the simple to the sacred) is a fundamental aspect of the great mystery around us, informing and permeating all we see, and all we do not see. These two very different responses, one all startled and the other almost blase, need not invalidate or diminish each other. If we can somehow manage to embrace both, then we just might be able to discover the secret at the centre of the maze *and* find our way out again.

Along Came Mother

The previous section was written some months ago, before the present season began. I was partly concerned then with what effect a poor summer might have on the circles. As it turns out, Meaden may rightly feel somewhat vindicated by the relative sparsity of events. It would be asking rather a lot to dismiss as mere coincidence the slow start to the circle season in conjunction with one of the most abysmal Junes on record. This suggests strongly that climate does indeed play a vital part in the phenomenon. Yet there have still been circles - and what they have so far lacked in numbers they have made up for in new patterns and features, leaving Meaden and the rest of us with even more questions than answers.

The plain single circles and ringed circles which formed the majority in previous years now seem conspicuous by their general absence. Pictograms now appear to be the order of the day. Why is this? It hardly equates with Meaden's vortex principle to begin with, unless he can explain why plasma vortices should develop a preference for the complex over the elementary.

On a different but related point: if pictograms are not new, as Meaden asserts, then the idea he proposes in *The Goddess of the Stones* is badly flawed. In his latest book, a kind of grand unification theory, he suggests that ancient stone circles were built on the sites of crop circles. If this were so, why do we not see standing stones in the shape of pictograms, which according to Meaden must have appeared in the times of our distant ancestors? He can have it one way or the other but he can't have it both ways, unless he supposes that for some unknown and unknowable reason the builders of Stonehenge, Avebury and the countless other sites chose not to build on pictograms. Why do we not see an Alton Barnes, a Crawley Downs or Hazeley Farm Fields standing in the early morning mists of Salisbury Plain, Cheesefoot Head or the Vale of Pewsey? I am quite ready to accept that simple circles and ringed circles appeared thousands of years ago and that the people of the time, seeing great religious significance in them, placed permanent markers around their borders. The fact that they marked only these basic configurations tells me that pictograms are relatively new and that we are now witnessing one development after another.

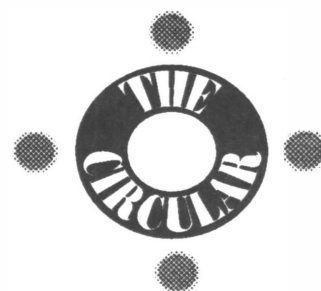
July certainly brought a fresh watershed in the puzzle which now has us helplessly spellbound. With the arrival of the spectacular formation at Barbury Castle, crop circles have for the first time begun to approach the complexity of snowflakes. It's wonderful of course, but it has certainly not made things any easier for us, especially for Meaden who must now be feeling, well, snowed under I suppose. This absolute gem of a circle is like the child who stands up in class and asks a question to which the teacher does not know the answer. The

teacher, despairing, can only tell the child to sit down. Hence Meaden had no option but to declare Barbury Castle a fake, in which case the hoaxers have certainly smartened up their act since their ragged performance at Westbury last year. In one sense though, if it were a fake, it would be an even more staggering achievement than if it were the real McCoy. With the exception of one side of the triangle, which curves slightly around one of the central rings, the whole work is just about as exquisite and perfect as we should ever reasonably expect a crop circle to be. I am not unprepared to believe that it could be the work of highly skilled and synchronised forgers, but I would take a great deal of convincing. It is so huge that to stand in any one part of it is to have only the vaguest notion where one is in relation to the other parts. Considering this, it is difficult to imagine how anyone could hoax this awesome beauty in broad daylight, let alone in the hours of darkness.

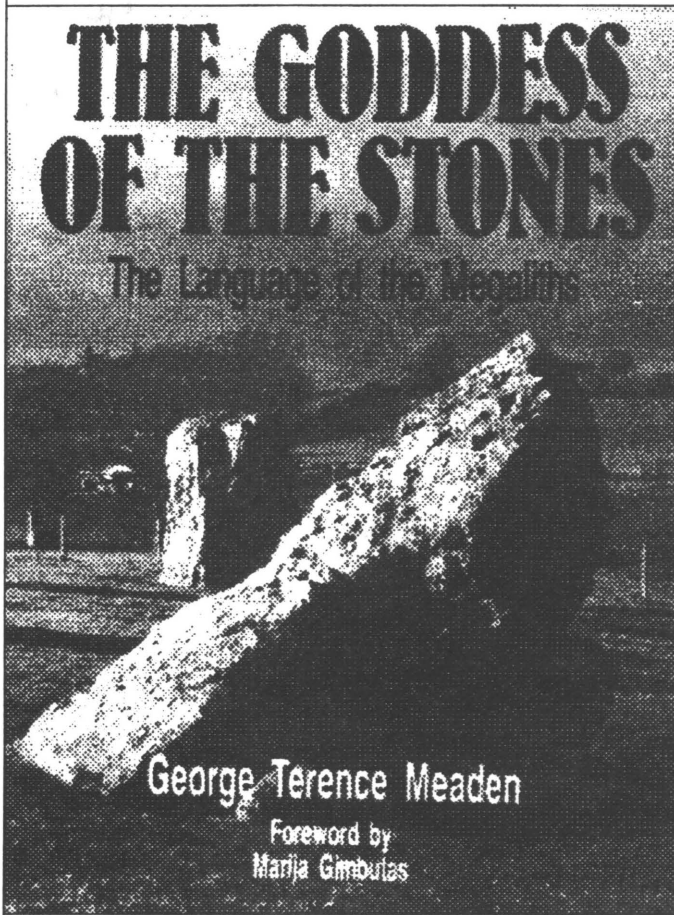
The Barbury Castle formation has been called the Mother of all crop circles. We do not know how it was made, but one thing is beyond dispute: it is a great masterpiece of landscape art. Whatever else it is we can only guess.

Let's look at it like this: if it is a fake, then there is at least one crazy genius at work in the night. This would mean that all other pictograms could easily be faked too and that we have therefore been taken in by the greatest and the strangest hoax in history. If it is the mark of a Meaden-type vortex, then the British weather is even more worthy of everyday comment than we realised. If it is the most extraordinary sign yet of the natural engagement I have proposed, then nature - and we - are on the move.

**For a detailed account of the Fatima story, see "Our Lady of Fatima" (Macmillan) by William Thomas.*



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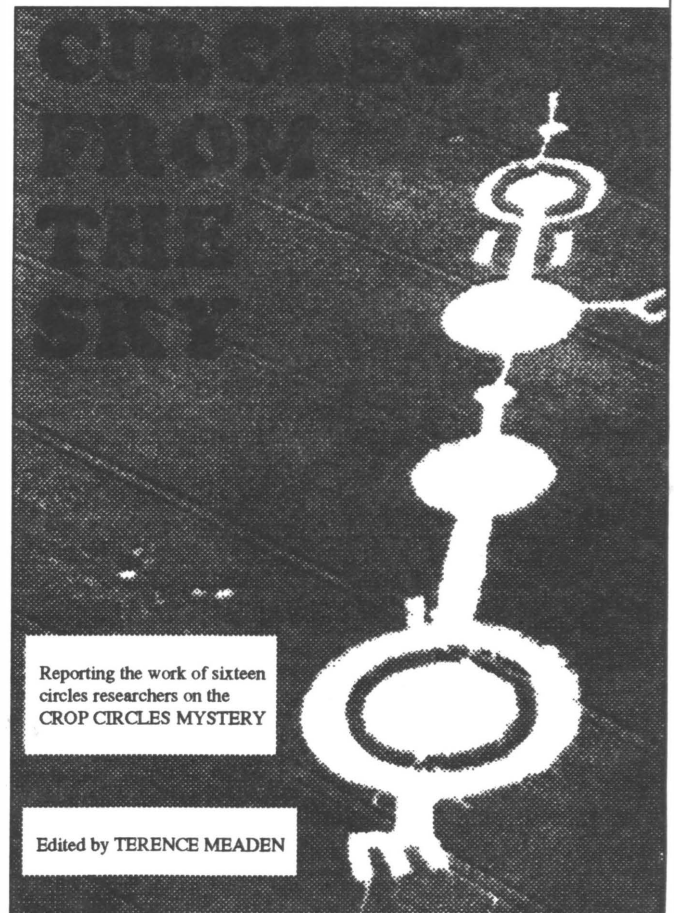
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