

SC



*THE MONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND*

57

OCTOBER 1996

£1.00

**More Reports
From 1996**

**Oliver's
Castle
Special**

**The Full Story Of
An Astonishing Video**

"You are the masters of denial" BASHAR (Channelled through Darryl Anka, talking about human beings...)

Last month, we were the first publication to report the apparent taking of a video which showed this year's formation at Oliver's Castle appearing in seconds under an array of aerial lights. We can now confirm that the video does indeed show this event! There was initial confusion because some who had viewed the footage through a camcorder viewfinder hadn't noticed the pattern unfolding because of the poor resolution when viewed that way. Seen on a full monitor, there is no doubt as to what the footage shows. One or two have stated that maybe what they were originally shown at The Barge was not the same video, but this is highly unlikely. The sequence is very short but extremely spectacular and we devote much of this issue to exploring the full story of exactly what it shows, of how the video came to light and of its implications. Luckily, copies, legit or not, are now doing the rounds and it can't be kept under wraps...

It says something about the innate negativity of many cropplers that the video is already being dismissed out of hand as a fake by some. There are a number of 'points for' and 'points against' articles on the Internet, and it's interesting that there are far more against than for. This would be okay if they were justified, but so far nearly all the anti-points are entirely demolishable because they are based on too many unfounded assumptions. Many of these seem simply to revolve around the fact that there are too many good points about it for it to be true! So, in other words, because the video seems to confirm so much of what researchers have speculated on, it must be a fake! What's the matter with us? We know that the outside world will almost certainly dismiss the video as hoaxed but have we, as cropplers, lost all sense of open-mindedness and discernment? Even if the video is at some point shown conclusively to be a fake, there are no reasons right now which show this to be the case, so why not start off with the viewpoint that it *might* be genuine, instead of saying it *must* be a fake?

A number of groups seem to be 'analysing' the video now, but any statements which 'prove' anything about the tape one way or the other *must* be in terms demonstrable to the common person for such results to count. Technical types can say anything to most, who have no way of knowing if they are right or not. A number of blah-merchants for instance have already bragged that they could knock up such a video at home, when the truth is they have no equipment capable of anything of the sort. So beware these types, try and see the video for yourselves and make your own judgement. It certainly *looks* convincing. Its pros and cons will be discussed further in future SCs, but for this issue, Michael Glickman explains why he, at least, believes the footage to be genuine...

ANDY THOMAS

SC

THE MONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND

Editor: ANDY THOMAS

14 Bishops Drive
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1HA
England
Tel: 01273 474711

SC E-Mail Address:
101476.1452@compuserve.com

SC: Edited and produced by ANDY THOMAS with assistance from Barry Reynolds and Kaye Thomas. Articles, letters and contributions to the editorial address please.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not SC as a whole, unless otherwise stated.

SC Copyright (C) 1996: permission must be sought for any reproduction of material. Copyright for individual articles and illustrations lies with the original authors, artists and photographers.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

£10.00 (UK)

£13.00 (Europe)

£18.00 (US and Overseas)

Cheques payable to 'SCR' please.

Cheques & POs must be made out in sterling (ie. English currency), drawn on a bank with a British branch.

Eurocheques accepted. Cash accepted but sent at own risk.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND MAILING ADDRESS:

Di Brown & Jason Porthouse
36 Graham Crescent
Mile Oak
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 2YB
Tel: 01273 885117

Front Cover: Oliver's Castle, Wiltshire, August 1996. Photograph by Steve Alexander.

The Preamble

"Vandalism. It's all vandalism!" The farmer, John Butler, was enraged with the Snowflake formation at Oliver's Castle. We had passed by his drying barn to get permission to go in and measure. He refused, growling about the trouble he had been caused and warning us that Devizes police had been informed.

Days later, when it was clear that the field was about to be harvested and when Butler himself had committed an act of gratuitous vandalism by spitefully directing his combine through the centre of the formation, we managed to get in by paying him. Patricia Murray and I surveyed it and spent time recording the miraculous construction. The crop was long-eared wheat, possibly Soissons.

When the formation was new and access was forbidden, we had looked down on it several times from the edge of the hill. It was a six-fold geometry, a large centre circle of 85' diameter radiating six spokes, each of which had three satellites of diminishing sizes. I was fascinated and determined to survey it. I was convinced - mistakenly as it turned out - that the Snowflake would yield geometric and proportional revelations beyond the obvious ones. It had other surprises to offer.

The Video

We shall simply call the cameraman John. He is 21, a student, and has so far wished to remain anonymous. He is interested in the circles and on the evening of Saturday 10th August he was at The Barge pub at Alton Barnes where he told people of

his intention to spend the night crop-watching at Oliver's Castle. He was awakened there at dawn by the famous circle-makers' noise: a distinctive humming. He got up and saw lights in the field below him. He reached for his video camera which, initially, would not work - presumably be-

cause of the damp (Some camcorders automatically shut off if there is dew in the air, to protect the recording heads). Moments later he was able to film.

He recorded the movement of the luminosities; it is not clear at what point he observed the formation below them.

A Footnote

Consider, for a moment, the young man's frame of mind. He had just viewed an event unseen that night by anyone else on Earth. He was alone and his experience was, at one level, truly shocking. While he was not turned to a pillar of salt, the comparison with Lot's wife is appropriate. They both glimpsed manifestations from, and perhaps for a moment were in, other dimensions. I have not met John but I

get the impression that he has been much exposed to the government involvement-CIA conspiracy/military interest view of crop circles. This will have done little to help him calm down.

And then, as he left, or prepared to leave, Oliver's Castle, he saw a party of soldiers jogging towards him. The sergeant, apparently, spoke to him as they passed. It has been suggested that he said "Did you get what you came for?". This is an extremely strange thing for him to have said whether (a) as I believe, he was supervising fitness exercises

- NEWS - THE SNOWFLAKE FILE

MICHAEL GLICKMAN tells the full story of one the most significant events ever to have happened in the world of crop circle research... (Italicised insertions by ANDY THOMAS)

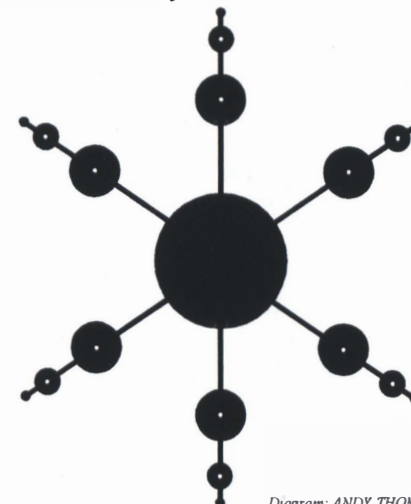


Diagram: ANDY THOMAS

and met a young camper or (b) he was a leading member of the UK intelligence community.

Some, irresponsibly building on John's fears, have suggested "military involvement". What nonsense! If the British Government, or any of its agencies were involved, John would have seen helicopters, black vans with elaborate small aerals and specialist teams who would have taken the video and detained him. *(It has been speculated by those of the conspiracy persuasion that John was 'allowed' to take the video as part of some military experiment to test the public's reaction to such an event - this would, however, suggest the military knew the formation was about to occur or created it themselves in some unknown way. There is no evidence whatsoever that they would be capable of this.)*

The truth is almost certainly far removed from these adolescent fantasies. It was dawn and there is a military building, Lemarchant Barracks, less than two miles away at the base of the hill. It houses a part of the Territorial Army who use the conveniently placed Oliver's Castle for early morning runs.

The Follow-Up

Just before lunchtime that Sunday, John called The Barge, trying to contact Peter Sorensen. He was shaken by what he had filmed and seen and needed help and advice. He had not met Peter but knew his name and his work. He was told that Peter was not there. John came to The Barge that evening, once again looking for Peter who, once again, was elsewhere. He showed the footage - through the viewfinder - to several people, including Nick Nicholson, Lee Winterston and, crucially, Freddie Silver, one of Colin Andrews' research associates.

It is important to understand that, at this stage, viewed only through the camera viewfinder, the full significance of the video was unclear.

Two or three evenings later, John found Peter at The Barge. He told Peter that he had viewed the material through a large colour monitor: It clearly showed the Snowflake forming. Ulrich Kox, who spent some time talking to John, was struck by how nervous he was. His hands were shaking.

Some Revelations

It came to light at about this time that Colin Andrews had secured a copy of the video. The circumstances are unclear *(Colin met with John at the*

Waggon & Horses pub) but it is certain that John kept the master copy. Andrews said he needed to subject the tape to "analysis" implying that it might be a fake. He promised to keep John informed and left England immediately, reportedly without saying goodbye to his associates and colleagues. He immediately issued heated press releases on the Internet in the James Bond adventure style which is by now so familiar.

Repercussions

Colin did not keep John informed and failed to return several calls. John is a student and cannot afford transatlantic telephone bills. Though nervous, he wishes above all that the video be made accessible, unaltered, to the general public. He has come to question Colin Andrews' intentions. At the time of writing, Colin is on US radio promoting "his" video. His last press release informs us that he has hired "a private detective agency" to investigate "certain aspects of this case". I always felt it would be better, on employing detectives, not to broadcast it world-wide.

As a result, John gave a copy to Peter Sorensen who undertook to make it available. *(Recent reports suggest John may now be openly selling copies himself.)*

The Showing

Peter Sorensen organised a small viewing of the video on Saturday 7th September at The Barge. There were perhaps twenty people present. He repeated the showing the following evening to an equally impressed group. I was present at both.

I must formally thank Peter on behalf of all those who saw it. He is committed to making this breathtaking footage freely available and should be applauded for his generosity, openness and prompt response. Acknowledgement is also due to John for his courage in difficult and unusual circumstances. He should be proud.

The Dark Side

We have learned to expect that every event, no matter how stunning and miraculous, will be debunked and rubbished by someone. I was naive to assume that this astonishing video might in some way be spared. As early as the second evening showing of the footage, people were pontificating about the ease with which it could have been faked.

In the era of *Jurassic Park* and *Independence Day* it is difficult to deny humanity's burgeoning skills at artifice.

However, in this case, reality knocks rather firmly at the door. None of the hoax explainers had actually visited the formation. If they had, they would have seen a crop circle as un-man-made as ever existed. *(Some reports have stated the lay was messy and many stalks were broken - this is patently untrue; quite the reverse, in fact.)* They were unaware that the time between the formation's arrival and the showing of the video was, at most, 16 hours. One could argue that this is plenty of time for a well-equipped and skilfully staffed special effects studio to fake this film, but where - on a Sunday in Wiltshire - was this studio? How were the personnel aware that this was the day on which they were to fake this film? How did the cameraman know where the formation was going to arrive? How could he be so confident that his co-conspirators at the studio were going to do such a good job that he could start to advertise the existence of the footage? How could he be so certain that Sorensen was not available at lunchtime on the Sunday, and wishing to view the footage immediately? Had Peter been there, the fantasy video fakers would have had a maximum of six hours.

The really desperate will suggest that the formation itself was made for the film. Very few people visited this formation, largely because the farmer was so objectionable. Everyone who did get in was impressed with its quality. It was a viciously wet night and the site is the most visibly overlooked in the area. This is the last field in Wiltshire in which one would choose to carry out a hoax. *(Two sceptic theories run like this: Either a) fakers film the empty field, take the footage and apply, with computer graphics, their invented formation and the balls of light. They then wait for a night with similar conditions to the original video and then send out hoaxers to actually create a pattern of the same shape in the field, thus being able to very quickly produce a video of that formation 'appearing'. Or b) the formation is found or deliberately hoaxed, filmed and rushed back to a studio to 'reverse-engineer' its miraculous 'appearance'.)*

The video shows a consistent and unchanging light quality as it would in a real-time sequence of a few seconds. Whatever else might be said about this video, it is not stop-motion for light levels shift dramatically in minutes at dawn in Wiltshire. I predict that this footage will be condemned as a

fake. With equal certainty, I predict that it will never be condemned as a fake by anyone who is in possession of all the facts.

The Video Itself

I was deeply moved by the video and started to assemble my notes as soon as I returned home. There is no doubt in my mind that this is one of the most important pieces of film in the world.

I will describe it in as much detail as I can. Sooner or later, every reader will see it; for the moment a description must suffice.

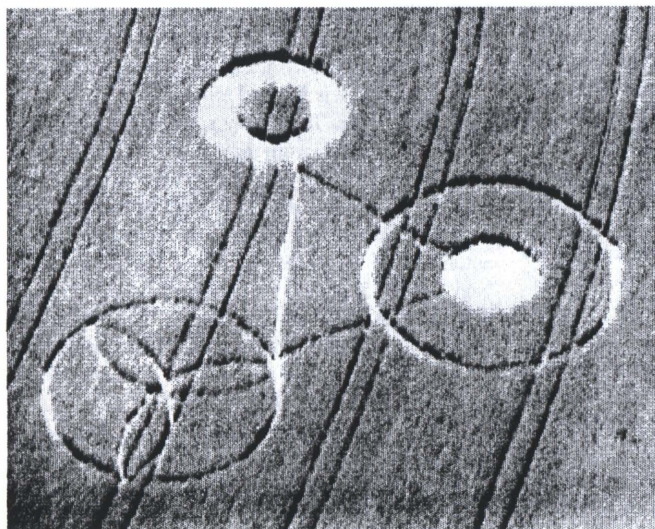
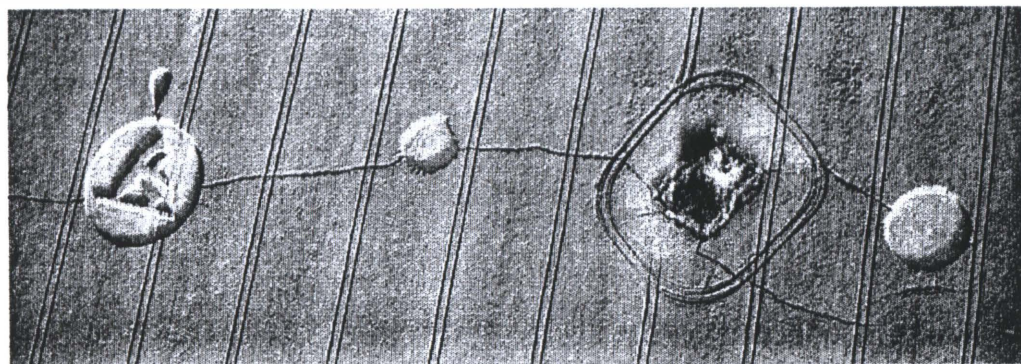
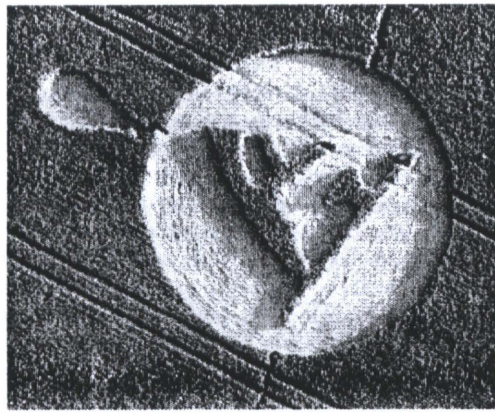
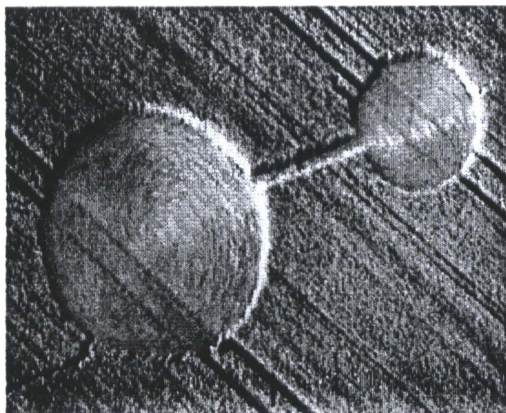
John is on the hill to the north of the field. Thus we are looking south; right frame is west and left frame is east. It is dawn and there is no direct sunlight. However there is enough light to see the landscape clearly.

The luminosities move with great speed and purpose. There is an overwhelming sense that they have a clear task to perform. The key part of the video is no longer than five seconds; it is impossible to comprehend at a single viewing. Each evening the video was shown it must have been repeated literally a hundred times.

To understand what is happening, you must focus on a single part, one of the luminosities for example or part of the field, for five or six viewings. You must ignore everything else, concentrating on one aspect. This becomes easier with repeated viewings. There is no discernible sound, though in the early seconds before the action truly starts John can be heard talking to himself, asking where the lights have gone.

The camera focuses on the field where presumably John had first seen the lights. A second shot closes in on the field. It is flat and untouched. There is no formation. Two luminosities, numbers One and Two, move rapidly from right to left. One is 25% or 30% larger than Two. They follow a semi-circle over the field and then move back to the right and exit upwards to the south. As they leave, they actually pass under powerlines to the south of the field. It was originally thought they actually passed through the adjacent hedgerow, but closer inspection has shown this is not so. Their going under the cables is indicated by the lights appearing to go out for the briefest of moments.

I would estimate that they are three to five feet in diameter. They seem, generally, to be fairly high, possibly twenty or thirty feet up.

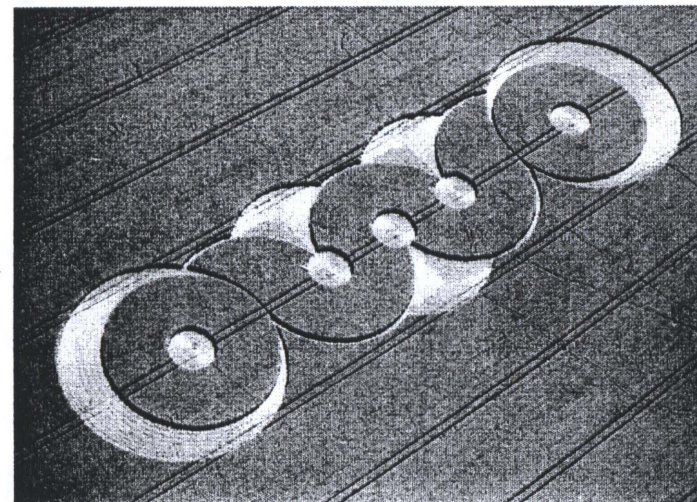
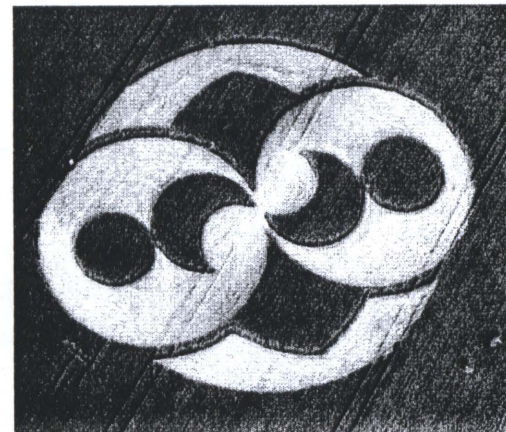
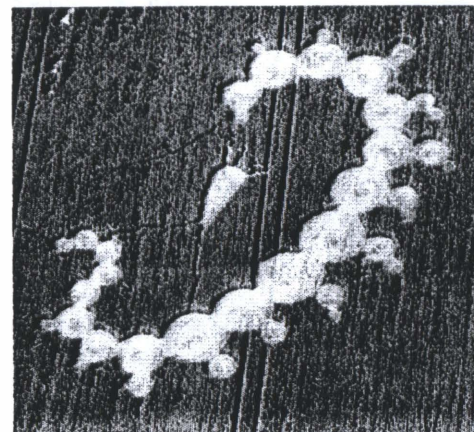
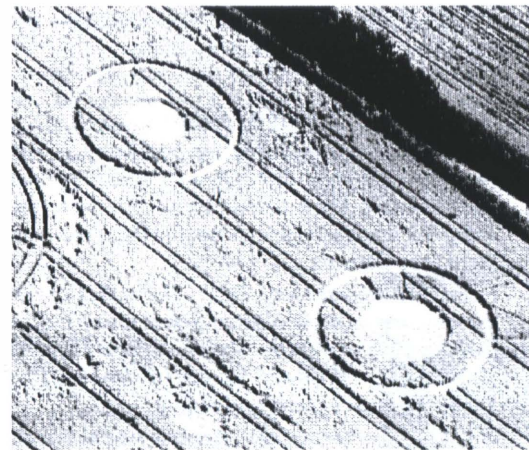


TOP LEFT: Roundway, Devizes, Wiltshire. Photo: **STEVE ALEXANDER**

TOP RIGHT: Detail of the formation at Roundway below. Photo: **STEVE ALEXANDER**

MIDDLE: Roundway again! Note the use of a burial mound as part of the design. Photo: **STEVE ALEXANDER**

BELOW: A mini-Barbury Castle at Brixham, Devon. Photo: **PETE GLASTONBURY**



CIRCLES '96: PHOTO- SPREAD #4

Photographs from the 1996 crop circle season.

*Original colour copies of these photographs can be obtained directly from: **STEVE ALEXANDER** at: 27 St Francis Road, Gosport, Hants, PO12 2UG, tel: 01705 35286. **LUCY PRINGLE** at: 5 Town Lane, Sheet, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU32 2AF, tel: 01730 263454.*

TOP: Somerton, Somerset. Photo: **LUCY PRINGLE**

MID LEFT: 'Caterpillar' fractal, Liddington Castle, Wiltshire - featured last issue but back in close-up by popular request! Photo: **STEVE ALEXANDER**

MID RIGHT: Liddington Castle - the other bit! Photo: **STEVE ALEXANDER**

LEFT: Streatley, Nr Barton Le Clay, Bedfordshire. Photo: **STEVE ALEXANDER**

As luminosities One and Two perform their semi-circle at left frame the Snowflake forms. It appears to happen in the following order. First, a light patch can be seen in the centre of the field as the crop begins to fall and the exposed stems reflect light. The patch immediately becomes the centre circle. Second, the first ring of six circles appears. The nearest of the circles, the northernmost, exhibits the same effect. Third, the six paths, 48' in length, connecting the centre circle to the first six circles appear. Fourth, the six middle circles appear, followed shortly by the tiny outer circles and their pathways.

This formation appears within three seconds. The only way these events can be unpicked is by multiple viewings.

As luminosities One and Two are moving out of the field, luminosity Three can be seen in the next field at the top left of the screen. It moves in at great speed, crossing the screen diagonally and exiting right. As it passes, another, fainter, luminosity, number Four, appears beneath it.

They re-enter almost immediately from the right. Three goes across the screen and out of left frame. Four, still dimmer than its partner, also moves out of left frame but seems to dip briefly towards one, or possibly two of the outer circles. Three and four, having circled back off screen, move directly west. Four, in the lead, is dimmer and seems to disappear in the field. Three goes off-screen right.

Throughout the sequence with the second pair of luminosities, the completed Snowflake formation is clearly visible in the field.

I repeat that the development of the formation takes about three seconds, but it is possible to reconstruct these events as individual components of a sequence. No doubt with further time, others will provide a more comprehensive and detailed analysis.

We are simple humans, trapped in our three-dimensional world. This video brings us our first glimpse of interventions from other dimensions into our mechanical reality. I had assumed that there would be a clear relationship between the movements of the luminosities and the geometry of the formation. There is none.

The luminosities make their pass and the circle simply manifests before our eyes. Clearly the luminosities are responsible; their presence at precisely the moment of formation is too much of a coincidence. However, there is no point of contact,

no acknowledgement in their trajectory of the geometry of the crop circle which forms.

Two Hypotheses

There are other parts of this sequence that were not recorded. We know that John saw lights before he started filming. We can never know what they were doing but it is reasonable to assume that they were there for a purpose.

I offer two hypotheses. First. The object of the exercise was to show John and thus the rest of us the formation of a circle. The noises and the early sightings were irrelevant except for the need to move him into concentrated action.

Second. The luminosities' first task was to key-in the exact form of the crop circle. Had we been able to see this, we might have seen them performing a precise geometric dance, acting as the stylus which drew the Snowflake. The brief pass we witnessed is, in this hypothesis, simply the trigger which causes the wheat to fall in its preordained pattern.

A Puzzle

When Patricia and I surveyed the formation, we found that each of the six arms of the Snowflake had the narrow underlay path which had been so prevalent this season. It ran from the large centre circle to the end of each arm and varied in width from eight to sixteen inches. In every one of the eighteen satellite circles it was overlaid by the circular swirl.

These observations are contradicted by the video. The first six main pathways, four feet wide, are clearly laid after the first ring of circles has been formed. I cannot explain this. Perhaps the video, when enhanced, will demonstrate that the six narrow tracer pathways were indeed laid first. (It is quite possible that the underlay paths are there initially but simply can't be seen given the murky half-light resolution of the picture.)

Conclusion

We have been offered an astonishing window. I have been privileged to look through it early and I am shaken and profoundly grateful. This may be the most important footage on Earth and it is for all of us.

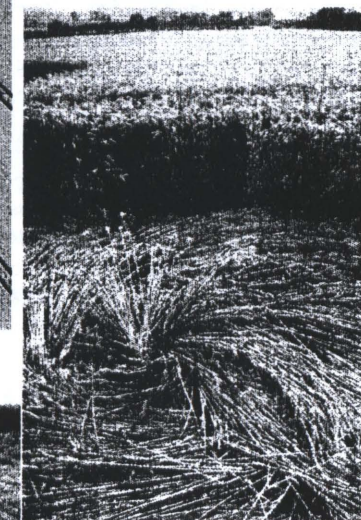
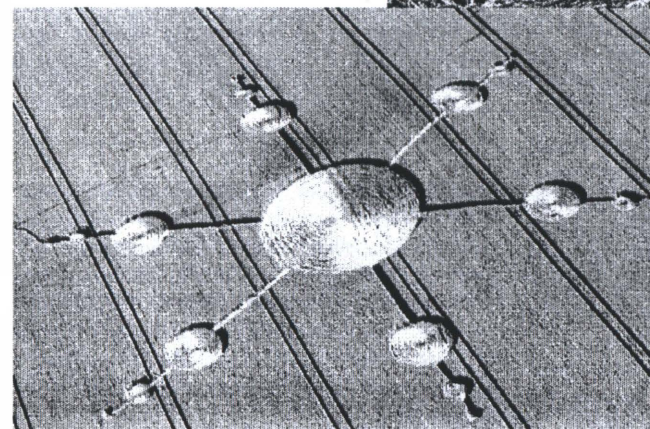
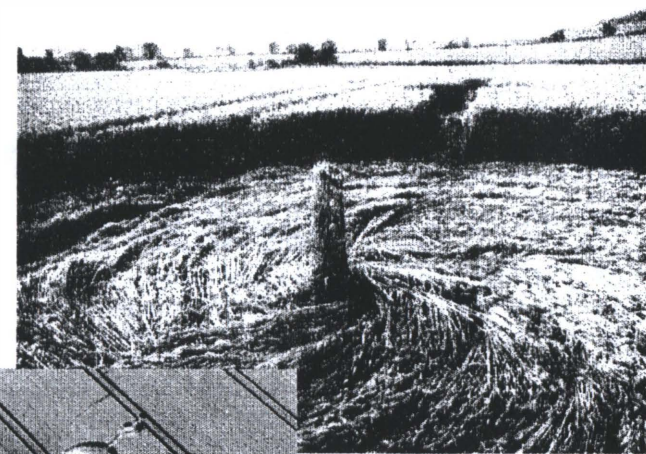
This is why I am sure the video is real: If it was faked, who directed it? Forget the usual, boring mechanistic explanations of how it could have been

done (explanations, incidentally, which always, inevitably, miss out a section of fact), the real question is who conceived it, who wrote the plot? For the remarkable thing is that the unexpectedly disjointed relation between the luminosities and the formation itself is new and - hitherto - unimagined.

I recall the impact of the Alton Barnes pictogram, of

Barbury Castle, of Bythorn and of so many others. In retrospect these were steps in an elaborate progress. The Snowflake video lets us know that we are ready for further revelations. The curtains will be drawn back yet further next season and the world is somehow different. **MG**

PHOTOGRAPHS: From the air it was impressive; inside the Oliver's Castle Snowflake, there was a variety of excellent and beautiful swirls with standing centres. Pictured below - proof positive that Michael Glickman did visit the inside of the formation! Interestingly, very few researchers actually entered the Snowflake.



Aerial photo by **LUCY PRINGLE**

All ground shots by **ANDY THOMAS**

There's still a trickle of circle reports coming in from around England but most of the fields are now ploughed earth and stubble - which means everyone can now settle down over the winter, begin to process another summer's worth of information and take in properly the wealth of staggering designs which our fields have seen in 1996.

Beware of wrong information doing the rounds, however. One rumour (which inexplicably got as far as being put out on the CCCS telephone 'hotline') suggests that Sussex had twenty formations this year and that the Sussex research team is deliberately withholding information! If those at the source of this rumour would like to send us details and photographs of the missing ten formations which were on our own doorsteps, we here in Sussex would love to see them... How blind we all

must have been. Meanwhile, the only ten formations we know anything of have all but one been openly reported in SC in the last few issues, with more detailed surveys to come. A tenth Sussex formation came to light just as we went to print; info next month. Similarly, we have learned of some other formations too late for this issue (two in the Isle of Wight, for instance), details to come. Circle news continues to pour in from other countries and these are listed below after a round up of the straggler reports received since last issue.

HERTFORDSHIRE

Wallingdon, Nr Baldock: A ringed circle appeared in mid-August in oilseed rape and was reported in the *Baldock News*. Unusually, the rape was already brown, flowerless and dry when the formation arrived. The only other similar case SC is aware of, where rape has been visited after its green and yellow state has passed, is the formation between Ditchling Beacon and Patcham, East Sussex, in 1994. This event occurred very near the Icknield Way path, as did others in the area this summer and in years before.

HUMBERSIDE/EAST YORKSHIRE

Burstwick: A small 20' single circle was found in barley in June.

Camerton: A small single circle appeared in wheat in July.

Hedon: A large ringed circle was discovered in wheat sometime in June.

Melton: A older-style pictogram of a circle from which emanated a long extending path with two sloping 'delta wing' paths coming out either side arrived in mid-July, 200 yards from the A63 road.

Sproatley: Four circles were discovered in one field in July.

Welwick: A small single circle was found in June. Researcher John Andrews believes the circle to have been man-made although we don't know why.

KENT

Chartham, Nr Canterbury: A large and, especially for Kent, complex formation of overlapping rings and semi-circles together with a separate 'fish' shape was discovered very late in the season (the first week of September) in wheat. Its overall length was 150'. For some reason the field was harvested very late. The patterns had probably been there for about a month before they were found. Reportedly impressive.

WILTSHIRE

Burbage/Fosbury: Somewhere between these two places, Lucy Pringle spotted a very strange double-"torpedo" design in what appears to be wheat, while flying in early July. Very long, the formation consisted of two extremely elongated oval rings joined together side by side, one about two-thirds shorter than the other, resembling two safety-pins lying together. The paths of the 'rings' noticeably widen at each end of the 'torpedoes'. Not, to our knowledge, ever examined by anyone on the ground.

WALES - ?

Welsh Border: Somewhere here, but we don't yet

know quite on which side, or even which county, a huge formation of triangles, squares and circles was reported around 25th August. Rumour suggested the lay of the formation was in the 'Birling Gap' style - ie. all the crop had been bent over halfway up the stems instead of laid flat. Anyone out there know more?

NETHERLANDS

Colment, Zuid-Limburg: Formation discovered here on 3rd August, no details available.

Graauw: A 30' circle in wheat appeared here around 24th July.

Netersel, Noord-Brabant: A large circle with emanating pathways to three smaller satellites arrived in wheat around 25th July.

Welte, Zuid-Limburg: A single circle enclosed by four straight pathways was found in wheat around 25th July.

Zuid-Limburg: A classic-looking early 90's pictogram in wheat appeared around 4th July.

Plus..!: Many other formations (around 40) in Holland, which we'll get around to eventually...

Lucy Pringle believes that paranormal researchers and croppies take themselves too seriously. She has produced a remedy for this affliction. Through trying to survive her part in the whirlwind of the last year's CCCS furore, some might say Lucy may well be in need of some light relief. I say Lucy Pringle because even though *Paranormal Pranks* is ostensibly authored by cartoonist Peter Eade, this little offering has the stamp of Lucy running throughout. Always one with an eye for a good commercial venture, Lucy published the book and contributes a surprisingly deep foreword for a collection of cartoon jokes about crop circles, UFOs and other assorted gags aimed at the paranormal or New Age set.

As cartoons go, this stuff is pretty amusing; the crop circle and UFO jokes tend to revolve around much the same theme (little green men, and perhaps just a little too much emphasis on hoaxers for some tastes), but it's some of the sicker, more outlandish jokes which are actually the funniest. An example; two eskimos sit in their igloo warming their hands

OTHER COUNTRIES

Flandorf/Korneuburg, Nr Vienna, Austria: A celtic cross-type design of six small circles, linked with a ring, orbiting a large central circle with two thin standing strips inside appeared on July 20th in wheat. Many sightings of aerial light phenomena were reported in the area.

Holeby on Lolland, Denmark: Crucifix-type formation, a central circle with three arms to smaller circles and one longer arm to another, appeared on 25th July in wheat.

Espoo, Finland: On 11th August a double ringed circle was found in wheat with another two circles each side of it. All three were spiralled anticlockwise.

Meanwhile, elsewhere... The Czech Republic has apparently become a hotbed of circle activity in recent years. A team of their croppies came over to England this summer with some astounding pictures of what we have missed so far. More on this another time. What else are we missing around the world..?

Thanks this issue to John Andrews, Mike Rogers, Lucy Pringle, Paul Vigay and Joyce Galley.

on a roaring fire. Caption: "It was a bit handy your mother spontaneously combusting..." This extremism, perhaps disappointingly, doesn't, however, extend to any cartoons about cattle mutilations. I guess the world isn't quite ready for jokes about missing genitalia and laser-removed brains.

This amusing booklet, with its luminous yellow cover, seems aimed principally at the novelty/stocking-filler market, and as such adds neatly to a niche of crop circle books previously only occupied by the comedy publications *Round In Circles* and

Cropcircle Apocalypse.

Paranormal Pranks insists that we must laugh at ourselves as well as being laughed at by others. Part with your dosh for this then and giggle. AT

Paranormal Pranks is currently available at the "special Christmas offer" price of £3.99 plus £1.00 p&p UK, £1.50 overseas, "while existing stocks last". Order your copy from: 5 Town Lane, Sheet, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU32 2AF. Cheques payable to Lucy Pringle.

- NEWS -

CIRCLES '96 UPDATE #5

The party's over... but not quite. With another summer behind us a few reports of formations from the season are still filtering through the system. ANDY THOMAS rounds up the events SC has heard about since last issue...

- REVIEWS - PRANKS WITH PLANKS

ANDY THOMAS laughs
at *Paranormal Pranks*...

cornography

with Michael Glickman

Sitting in one of the lovely Chiselden formations, Patricia says "Oh (expletive deleted). A tour."

A tenacious crocodile of determined middle-aged American women (why are they always women?) stomps along the tramline towards us. We scoop up our stuff and make for the other tramline. Too late. They're in. As we scurry away a voice calls: "Michael, Michael, I have a question for you."

I vaguely recognise a face from the Glastonbury Symposium and, as I now realise, having spoken there, I am "Michael", public property.

"You know the Stonehedge formation..."

"Stonehenge" I murmur.

"...yes, the Juliette set..."

"Well some people have decided to call it the Julia set..." I say.

"...yes, well, Colon Andrews..."

"It's pronounced 'Colin' here." I say. "Colon is a part of the lower digestive tract."

"...yes, well, I bought this photo of the Stonehedge Juliette set from Colon Andrews and it's been stolen from my hotel room."

My mind goes into meltdown. What can this little woman want? Why did she make me stop my rapid escape down the tramline? Does she think I am an insurance agent, a private detective? Does she think I looted her hotel room?

I glance longingly at Patricia's distant back. She's made it.

"I am sure Mr Andrews will happily sell you another photograph." I say reassuringly.

"Yes. But where is he? Where is he?"

I flee.

Ten minutes later, from the safety of the other circle, I see them driven away to their next fleeting visit, terrorising all researchers in their path.

Early on the evening of 11th August we had word that a large formation had arrived at Oliver's Castle. I raced there with Patricia Murray and Peter Heppa, a German video maker and we arrived at the edge as the dusk, and a savage rainstorm, moved in.

Oliver's Castle is the best location for looking down on crop circles. Below us as the light dimmed and the rain pelted we saw the lovely Snowflake formation. It was delightful. We staggered back through the mud. Three pairs of shoes ruined.

John Butler at Roundway Farm is the most difficult farmer I have ever met. When I approached him for permission to go in and measure, he rudely refused and said the formation was the result of "vandalism". Some days later we were shocked to hear that Butler, needing to take a combine from one field to another, had deliberately redirected it to cut through the heart of the Snowflake. Viewed from the hill above it was clear that enough remained for us to measure. We found Butler, valiantly resisted our urge to discuss vandalism with him, offered him cash, and, with his purchased permission, drove to the field.

A short digression here about town planning. The Grand Boulevards of Paris are considered masterpieces of urbanism. What is little known is that Paris had been the densest and most squalid of cities. It was disease-ridden and suffered regular revolutions. The boulevards were ruthlessly driven through the city by Baron Hausmann, not to make the beauty that Paris now is, but to provide rapid access for the army to quell revolution wherever it might occur. The clearing of terrible slums was an accidental advantage. Digression ends.

We arrived at the edge of the field to find a truly Hausmannian boulevard welcoming us. It stretched, straight and wide, across the field. There was no alternative - really there wasn't - but to drive ceremonially to the centre of the circle. I am proud to claim to be the first person ever to drive into a circle (or more correctly, for the more squeamish readers, into the former, now destroyed, site of a circle.)

When we had finished measuring, we turned the car by driving around the largely wrecked central circle. With the flow, of course. With the flow.

One morning, we drove by the East Field at Alton Barnes to see the pattern of the harvested Double Helix formation beautifully duplicated in bright green shoots in the stubble. The barley seeds which had been pressed into the earth by so many visitors had started to grow. We took photographs and went for lunch. On our return it had been ploughed in. The cycle continues. We have not the remotest idea what the soil of East Field will offer us next season. **MG**