

*THE MONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND*

69

OCTOBER 1997

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**Sacred
Geometry
& Earth
Changes**

**Oliver's Castle;
Michael Glickman
Doesn't Take It
Lying Down...**

**Final UK
Formations
1997 Reports**

**Letters
Bite Back!**

"You teach your daughters the diameters of the planets, and wonder when you have done that they do not delight in your company" DR SAMUEL JOHNSON

This is a bit of an 'issues' month, with several letters responding to SC 68, and Michael Glickman's crusade against the Oliver's Castle debunkers. To give space to all this in itself raises an issue: how far should debate go when we're dealing with something which many believe is here to inspire us to higher concerns? There is a school of thought that suggests crop circle enthusiasts should simply get on with enjoying what they believe in and ignore challengers to avoid any unpleasantness. Some would have SC go the same way; but there's a danger here. Never to raise a voice against opinions disagreed with, misinformation, or even lies, runs the risk of allowing the very subject some of us feel so passionately about to be buried from the view of those who might otherwise be attracted. Given the human tendency to believe negative information above all else until presented with evidence to the contrary, ungrounded scepticism and paranoid assertions of mass-hoaxing simply repel those who might otherwise take an interest.

Does this matter? Are the circles worth fighting over and risking the type of conflict SC has found itself embroiled in on occasion? The answer to this is in people deciding for themselves where their fascination with the phenomenon lies. If the circles are just curious oddities, a fun hobby or Sunday science project to fill the summer months then maybe not. If, on the other hand, one believes the appearance of the crop formations have huge potential significance to our race, our planet and these turbulent times, then raising a voice against misleading information becomes more important. The circles are either here as a mark of global change, as a cause or natural symptom, or they're not. If we decide they are - as many have - then surely it becomes necessary to campaign for the opportunity for their message, whatever it may be, to be heard loud and clear without being clouded at every turn by unsubstantiated gossip and rumour. Every viewpoint, of course, has a right to be aired, however uncomfortable, but such acknowledgment and toleration doesn't mean people mustn't fight for things they feel are being misrepresented. For most at SC the circles are a passion, a concern, and we'll dig for the truth where we have to. This subconscious sense of mission, I suppose, is what opens us up to accusations of fundamentalism. Pseudo-fundamentalism resides on both sides of the circle-origin debate; to be a *real* fundamentalist means to be committed fiercely to one standpoint only - and that's NOT SC, any more than Peter Sorensen claims it's not him (see page 10). Simply, we at SC don't actually know what's going on with the circles but do feel there's something of enough significance here that it should be shared without a blanket of rumour and opinion presented as gospel.

ANDY THOMAS

SC

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Front Cover: Michael Glickman takes a breather at Bishops Cannings, July 1997. Photograph by Andy Thomas.

Here we go with the final incoming reports of English formations from 1997...

DEVON

Kennford Ken, Nr Exeter: A single 40' approx circle was seen from a road here around 1st August.

HAMPSHIRE

Clanfield: A neat single circle with two grapeshot further up the field was discovered on 3rd July, not far from a housing estate. Later, around 1st August, a large 1994-style 'thought bubble' design of five decreasing circles appeared but this was much messier. Although the outlines of the circles themselves were reasonable, the lay inside was very haphazard, with no discernible swirls in any of them and the geometric line of the whole pattern was awkwardly staggered.

Upham: Back at this popular spot for crop circles in 1997, an elaborate 100' approx celtic cross-type design was reported on 14th August. A large ring surrounded by four small circles was itself encircled by two rings, one thin, one thick. The two outer rings were joined by two thin paths. The outer ring, though generally neat, was very distorted at one point, which may have been due to the long-observed quality of 'gap seeking', where the circle-laying energy (or whatever) can be disturbed by the presence of spaces in the crop, like tractor tramlines.

Warnford: A very crude 30' approx smiley-face appeared here around 13th June.

Whitchurch: A 'vesica piscis' of two very thin overlapping rings arrived on 4th August but was marred somewhat by a rather non-geometrical 60' star design at the centre. The lay inside, however, was reportedly impressive. A line of speckled marks just below the design looked like either an animal track or where someone had tried to walk across standing crop without being noticed but failed miserably (or was this Doug Bower practising his alleged 'pole vaulting' technique.?). See photo, page 7. Goodness, we're sounding quite sceptical this month aren't we? But we are NOT saying this or that is definitely a hoax by describing crudeness or poor geometry, as at Clanfield

above, simply reporting visual qualities which people must make their own minds up about.

NORFOLK

Wacton: A small single circle was discovered here sometime in the summer.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Middleton Cheney: Three circles in a line were found here on 9th August in a triplet configuration, two small circles either side of a larger one.

OXFORDSHIRE

Brackley: An unconfirmed sighting was made here around 9th August near Finmare airfield, details unknown.

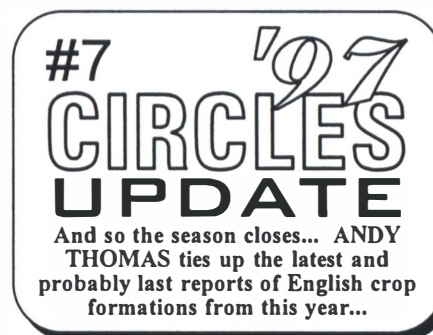
Long Hanborough, Nr Coombe: Another unconfirmed sighting was documented here, also around 9th August, details unknown.

Woodstock: On 28th July, a dumbbell with a connected triangular path resembling a sail appeared in wheat. The two anticlockwise circles of the dumbbell were both 30' connected by a 22' by 3' shaft and the 'sail' was 55' by 55'. This unusual design feature appeared to point towards nearby Blenheim Palace.

SOMERSET

Compton Dando: Another clear entry in our silliest circle site place name competition, a ringed 50' clockwise circle with a total diameter of 62' arrived next to a clockwise circle also of 62' just below Stanonbury Hill on 16th August.

Isle Brewers: A small dumbbell in animal feed wheat - one of the circles was only 18' approx - with one of the circles ringed was found by the farmer as he was harvesting around 12th August. So excited was he by his discovery that he telephoned a cynical National Farmers Union office to see who he should report it to! By some miracle, they referred him to SCR's very own Barry Reynolds... Interesting that the NFU do actually have some crop circle researcher's addresses and phone numbers on their national files... By the way, a formation appeared in Wiltshire this summer, which



we'll assume was man-made, which read, in large squashed-looking letters "F*** THE NFU", except there were, of course, no asterisks. One imagines this was some kind of clever-clogs response to the NFU's ongoing reward offer for information leading to the prosecution of crop circle hoaxers. Why any attempts at prosecutions haven't yet been made when all the NFU has to do is simply read the utterly candid claims of circle-fakery on the Internet from named alleged 'landscape artists' is anybody's guess. Perhaps even the NFU can see that the ludicrousness of this fictional drivel wouldn't be worth pursuing...

Newbridge, Nr Bath: A small single circle arrived on 11th July near the bridge which leads to the Bath by-pass in an isolated field surrounded by tall trees.

SUFFOLK

Birch Airfield: A quintuplet arrived here, not far from the A12 road, around 14th August.

Hitcham: The third of three formations in this area this year was a dumbbell reported on 14th August.

SURREY

Buckland: Around 25th July, a pictogram of a ring containing two semi-circles and two pointed paths appeared in rye, with four grapeshot nearby. Then, on 27th July, a more elaborate design arrived in the same field, looking like two *Starship Enterprises* from *Star Trek* joined together... Others have speculated that these might actually represent military gliders, as the nearby hill was used to train glider pilots between the world wars and several of them died there in accidents.

Kingswood: A formation of unknown configuration was seen and reported here by the *Southern FM* radio station's 'eye in the sky' traffic-reporting helicopter on the morning broadcasts of 29th July in an "Oh look, there's a crop circle..." kind of way. It was apparently clearly visible from the M25 as one approached Junction 8 eastwards to Reigate.

West Clandon, Nr Guildford: What was probably Surrey's most elaborate and largest formation for some years was discovered from the air by Michael Hubbard on 2nd August, a series of circles, rings and paths in curly patterns arranged in a kind of cross design. Sadly, this was never explored from the ground to our knowledge. The formation was east of

Guildford and this was the nearest town Michael could pin-point as the location.

SUSSEX

Cissbury Ring, West Sussex: From the air, Michael Hubbard spotted a bizarre sacred maze-type symbol etched into grass and scrubland near this ancient and famous Iron Age hill-fort in early August. The impression is that it was created for some kind of ritualistic or artistic purpose but we report it here just in case. The design was intricate but geometrically imperfect, almost like a piece of old cave-art, and appeared to have stones placed within it at certain points.

WARWICKSHIRE

Cosford: A neat single circle arrived here around 23rd July, hidden in the corner of a tree-lined field but very close to a major road junction with a roundabout.

Earlwood: On 6th August, three circles, one large, one small, were discovered next to a large distinct oval, all laid anticlockwise. Tracks joined the separate components but these may have been made by visitors to the formations.

WILTSHIRE

Liddington Castle: To join the plethora of other designs found in this area in 1997, a 20 metre circle with a complex lay was found around 31st July. Although the outer edge of the circle was clockwise, the inner part of it was anticlockwise! The crop, although smoothly laid, was not flattened fully to the ground. A small 'blob' shape was attached to the circle but did actually appear to be part of the main design.

Bratton: A single 25' circle in wheat arrived at this old circle-haunt around 25th July, just below the embankments of the ancient hill-fort there. Two grapeshot with standing centres lay nearby.

Vernham Dean: On 5th August, a very impressive formation in wheat was spotted here, which may have been present for the preceding two weeks before being found. Seven circles of differing size, one ringed and one partially ringed were laid out in a clustered line, distinguished by a distinctive curved path which encompassed the whole design - a new trait for the crop designs. Unfortunately, it's faint resemblance to either a) Mickey Mouse, or b) a man

"Dick Laurent is dead"

waving, has lodged these images so firmly into some people's minds that they can't see the pattern as anything else. Others, however, have interpreted the formation as being a type of star map, although quite what constellation is being depicted is highly debatable. Some have said Lyra, others the Pleiades. Make your own astronomical choice. The formation was apparently very hard to find on the ground which may explain why it lay undiscovered for so long.

Woodborough Hill: On 11th July, an extraordinary and unusual pictogram in wild grass appeared here just below the distinctive copse of trees which crowns the hill itself. A long snaking path emanated from a clear circle, fading out as it progressed. The whole formation was surrounded by a series of extremely faint rings which could barely be seen at all. Spotted from the air by Lucy Pringle, it's a shame this was never investigated from the ground (to our knowledge) as grass formations are rare and this was exceptionally clear and neat. On 21st July, in a wheat field below the hill, the Germans Koch and Kyborg created their annual communication experiment formation in what they see as their ongoing dialogue with beings from the constellation Orion. Each year they devise a reply design to the previous season's pictograms, which they believe contain astronomical information. This year they made a series of rings and circles scattered across the field which apparently communicated our position in the stars from Orion's point of view. Or something. The formations, interestingly, for those who think this sort of thing can be knocked up in an hour or so, took an entire day to create, and much longer to plan. The Germans even went as far as placing the circles on earth energy lines. Let's hope the beings they're trying to chat to are benevolent. If not and they eventually turn up in Independence Day-type ships and blow us all away, we can blame Koch and Kyborg for inviting them.

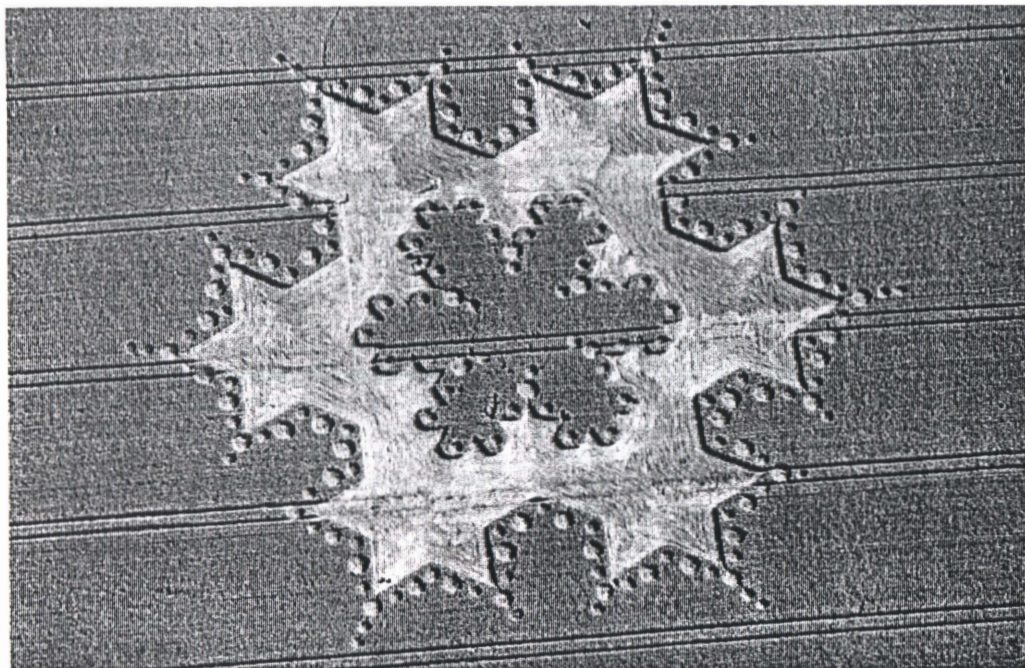
AND FINALLY... THE LAST FORMATION OF THE YEAR?

Hackpen Hill, Nr Broad Hinton, Wiltshire: The last English formation of the year as far as we can tell and if we're not taken by surprise by an early-autumn one, arrived here on August 18th in the form of another fractal of triangles, clearly in the same series as the Silbury Hill and Milk Hill 'snowflakes' earlier in the summer. Smaller than its predecessors and more triangular than star-shaped, this was a gorgeous note

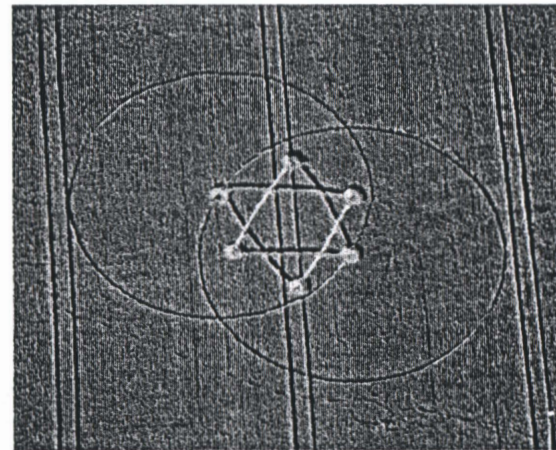
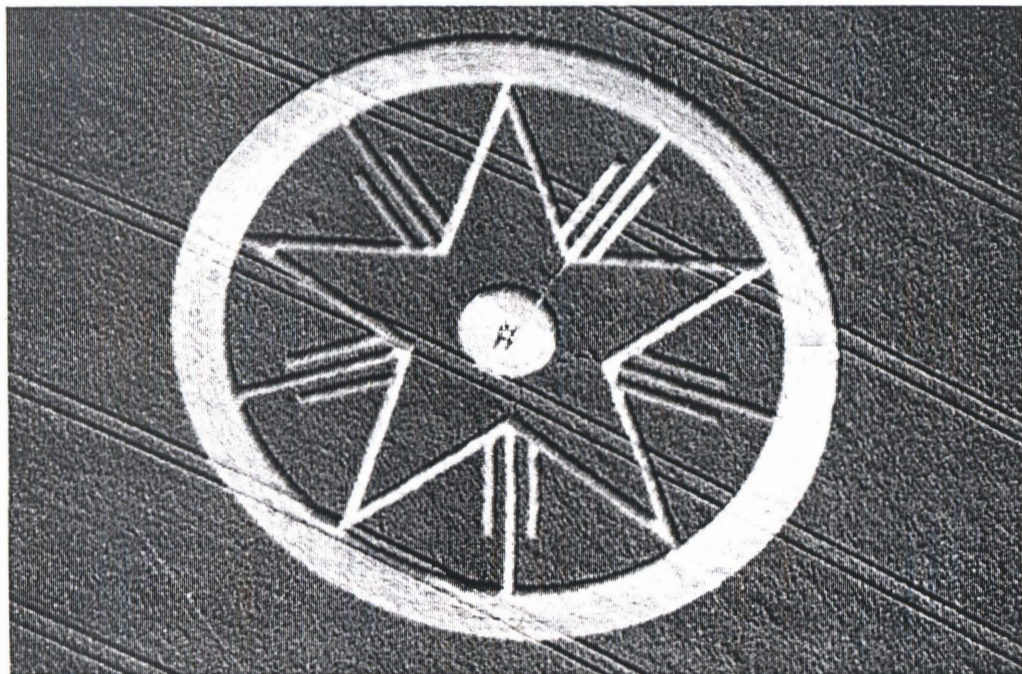
for the season to end on, a happy-looking, exuberant symbol in wheat characterised by streams of tiny circles, 96 in all, going from small to large, radiating out from the symbol like sunny particles of light. The central motif has nine emanating triangles, equally spaced, identical to the outer edges of the other aforementioned fractals. It has been described as a 'strange attractor', although no-one seems quite sure why. Answers on a postcard please. There's a good feeling to this formation, and it's certainly more a "See you soon!" end-of-term pattern than the "Goodbye forever" summing up symbol we all dread. It's a bit of a myth that the last formation of the year is always the biggest and best. Normally, there are a scattering of wind-down formations after the biggies everyone remembers. This year then, the mock-grand finale must clearly be seen as the Milk Hill snowflake (see page 6), but this mini-fractal at Hackpen Hill is a good enough note to go out on properly.

We hope we have succeeded in enthralling everyone with these rundowns of the very latest crop formations as the reports come in. Sometimes data lists can be dry and boring without visual references, which don't often come until later, but we do our best to transmit some life into them by telling you what we know about the patterns as they get reported. We don't claim to have covered every single formation of the year, there will surely be some missed, but all the formations known about have appeared within the pages of *SC* at some point or another this summer. Remember, aside from the Internet, which by its very nature has the fastest information available, *SC* is the next best way to keep up with what's going on and still the only publication to provide this service on a monthly basis... There's still some data to come, of course, and next month - at last - we round up the global formations of 1997... AT

Special thanks this issue to Lucy Pringle & Michael Hubbard. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our data lists throughout this year. There are too many for all to be named individually but particular thanks must go to Karen Douglas & Steve Alexander and to all the contributors of reports to the Internet's Crop Circle Connector, run by Mark Fussell and Stuart Dike. Special credit must also go to Barry Reynolds, whose database is crucial to maintaining these regular updates.



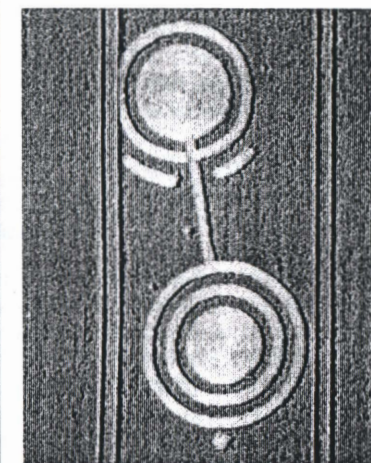
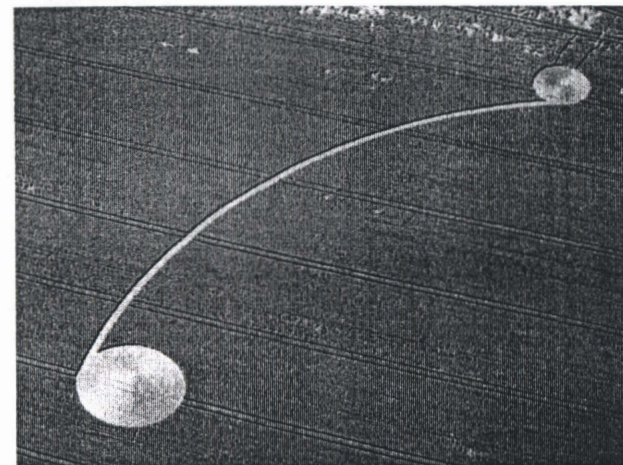
ABOVE: Milk Hill, Wiltshire. The most astonishing formation of the year and maybe one of the best ever. There are 198 small circles in this design - a record breaking number in one pattern. BELOW: Bourton, near Bishops Cannings, Wiltshire. One of the neatest and most immediately striking symbols of 1997.



#5 '97 CIRCLES GALLERY

Photographs showing some of 1997's beautiful crop formations, taken by STEVE ALEXANDER. Note the 'star' motif which runs through three of these designs.

Full colour original copies of Steve's pictures can be obtained from him at: 27 St Francis Road, Gosport, Hants, PO12 2UG. Tel: 01705 352867.

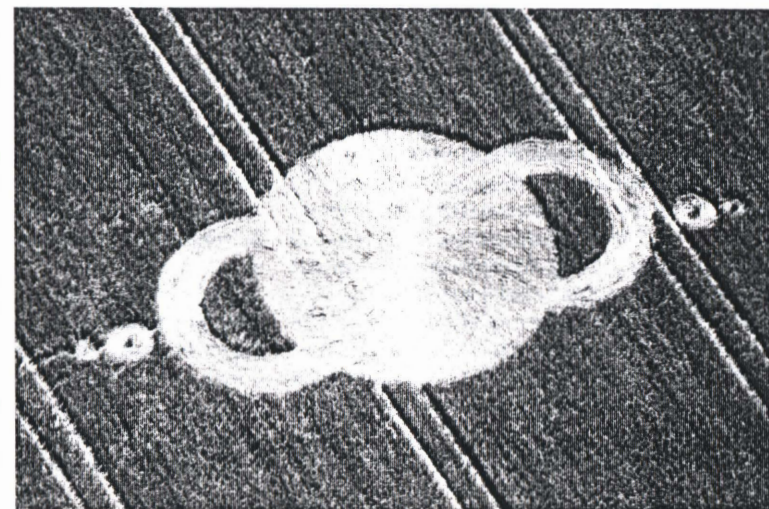


TOP: Witchurch, Hampshire. Geometrically dodgy but reportedly well-laid.

MID LEFT: Liddington Castle, Wiltshire. Note the huge and perfect arc of the pathway.

MID RIGHT: Keysley Down, Somerset. This recalls the early 90's pictograms.

RIGHT: Lane End Down, Hampshire. The radial burst lay of the central circle is very impressive.



The best teachers I have ever had have been the circle makers. There would be a certain logic in going on to assume that the greatest teaching I have had from them is about the circles. Not so! I have learned more about people, human earthlings, than I ever dreamed possible.

How is it that, in this curious and eccentric community, we have been misled to accept that any sentence which contains the words "hoax" or "fake" must be radiant with truth and may be accepted without the most superficial of examination? How can it be that the Oliver's Castle video, evidence that we have sought for years, is so quickly and gleefully rejected on the flimsiest of evidence?

I must start here by stating that the formation was as real as any I have inspected. I spent more

time in it, I believe, than anyone else. The geometric information it contained was simply astounding. Anyone wishing to reassure themselves of its quality needs only to look at the video footage shot in the formation by Peter Sorenson who was to become - as time went by - one of the most vehement critics of the Oliver's Castle video. His own video of the formation itself demonstrates an immaculate crop circle which Sorenson can be heard to applaud at every turn.

It will not be easy to view. This is another piece of suppressed information as is the longer, unedited, sound version of the original Weyleigh tape which others have chosen, as yet, not to release.

The Oliver's Castle video touched me deeply. It seemed to be *right*. Of course, the usual suspects geared up for their ritual demolition within hours of seeing it but, against that, a truly impressive array of film, video and special effects people were most impressed. Not a single one said that it could not be faked. They all agreed that it could. But it would take time, money, equipment and real skill and artistry. Attempts by amateurs to duplicate it were laughable.

I am not a film, video or special effects expert. In

these areas I rely on the opinions of acknowledged professionals. The only technical contention against the video's authenticity came from Lee Winterston's studio in Swindon. Remember, by the way, that Winterston is a self-confessed circle 'hoaxer'. He put

forward an argument about the two image 'fields' which should be present in any video. The Oliver's Castle video, according to him, had only one. Thus it was faked. I must emphasise that this has been the only technical argument against the video and forgive me, I believe Hollywood, California against Swindon, Wiltshire.

And so the whole scuzzy saga dragged on. The obsession on the part of the principal hoax-boosters to discredit the video at any

cost became almost comic. What had got into them? Anyone at *The Barge* who did not keep moving would be bored to death, night after night, by their relentless rantings.

The target of their attack, the most pernicious *argumentum ad hominem* in living memory, was the hapless Weyleigh or Wabe. He worked in a video company, he had dyed his hair, he had grown - or was it shaved off? - a beard, since first appearing. What did any of this prove beyond a disgraceful campaign to discredit this man? The first thing he told us was that he wanted nothing except to be left alone. They invaded his place of work, unannounced and mob-handed, with a Japanese film crew. They reported, like schoolboy bullies, that he ran away. Wouldn't you run away? The only thing proven here is that the accusers' 'research' had descended to the level of the lowest paparazzi. Had they shown that he was an axe-murderer or child abuser it would have taught us nothing more about the video itself. What - to use the old investigator's adage - about Motive, Means and Opportunity?

Then, some weeks ago, with a grand flurry, they promised the final revelation. I was thrilled. Perhaps now these flakiest of investigators, whose work to

date had been no more than innuendo and defamation, a sleazy *Barge* side-show, would pull a rabbit from a hat. Perhaps they had real information on the video. What were the motives? How had the video been fabricated so quickly? Who had funded it and at which immaculately equipped studio had it been so quickly and beautifully faked? How, above all, was this individual, or this team, able to respond so quickly to the gift of the appearance of the formation? I waited in vain to hear these questions answered. Instead of answers they grasped for the last refuge of the scoundrel; by asserting the formation had been hoaxed! I knew that not to be true and I further knew that if, after twelve months, this was the best they could do they should be ashamed of themselves. Further, if this is - after a year - the best evidence they can produce, does it not confirm the veracity of the video?

What of Wabe's much trumpeted confession? What of the loudly telegraphed TV programme? (See *editorial*, SC 67.) When neither appeared, did the accusers apologise publicly to this man who they had so despicably slandered? Well, of course not. Did they apologise to the crop circle community who they had so knowingly misled? No, they did not. Simply, having spread their poison, they kept quiet. I knew that formation and I know it to be real.

Measuring it, we noted, like Peter, several exquisite features of construction. There was nothing there to raise our suspicions. When the formation was put on the drawing board, it unfolded like a flower, revealing many particular characteristics. Perhaps the most important of these was that it contained - though clearly a six-fold figure - a thin seven-fold star, a heptagram. This is a significant discovery as not only is this the first time seven-fold geometry has been found but this is the geometry of Spirit and Revelation. What could be a more appropriate additional gift?

As to the video, I am anxious to hear real discussion, real evidence, real analysis from qualified persons. I hope that the unreliable pub-rats are now exposed to the community as nothing more than gossips. Their motives are another matter.

The attack on this video has failed pathetically. We truly must learn to exercise a little judgement, discernment and restraint in the face of this garbage. Yet again, the circle makers deliver a double lesson. Firstly, they provide the gift we have sought for years; a magical insight into how a circle is formed. Secondly, they hold up a sharp and unrelenting mirror to reflect just how much further we have to evolve. **MG**

LETTERS

SC 68 illicit quite a response, verbally and in letter-form, for a number of reasons...

I was surprised that to answer my letter in SC 68, you took twice as much space as the letter itself. Now, if I was to take twice as long for my reply, that would require three magazine pages - and if you took six pages to reply to that, three quarters of SC would be consumed.

So, I'll forgo the urge to address your every point, and focus on one that is at the core of the matter. Then I must also write a bit concerning Michael Glickman's column, which is tangentially related.

Andy wrote, "Peter's work carries the potential of creating widespread damage when pronouncements on the genuineness or otherwise are made by him".

And, "the fact is that those on the periphery of interest are being turned away by his negative opinions..."

I take quite seriously the danger that some individuals will probably be turned off from the circles if they read *only* the reports which I've made on circles I feel were not genuine. But I am certain that the vast majority of newcomers spend more than a few minutes looking into the matter and they encounter a wide variety of opinion from many sources, including - I hope - my positive reports.

I think that a democratic interaction of ideas is vital to the *long term* advancement of the circles. I strongly disagree with your insistence that "...no formation should be declared anything at all, simply reported with cool observations..." I believe debate, fuelled by differing opinions, always results in a greater good. And when I find strong clues to a new circle's origin - whether muddy footprints or magic bends - I am duty-bound to report them. (Martin Noakes take note; this isn't the cause of "Joe Public believing the debunkers". In fact, it's a much stronger defensive

position against sceptical attack than proclaiming there are no hoaxers.) (*Who's proclaiming this?* - Ed) My opinions have long troubled my friend Michael Glickman, and now, through the thinnest of veils, in his *Cornography*, he has attacked my diagrams as "propaganda" for a "new fundamentalism" at *The Barge*. Please! Fundamentalists force a single religious doctrine down people's throats and tolerate no questioning of their scripture. But I encourage all theories and my philosophical approach to the circles is all about questioning. I feel some formations are man-made and some are not. I know there is something very profound here, but it's by no means clear what! When folks tell me they think I'm wrong, I listen carefully to their views. I even change sometimes! That's not fundamentalist. Nor am I a propagandist - I am certainly not lying to manipulate people's thinking!

Sadly, Michael's last paragraph borders on book burning, when he urges his readers to "tear the propaganda from the walls!" People have recently, in fact, begun doing exactly that (taking my diagrams from the boards), and some anonymous person is writing crude personal remarks on my pages. If not the direct result of Michael's inflammatory urgings, the motivation of these acts to suppress free speech is identical.

The Barge is an open forum, where people discuss ideas and post papers reflecting the whole croppie spectrum. I wouldn't dream of removing something from the bulletin board because it was contrary to my beliefs. And, I can 'take a joke', so I leave even the crude graffiti.

I'm astonished that my beloved old friend is encouraging vandalistic censorship in his widely-read column. And I wish SC would go back to the way it used to be, when it devoted itself to the love of the phenomenon, rather than wasting space in an on-going campaign against people and ideas it disagrees with. Talk about negativity!

Peter Sorensen, Pasadena, California, USA.

Actually, SC has mellowed substantially from "the way it used to be", in terms of dealing with "people and ideas it disagrees with" as long-term readers will confirm! It's just that sometimes we have to resurrect our old fire to deal with important issues that need addressing. As Peter says; "debate, fuelled by differing opinions, always results in a greater good". To

avoid certain issues can be to let them get out of hand to the point where they become overwhelming problems, so we face them openly. This is not "negativity" but necessity. History has shown that appeasement and denial never works. As we have said before, however, we never attack people on a personal level but simply hold them accountable for their words and actions and take issue where we feel the need to do so. We felt the length of our reply to Peter last issue was necessary because it raised some general points that needed airing. It should be remembered that Peter's letter was in itself a response to just two lines in SC! (And yes, we know, this reply has taken up another three paragraphs...)

As far as reporting what is found inside crop circles goes, of course people must be honest about what they find; the difference though, is simply to say "I found some muddy footprints" (for instance), rather than "I found some footprints therefore this is a hoax". SC, incidentally, does NOT advocate vandalism of The Barge noticeboard and DOES respect all viewpoints even if it doesn't agree with them. We rather think Michael Glickman was speaking figuratively.

One of our readers also wishes to take issue with some of Peter's views...

I was saddened to learn that the "they're all hoaxes this year" brigade (SC 68) are still despoiling the landscape. It's a wonder there is anybody left studying crop circles at all when this state of affairs has been going on since 1991. Having viewed the phenomenon on the ground since 1989, and commented on it since 1983, I feel I am in some position to judge.

Let's get it straight - all opinions on the ground appearance of a formation are entirely subjective. Remarks that it "looked an absolute mess" on the ground often bear no resemblance to what it looks like from the air. Dominant researchers getting in the first opinions (particularly now we have the Internet) are hyping out anybody else's views. This year Peter Sorensen has fired salvo after salvo of mostly very valuable survey work on the Internet, but making personal assessments on a number of major events. He wasn't too generous with the Barbury Castle rape designs even though they were undoubtedly the finest bending ever achieved in this crop; and he rated the Stonehenge labyrinth as "wrong" even

though it was laid down in damp green barley in early June and the very intricate design would be a nightmare to create with mechanical devices. Then, all of a sudden, he began to like them - declaring the Alton Priors 'Torus Knot' of July 11th to be "gorgeous" and "flowing like water". My opinion, after seeing this one on July 12th, was that it was no more than average on the ground but very impressive viewed across the other side of the valley. All these big and complex formations need to be viewed from a distance, preferably from the air. On the ground it is impossible to make out the design - even more reason to see how difficult it would be to hoax them. Silly comments on a few broken stems are basically meaningless. Until the wheat crop starts to turn golden and dry out, do we find truly perfect lays? Probably not until after July 20th in an average English summer. Who admires a great work of art from less than two feet away in a gallery? All you see then are brush strokes and blobs of paint. Does not the same apply to crop circles?

I also note Mr Sorensen has commented on the number of muddy footprints he claims to have spotted in early 1997 formations. Bear in mind we had five inches of rain in most of the south of England during June and storms of such intensity that top-soil was exploded into the air leaving mud naturally spattered on growing plants. This could easily be spread around in a crop circle by flocks of birds or other wildlife foraging at first light. Can anyone positively identify a Doc Marten's imprint on flattened crop or be certain no other humans have been there beforehand?

When I first discovered the Toot Baldon circles in Oxfordshire this August using long-range binoculars, I was able to establish at the remote field that there were absolutely no entry points and the tramlines did not pass through either circle. Furthermore, the lays were immaculate - it being formed in dry, ripe wheat. Needless to say, I, (and maybe a few people from Sussex) will be out looking for crop circles again in 1998!

PS. We at Oxford are flattered to learn that we are in the hunt for the title of "silliest crop circle place name" of 1997. As this is the second formation to be found near Toot Baldon (the first in 1995) can we say "TOOT TOOT"! Toot Baldon (spelt with a third 'o', note), Marsh Baldon and Nuneham Courtenay, all within three miles of each other, must challenge for the highest level of silliness in the land! I will also check whether world champion sprinter, Atto Baldon, has ancestry from the area!

Geoff Ambler, Wheatley, Oxfordshire

Sorry to say that 'Arse Overtip' (or whatever it was) ('Arse Sodbury', actually - Ed) isn't in Oxfordshire. Is it in Sucksex?

Anthony Cheke, Oxford, Oxfordshire

Martin Noakes' article last month, as mentioned briefly by Peter above, also sparked reaction - nearly all supportive. However, we did hear from Michael Newark, named in the piece, who wishes to point out that although Martin accurately quotes his views on the motives of the hoaxing teams he thinks exist, he DOES believe in a genuine phenomenon as well and would like his positive work with dowsing and other research acknowledged.

Incidentally, we should point out that the "charlatans and rumour-mongers" mentioned in the intro box to Martin's article did NOT refer to those people mentioned by Martin but rather to those who mislead such researchers by spreading this kind of unsubstantiated hoax-talk in the first place. Oh, and we also received this...

While reading SC 68 I came across the Martin Noakes column which referred to 'Tony'. Well, I can say with all honesty that is how I would depict him. Myself and my mate spent 4-5 days with Tony and his brother, went in a few crop circles and he said the usual, as Martin says. Away from the circles we had a hilarious time.

But I must say this to cheer Martin up. One day we decided to go to Hampshire. The first circle that we found had only two people in. As we neared the circle we could make out Colin Andrews (CA) and a young lady. Of course, Tony headed for CA; we all acknowledged each other. Then Tony went to town on CA, putting across his "scientific" know-how. He was saying this and that and then he knelt down to show CA something, which brought a smile to CA's face and his ladyfriend. The rest of us tried to keep straight faces. You can imagine what dropped out of the side of his shorts. I don't know if it was the right or left one.

Hope that little episode cheers Martin up. By the way, Martin - Brilliant opinion.

G R Stewart, Earls Barton, Northants.

As Michael Glickman presents his talk on the sacred geometry inherent in crop formations, I listen, I absorb and I conclude: it all fits.

Prophecy is a precarious business, as the Jehovah's Witnesses have discovered to their cost. Many times since Charles Taze Russell began preaching the word in Penn-

sylvania in 1881, the Second Coming and the consequent end of the world have been foretold... and many times they have been disappointed. Nostradamus also tried his hand at prophecy and, apparently, was rather successful at it. But on the other hand his quatrains are sufficiently loose and open to interpretation that anything can be read into them. Then there's Edgar Cayce who was altogether more direct and seems to have had his finger rather closer to the pulse. Still, prophecy...

I do not consider myself a mystic or a seer or a fortune-teller. However, everything I have seen, everything I have read and all the people I have either heard or spoken to, including Michael Glickman, have all pointed in the same direction. So I tentatively enter the prophecy business and hope, fervently, that I am wrong.

Many cultures around the world seem to indicate the millennium as being, in one way or another, the end of time. It is possible - and I emphasise POSSIBLE - that is the message that the circle-makers are attempting to give us. The message, however, is symbolic, a code - and a code that we, as yet, have failed to crack.

If Michael Glickman's contention about the formations' sacred geometry is correct then that message has something to do with humans and our temporal and spiritual relationship with the earth beneath our feet. I see no reason to doubt him but I would like to suggest that perhaps it goes beyond even that. Let me explain.

Some 200,000 to 160,000 years ago something happened, something big, something monumental. No one knows what that was; we can only guess. But whatever it was that occurred so long ago, by the time it was finished homo erectus had veered off into an evolutionary cul-de-sac and homo sapiens - that's you and me - had taken their place.

Now, all these years later, strange things are afoot, prophecies are being cast and crop formations displaying sacred geometry are appearing. Why?

According to the Mayans, history runs out in 2012. Their prophetic calendar simply runs out. Why? Terence McKenna suggests that this is because, by then, we will have broken through the fourth dimension and that time as we know it - linear - will cease to have meaning. Maybe.

Instead, what I'd like to pose is another possibility: the end of homo sapiens.

On May 5, 2000, a planetary alignment occurs with the Earth on one side of the Sun and another six planets all exerting a gravitational pull on the other. Scary stuff. No one knows what kind of effect this will have on the planet.

Earthquakes? Tidal waves? Great shifts in the tectonic plates? Who can say? Well, no-one, which is why no one is saying anything... interesting at all. Add to this the fact that the planet is well overdue for a shift in the polar axis. But so what?

Well, whatever event caused the downfall of homo erectus may be about to repeat itself. Homo sapiens, I would suggest, have run their course. But this is not to suggest that life on this planet is over, far from it. What I believe may come to pass is the advent of homo superior and that these

cosmological events will merely herald that arrival. And THIS is what the sacred geometry is indicating within the crop circles.

Homo superior may be wiser, more spiritual, more in tune with natural forces and more adaptive to the new world - much as homo sapiens were 200,000 years ago. So we are unlikely to all be wiped out overnight but, over the next 15 years, we will be privileged to witness the birth of a new order of humanity.

The good news for crop circle watchers may be that those of us who are interested enough in these incredible phenomena may be being proffered the equivalent of a 'Get Out of Jail Free' card. If the message really does contain sacred geometry it may be saying: 'Wake up, open your eyes and behold the glory and majesty of nature'. I would argue that this is spiritual but not religious. Anyone unmoved by the wonder that presented itself on the Oliver's Castle video from last year may find they just won't cut it in the new world of the homo superior. Ditto anyone who dismisses the whole notion of crop formations as mischievous hoaxing. We may, here, have been offered a chance at salvation and we should ignore it at our peril.

Of course, I may be wrong. I hope I am because that would mean that it's OK, the sh** really isn't going to hit the fan sometime in the next 15 years. But if I'm right - and remember what I said about prophecy - then we are entering a time fraught with danger but redolent with wonder, magic and mystery.

Meantime, we just have to hope that someone, somewhere, and soon, cracks the crop circle code because it may just be that whatever the message is, is contained therein. DD

- FEATURES -

SACRED GEOMETRY & The End Of Time

Coming soon... the end of homo sapiens,
at least according to DAVE DICKSON,
who, inspired by a Michael Glickman
lecture, believes the crop circles point the
way to big changes ahead...