



*THE MONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND*

70

NOVEMBER 1997

£1.00

**Global
Formations
Of 1997**

**Alton
Barnes,
London &
Glastonbury
Circle Events**

"A mystery means there's a puzzle to be solved. ...There are many avenues in life where we're given little indications that the mystery can be solved. We get little proofs - not the big proof - but little proofs that keep us going. That there is a mystery is a huge thrill" DAVID LYNCH

At last, this issue we get around to listing the non-UK crop formations of 1997 and you'll see from our tables why it's taken us so long. Information from abroad always takes a while to seep through and we thought we'd wait until most reports were in before running with it in SC. This documentation shows clearly that the circle phenomenon is truly global. Even so, there's little doubt that the central focus remains England in terms of numbers and complexity of design and some rumours of the amount of overseas events are a little exaggerated at times. A case in point are the current stories doing the rounds about India having had 2000 crop circles in recent years. Whilst it will be fascinating if this turns out to be true, it should be borne in mind that, as yet, this seems to be nothing more than supposition, an estimate of what might have appeared based on only half a dozen or so claimed sightings (from one hitherto unheard of source) of which only diagrams, not photographs, have been seen. SC hopes the claims are real but strongly suggests waiting to see some proper evidence before getting too excited.

And now a little admin. As most readers are aware, SC and its parent organisation SCR are run on a purely voluntary basis in the spare time available in-between earning livings, raising families and going down with various minor diseases. Please bear this in mind when waiting for either your monthly SC, back issues or anything else ordered from any of our members. If any of this is a little late coming, your patience is requested. Please allow a *full month* for back issue posting. Unforeseen personal circumstances in our chain of command can make all the difference as to when these things will be sent out. Producing a regular publication takes a huge chunk out of each month and this isn't helped by cajolers, however well-meaning, ringing up when an item is just a few days late. If SC isn't with you on time, please don't call unless it's a good three weeks or more overdue, in which case there may be a need for individuals to enquire. Any other delay is simply down to the availability of the production and mailing 'staff' here and we ask you to bear with us on this. If calls must be made, please don't telephone before 10.00am or after 9.00pm if it can be helped - thanks. And address changes to Di Brown please (see right) - not me! Okay, admin over. Lastly, thanks to everyone who has telephoned or written in to express their concern and good wishes to SCR's resident psychic Paul Bura; all these have been passed on and are very much appreciated. For those unaware, Paul was recently diagnosed as having a brain tumour. Happily, it was benign and has been successfully removed in an extensive operation. Paul is now on the slow road to recovery and in good spirits. We all send him our love. ANDY THOMAS

SC

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Front Cover: Milk Hill, near Alton Barnes, August 1997. Photograph by Steve Alexander.

#8 '97 CIRCLES UPDATE Overseas

We've been promising it for months but at last it's here - the list of crop formations from around the world in 1997, minus the USA databases which will follow next issue. Germany and The Netherlands appear to have had the bulk of the overseas events this year but this may simply reflect the amount of active circle researchers now operating there to report them. It's possible that many other countries have had crop circles which have simply gone undocumented. The easiest way to present this overseas data is in the form of tables as seen below, compiled by BARRY REYNOLDS, so here goes...

MISCELLANEOUS COUNTRIES

Country	County/ State/ Province	Nearest Town/ Village	Date First Seen	Crop	Details
Australia		Melbourne, Western suburbs of	18-Feb-97	Grass	30' clockwise circle in grass. Inside perimeter were 6 evenly spaced circular indentations 12" across and 4" deep. Bottom of each hole was parabolic and bore an imbedded "x" imprint. Around each hole was a brown marking extending up to 5" away. (Pegasus)
Brazil	Rio Grande do Sul	Sepe Tiaraju, Santo Angelo	27-Feb-97	"Cornfield"	10m circle in cornfield appeared after "strange noise" heard and "a vivid red light" seen in the direction of the pasture where the circle was found the following morning.
Brazil	Rio Grande do Sul	Sepe Tiaraju, Santo Angelo	28-Feb-97	"Cornfield"	The following night from the above, a security guard "saw an orange fireball in the sky that disappeared in seconds." It was "emitting an orange light & was the size of a truck". A "strange white dust" covered the corn leaves.
Canada	Saskatchewan	Kawaca- toose Indian Reserve, Panashi	07-Aug-97	Wheat	13m circle & 2 1.3 m grapeshot resembling half a celtic-cross. Neatly laid and swirled. Edge of large circle looked 'singed'.
Canada	Saskatchewan	Kawaca- toose Indian Reserve, Panashi	11-Aug-97		12' circle being investigated by Royal Canadian Mounted Police! UFO reports in same area at same time. In 'Leader Post' (18/08) & 'Star Phoenix' (16/08) newspapers.
Croatia	Northern Croatia	Zagorje	16-Apr-97		28m circle found in field after local man saw a "red light" "fireball" hovering just above the ground 160m away. UFO was described as a black sphere surrounded by a fiery red glow 12m - 15m. Circle found when man went to investigate. Also found footprints!
Czech Republic	Ceska Lipa	Near Mimon	23-Apr-97	Grass	2 touching double rings, all anticlockwise, in grass, approx. 18m long. Appeared in a military range near Mimon. No proper photos taken as first visitors destroyed it. Formation appeared in this region in early July 1995.
Denmark	Jutland	Alum/ Vester Velling	15-Jul-97	Wheat	2 ringed circles & a double ring, all clockwise. Rings 27.1m & 31.4m (30cm wide) with circles of 4.0m & 3.4m, 25.5m apart. Both joined to a 13.3m ring around a 10.6m circle. Sets of circles in a triangular layout, with 2 of the rings slightly overlapping.
Denmark	Jutland	Alum/ Vester Velling	04-Aug-97	Rye	1500m from first formation. 18.5m circle with 26.6m ring 0.5m wide with shaft 22.5m long and 1.6m wide. Grapeshot on one side of the shaft and small box on the other. All clockwise.
Denmark	Lolland	Holeby	24-Jul-97	Wheat	14m circle with inner laid clockwise and outer anticlockwise. Inner had "heavy" energy whilst outer was "light and fine".
Denmark	Lolland	Holeby	09-Aug-97		700m from first formation. 16m circle with 26.7m ring around it 2.7m wide. 90cm path under the circle from one side to the other.
Denmark	Lolland	Holeby (north)	21-Jul-97	Wheat	16m clockwise circle with 6 radiating paths 0.95m wide & 5.3 to 7.2m long.
Denmark	Zealand	Kalundborg /Bjerger	19-Jul-97	Barley	21.2m clockwise circle.
Denmark	Zealand	Skaelskor	19-Jul-97	Barley	6.3m, 15.3m & 28.8m clockwise concentric circles 1.6m wide.

GERMANY

Germany	Northern Hesse	Kassel	04-Jul-97		Ringed circle with small arc inside ring & another one outside.
Germany	Northern Hesse	Kassel	04-Jul-97		Ring containing complex labyrinth/maze near to the A44 motorway and the site of 1996 formations.
Germany	Northern Hesse	Kassel	04-Jul-97	Wheat	35m ring containing complex labyrinth/maze of 1 wound pathway. Near to the A44 motorway.
Germany	Palatinate	Altrip	05-Jul-97	Wheat	40m pictogram 500m from the Rhine. Triple inline dumbbell where paths joining circles are actually small circles. 2 paths ending in small circles from larger bottom circle, 2 pronged claw from middle & 2 pronged claw ending in circle from smaller top one.
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	between Loit & Ulsnis	25-Jun-97	Wheat	Circle with wavy line from it and separate arc. 13m overall.
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Fusing	28-Jul-97		Triple inline dumbbell with one circle ringed. Also claw from centre circle and 2 boxes off pathway. 3 or 4 more circles not joined to formation.
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Kius	25-Jun-97	Wheat	All elements unjoined unless stated otherwise in an approximate line as follows; 3 small circles, arc, circle joined to wavy line, large circle, line, small circle joined to wavy line joined to small circle. 46.7m overall, largest circle 6.3m.
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Lindau	18-May-97	Oilseed Rape	First 1997 formation discovered in Germany at the northern bank of the river Schlei. Approximately 8m circle. (1 of 2)
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Lindau	18-May-97	Wheat - winter	About 250m from first formation approximately 10m circle with thin 19m ring around it in "quite young, grass-like crop". (2 of 2)
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Lindau	01-Aug-97		150m pictogram of 7 circles of differing sizes joined in a line, with 1 ringed. Also claws, satellite circles, boxes and arcs. Similar to 1990 Alton Barnes.
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Loit	09-Jun-97		Large & small circle joined by short curved path with separate 2 smaller circles and another medium sized circle slightly further away. Overall 43m, largest circle 7m.
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Stubbe Estate, Schwansen	13-Jul-97	Barley	Near the river Schlei, a large & small circle joined by a wavy line. Next to the large circle 2 small circles and a separate wound line. All circles with standing centres. Overall 61m with large circle 12.1m.
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Ulsnis	13-Jun-97	Barley	12.5m circle with 2.2m grapeshot 30m away.
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	Ulsnishoh	28-Jul-97		5 circles of varying sizes offset from each other, joined by straight and curved lines.
Germany		Bretzfild (Franken)	31-Aug-97		40m ring with 18m circle offset inside giving a standing crescent. Two grapeshot of 1m & 2m inside.
Germany		Kassel	06-Jul-97		Made by FGK as part of project UNION. The aim is to study man-made against genuine crop formations. Ring contained circle which was ringed two and a half times joined to a semicircle rather like a stylised stick-man. Several hundred metres from labyrinth.

THE NETHERLANDS

Netherlands	Amsterdam Noord	Amsterdam	18-Jan-97	Grass	3 (90cm wide & 6cm deep) circular imprints in grass in suburb of Amsterdam. May or may not have appeared whilst the soil was frozen. "Circles look like imprints from stabilisation rods from a crane". Grass is unaffected. 2 close together, 3rd 100m away.
Netherlands	Drente	Beilen	10-Jul-97		Spotted by a pilot. Single circle, 3m.
Netherlands	Drente	Beilen	10-Jul-97		Spotted by a pilot. Single circle, 7.5m.
Netherlands	Drente	Emmen	11-Jul-97	Rye	Dumbbell with 1 circle ringed 2.5 times. Pathway actually double-pathway. Largest ring 31m. Very impressive even though fairly old and crop recovering.
Netherlands	Drente	Emmen	11-Jul-97	Rye	Double ringed circle with curved pathway leading to small circle. On pathway is a small 'leaf'. Largest ring 18.5m. Reportedly very nice even though old.
Netherlands	Drente	Hooghalen	15-Jul-97		Close to first formation, possibly created after first one.
Netherlands	Drente	Hooghalen/Assen	05-Jul-97	Rye	In tramline-less field, a pictogram of 15 circles. A line of 10 (with the 10th ringed). From the 6th drop down 3 circles the 3rd of which has a crossed path through it. From the 7th go up and down 1 circle. The top 1 also has crossed paths through. Strange white powder found there.
Netherlands	Drente	Smilde	17-Jul-97		Single 16m circle.
Netherlands	Drente	Wijster	31-Aug-97		Single circle reported on 'Reported' where a photo was shown.
Netherlands	Flevoland	Almere	31-Aug-97		Reported on 'Gemeeld Op' (TV programme)
Netherlands	Friesland	Makkinga	18-Jul-97		50m pictogram of dumbbell with extra semi-circle between circles. One circle has 4 oddly-spaced pathways emerging. Bottom part of pictogram is the same as the Newhaven, Sussex 1997 formation.
Netherlands	Gelderland	Beek	29-Jul-97		Near a camp site between Doetinchem & Emmerich (Germany). 3 circles, one of which appeared to be unfinished.
Netherlands	Limburg	Melick	18-Jun-97		Pictogram with a large circle, a bar and several smaller circles. Appeared in local paper 'Het Limburgs Dagblad' around 27th July. Farmer reportedly angry and convinced it was a hoax (now there's a surprise!).
Netherlands	Limburg	Melick	18-Jul-97	Barley	45m triple in-line dumbbell where centre 'circle' is actually a ring which also had a semi-ring around it. One circle also ringed 3 times. Reported in local newspaper 'Het Limburgs Dagblad' around 27th July. Good lay with underlying swathe. Samples taken.
Netherlands	Limburg	Melick	21-Jul-97	Wheat	25m triple in-line dumbbell with centre circle ringed. Good lay.
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Andel	29-Jun-97	Barley	Triple in line dumbbell with first circle ringed, larger middle circle and much smaller 3rd circle. According to police, formation appeared between 20:00 on the 28th & 11:00 on the 19th. Pathways only 40cm wide. All anticlockwise, aligned north/south.
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Dongen	31-Aug-97		Reported on 'Gemeeld Op'.
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Dongen	31-Aug-97		Reported on 'Gemeeld Op'.
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Dongen	31-Aug-97		Reported on 'Gemeeld Op'.

Continued page 8 >



LEFT: Woodborough Hill, near Alton Barnes, Wiltshire. One of the most neglected formations of the year - a pictogram in grass next to the distinctive landmark copse of trees which crown the famous hill. They may not show here but the whole formation was surrounded by a system of very faint rings.

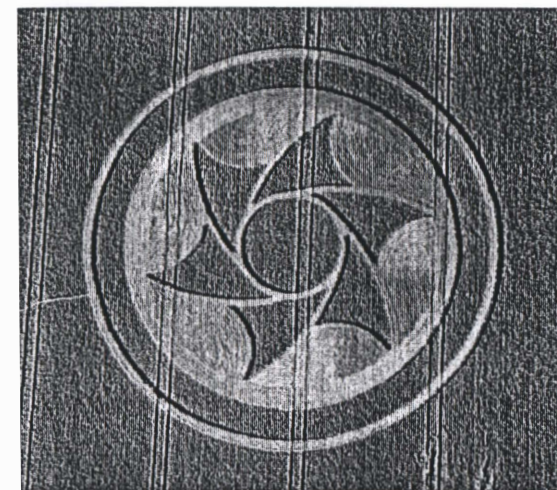
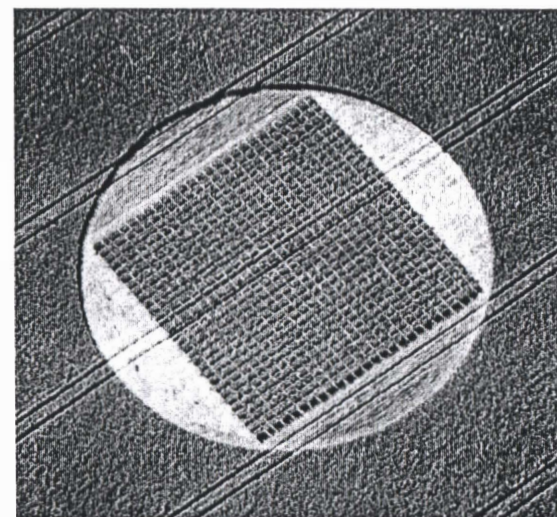
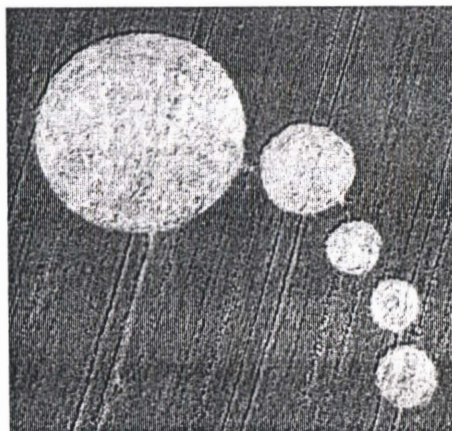


BELOW: Another look at the extraordinary fractal star at Milk Hill, Wiltshire, showing its position in relation to the white horse carving.



ABOVE: Faint pictogram in young barley at Upham, Hampshire, site of several formations in 1997.

BELOW: Slightly suspect 'thought bubble' at Clanfield, Hampshire, with no discernible swirl in the circles and awkward geometry. Still, who knows, maybe the circle-making forces were just having an off day.

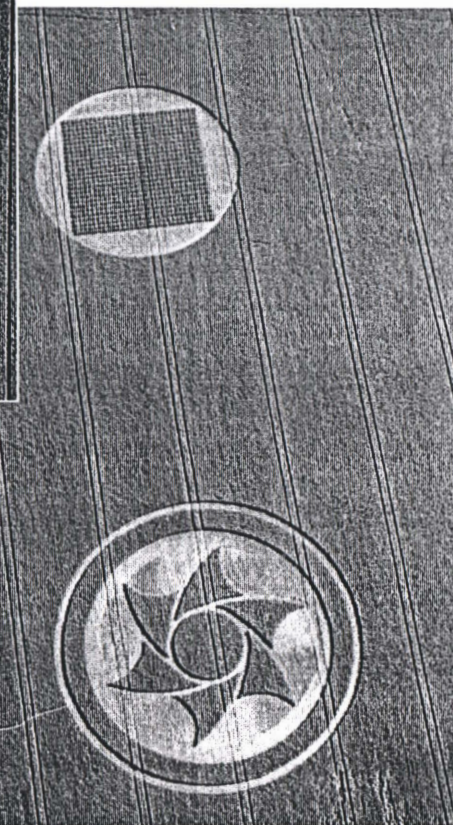


#6 '97 CIRCLES GALLERY

More photographs from the stunning 1997 season. All photographs on page 6 by LUCY PRINGLE. Etchilhampton photos on page 7 by STEVE ALEXANDER. Cissbury photo by MICHAEL HUBBARD.

Full colour original copies can be obtained from Lucy at: 5 Town Lane, Sheet, Petersfield, Hants, GU32 2AF, and from Steve at: 27 St Francis Road, Gosport, Hants, PO12 2UG. Tel: 01705 352867.

THIS PAGE: Etchilhampton, Wiltshire. Two of the neatest formations of the year. Could the rectangle of 780 boxes (30 x 26) be a calendar to lead us to the year 2012 as 26 weeks x 30 equals 15 years..? (See SC 68) **BELOW LEFT:** Sacred maze in grass at Cissbury Ring, West Sussex.



THE NETHERLANDS (cont.)

(Continued from page 5)

Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Hoeven/Oudenbosch	15-May-97	Grass	12m circle with 2 2m satellites and bar in 60cm high grass. All anticlockwise. Young man who discovered formation reported that the grass was still but seemed to be 'charged' and made a crackling noise. He believes it had only just appeared. (1 of 3)
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Hoeven/Oudenbosch	31-May-97		Pictogram with circles, rings and bars. (2 of 3)
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Hoeven/Oudenbosch	14-Jun-97		10m circle (3 of 3).
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Uden near Volkel	18-Jul-97		Underneath the crop an empty beer bottle was found!
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	Zevenbergen	12-Jul-97	Rye	8m anticlockwise circle with two, 2-pronged claws. Extremely badly damaged by violent thunderstorm shortly before researcher entered. Bent nodes and swollen pulvini visible in circle.
Netherlands	Noor-Holland	Purmerend	29-Jul-97		Single asymmetric 18m circle. Flat lay with irregular edge.
Netherlands	Zeeland	Baaland	17-Jul-97		Reported by local newspaper 'PZC' on 17th July.
Netherlands	Zeeland	Clevenskerke	17-Jul-97		Reported by local newspaper 'PZC' on 17th July.
Netherlands	Zeeland	Groenstraat Helkant	31-Jul-97		2 semi circles of 30m & 15m (sharing same centre point) sitting on top of one another with 2 antenna ending in circles leading from smaller semi circle.
Netherlands	Zeeland	Hoek	18-Jul-97		3 circles in a line of 4m, 6m & 4m.
Netherlands	Zeeland	Nieuwerkerk, Schouwen Duiveland near Dreischot	17-Jul-97	Wheat?	3 arcs of 7 circles with the smallest in the centre then increasing in size as the arcs 'fly' out similar to a Julia set. Superb looking formation. Some standing stems cut at 45 degrees & slightly carbonized. Mutilated & dehydrated rabbit discovered! Allegedly man-made...
Netherlands	Zeeland	Noordgouwen	31-Aug-97		Unconfirmed.
Netherlands	Zeeland	Vlissingen, Zuidbeekseweg, Groot Lammerenburg	15-Jul-97	Wheat	Quintuplet. Centre circle 6m others 4m, reported by a pilot from Flight Centre Zeeland.
Netherlands	Zuid-Holland	Zevenhuizen	13-Jul-97		Single circle broadcast on local TV station 'TV-West, Rijswijk' on 14th July.
Netherlands		Brummen	05-Aug-97		Triple in-line dumbbell with centre circle ringed & dumbbell with 1 circle ringed & two circles.
Netherlands		Leimuiden, nr Aalsmeer	27-Jul-97	Wheat	Dumbbell with 1 13m circle ringed once (overall 14.8m) and the other (6.20m) ringed twice (overall 11.2m). All circles anticlockwise. Reported in local paper 'Het Witte Weekblad'.
Netherlands		Middelburg/Vlissingen	31-Aug-97		Between Middelburg & Vlissingen near to the main road. Like an '8'.
Netherlands		Texel Island	18-Jul-97		3 8m anticlockwise circles in triangular layout all joined by 13m pathways. Reported in local newspaper 'Texelse Courant'.
Netherlands		Wieringermeerpolder	31-Aug-97		A stewardess from Royal Dutch Airlines reported one pictogram & 2 circles in this area. She also reported seeing circles in China 'recently'.
Netherlands		Woudrichem	31-Aug-97		Unknown - mentioned by Dr Eppo Bruins.
Netherlands			18-Mar-97	Winter grain	50m circle in winter grain somewhere in Holland!

USA 1997 FORMATIONS NEXT ISSUE...

'Croppies' often refer to themselves as the 'crop circle community', yet much of the time seem to be at each other's throats rather than communing. But every summer brings a glut of events which do actually bring disparate elements and factions together to some degree although increasingly some camps attend only their own functions. There are always drifters though, happy to be at any conference or meeting which has crop circles on the agenda, whoever's going to be present.

This summer, the three big communal events were the Wiltshire Crop Circle Study Group's Alton Barnes Fun Weekend on the 12th-13th July, the Centre for Crop Circle Studies' London Conference on August 30th and the ever-present Glastonbury Symposium on August 1st-3rd, which remains the centrepiece of the croppie year for many. On the face of it, these three functions were so different from each other that it would be impossible to compare them fairly, yet each seemed to compliment the other, reflecting different facets of the circle phenomenon and its enthusiasts.

In truth - and I say this with affection - the Alton Barnes Fun Weekend is really a glorified jumble sale, an informal gathering with a strong emphasis on traders' tables which allows attenders to drift in and out at any time with no obligation to do anything but chat and browse. The pleasantly musty environs of the Coronation Hall, really a prefab shack masquerading as the local community centre, recalls nostalgic visits to charity book fayres and Christmas bazaars and helps make the event the unique occasion it is. The concept of people making capital out of the circles with trinkets and therapies can be distasteful but the very presence of people huddled around the stalls here supports their continued existence. In any case sometimes individuals want to buy, say, a bottle of 'crop circle essence' (water) or rustic pottery mug with a crop design on it. Those who disapprove of such cash-ins will keep their hands in their pockets; everyone has a choice. Some merchandise certainly seems to have more integrity than others but potential customers have their own minds and can soon suss out bandwagon tat (of which there is some) from items of genuine good intent and quality (of which there are also some). In any case, the most roaring trade seems to be in photographs of formations and the spread of these images has probably done more than anything to alert people's minds to the importance of this phenomenon. The day we start talking about a crop circle

'franchise' though, we'll be in trouble.

With all this attention on perusing the stalls, the lectures which actually go on seem rather incidental. Ironically, the talks about crop circles take place chaotically, if rather charmingly, in the cramped room with the stalls, whereas non-circle subjects (drumming, healing, etc.) are presented in the spacious

luxury of a marquee erected outside. Surely shome mishtake? With a few fine-tune tweaks, future weekends here will undoubtedly become a pleasant annual landmark in the croppie calendar, helped no end by the Fun Weekend's greatest asset - the fields of circular myth and legend which lie but a few hundred feet away in all directions. Heck, the circle-making forces even delivered one of their most ambitious efforts (the 'Torus Knot') up on the hill for the

Saturday of this year's event for people to adjourn to in teabreaks. If that isn't an endorsement, what is?

The Wiltshire group began life as the CCCS area branch, but, finding itself increasingly out of step with 'the management', finally declared independence. It's easy to see why the two may not have seen eye to eye when comparing the informal tone of the Fun Weekend with the traditionally rigid format of the CCCS London conference. This rigidity was illustrated neatly by the fact that what took physical centre stage at the Westminster Central Hall venue was not the slide screen nor the speaker but the organising Council table, forcing the audience to crane their heads far left for the majority of the day. Such traditions, however, were in no way detrimental to the day's effectiveness. There's a kind of comfort in the predictable reliability and adherence to Victorian conventions of a CCCS event which is rather cozy. Everyone knows what to expect and how the format of the day will run. Their functions stand or fall by the speakers, not radical presentations, and the London conference delivered the goods accordingly. Adrian Gilbert (blokey, astrological and archaeological revelations), Jim Lyons (quickfire, excitable insights combining science and metaphysics) and Peter Paget (devastatingly quiet, slowburn musings on forthcoming social apocalypse) provided the highlights, aside from the excellent home-grown London CCCS talent on offer.

In fact, this conference was the inevitable next step from the London branch who organise the excellent Winter Lecture Series, which keeps city-bound croppies in-

- REPORTS -

LET'S GET TOGETHER AGAIN

Like 'Marching Season' in Northern Ireland, each summer brings 'Conference Season' to crop circle enthusiasts except that at these gatherings opportunities are made for divides to be bridged. Well, mostly anyway. ANDY THOMAS looks at the three big circular events of 1997, the people, the venues and the merchandise...

formed throughout the dark cold months and as such this conference was less a main CCCS 'do' than a natural development of the Winter Lectures. Indeed, what constitutes main CCCS is uncertain now; short of Council members issuing the odd *Circular* magazine here and there, the real work seems to be taking place out in the few active branches which remain. Maybe this is how things should be. Keeping so many contradictory theories and factions together under one umbrella was never going to be an easy task and human nature has simply taken its course, with many going their separate ways. But though the days of CCCS being a large, mothering, authoritative force are gone, instead pockets of individuals have been left to shine. The very fact that the London branch will never have any crop circles to look at somehow seems to fire it up to be vibrant and keen in mounting the events it does, by way of compensation. Conversely, branches with crop circles are often the least active.

The timing of the London conference was good for two reasons. One, it ended the circle season nicely, coming at the end of another summer of wonders which could be looked back on, and two, because just one week later the whole event would have had to be cancelled as Westminster Abbey, opposite the venue, played host to the massive funeral of Britain's newest saint...

Sandwiched between these two gatherings was, of course, the annual eye of the circle season storm, the Glastonbury Symposium. The longest-running of all croppie events, this huge coming-together of circle enthusiasts from around the world is a calm at the centre of the maelstrom, three days of reflection, exposition and stock-taking, providing a snapshot every year of where the circular mindset is at. Paradoxically, however, as each Symposium goes by the crop circles themselves seem to take a back seat in favour of exploring the issues they raise and other subjects they lead many into. But the initial presence of the circles is all-important; without the focus they provide, a general New-Agey conference might seem fuzzy and unsure of itself. With the peg of the agriglyphs as a starting point, the event has a strong beating heart which fires everything positively.

It's a credit to the consistent excellence of the Symposium that there's little I can say by way of conveying the general atmosphere and importance of the event that I haven't written in my previous, more extensive write-ups of other years (see SC 33, SC 44 and SC 56) which are still relevant today. Its setting in such a land of legend, the cosmopolitan air lent to the weekend by so many international attendees and the general air of good-heartedness from all present, mixed with the passion of Roland and Clare Pargeter who mount the event, gives it a peerless *ambience* and magic which is very hard to leave at the end. Spirits were raised even higher this time by the simultaneous (and coincidental) music and dance festival taking place in the streets outside, complete with revellers and performers.

Mind you, the good-heartedness did strain a little in a

couple of respects this year; a very public and unnecessary advance resignation statement by Colin Andrews from his regular spot, hurt by some of the criticism which has come his way recently, and various shenanigans sparked by Michael Glickman's presentation. The uncertain accusation runs that Glickers, in an impassioned speech, called various researchers "liars" in regard to hoax-claiming. Michael claims misinterpretation, yet legal action has even been threatened (!). George Wingfield, alerted by fans present at the alleged calumny, appeared on-stage that afternoon to defend himself. But such sour notes could do little to dampen the general high spirits. Non-appearances of speakers or arrivals of unexpected ones tipped the balance of the weekend not a jot, proving that the Symposium itself is bigger than any one item on the programme. Everyone who spoke, in the now traditional faint-inducing heat of the Assembly Rooms where the laws of physics cease to apply and fans just don't make any difference, fulfilled their function well, in a good mix of styles and expressions. Featuring faces new and old, regulars included Glickers (sacred geometry and admonishments), Karen Douglas (the only speaker to focus on 1997's crop designs), Palden Jenkins (deep New Age enlightenments) and, of course, Stanley Messenger (even deeper), without whom perhaps the weekend *would* be incomplete. Paul Bura gave his last public presentation before temporary disaster struck in the form of a brain tumour (see editorial) and I got to dress up as an ape.

Wandering around the trading rooms and cafe, where friendships, loves - and vendettas - are born, was, as ever, as much part of the experience as hearing the lecturers and here, sometimes, one sees one's heroes in a new light. The sight of Stanley Messenger, a philosopher of light and wisdom, making up rude limericks at a coffee table is an experience not easily forgotten. So now, as an exclusive to SC, with permission of the author, we present a scoop - one of Stanley's Glastonbury limericks:

*A croppie in Avebury Trusloe
Thought his overall potency wuz low
He thought "I should say,
It's because of my lay.
Anticlockwise is crap - clockwise does go!"*

Stanley admits this is not one of his best but this was about 10.30pm.

That hair can be let down in this way, demonstrates the spell the Glastonbury Symposium casts, where everyone is equal and no-one feels left out. If you haven't yet partaken of this opportunity to rub shoulders with those you may have admired or loathed from a distance and put faces to names from journals and web sites, to hear what they have to say and *how* they say it, don't pass up the chance again in 1998.

Some believe only the crop circles themselves matter and such gatherings as the summer swarmings described

above are unhelpful distractions. I don't agree. The most extraordinary thing about the phenomenon has been its effect on people - how else can one gauge this effect but by mixing and meeting with the very individuals drawn to it?

Ivory towers can be attractive places to live but everyone

Visitors peruse the dealers' rooms at Glastonbury.



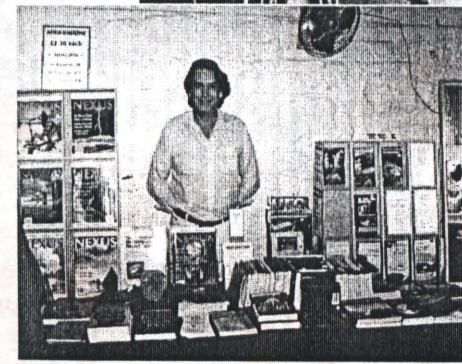
Steve Alexander & Karen Douglas in blatant wares plug.



GLASTONBURY '97
This year we thought we'd show you some shots of the areas not normally photographed at these sorts of events... Photos by ANDY THOMAS



The main hall, showing the beautiful central banner of the 1997 Stonehenge snowflake formation. As you can see from the seats, there were record attendances. (Just kidding - this was the interval...)



Marcus Allen in blatant Nexus Magazine plug.



Another view of the dealers' dungeons...



with Michael Glickman

Returning to California after this most surprising of seasons, leaves me, still in October, completely zapped. A re-entry to the real world after three months of the surreal. But who would claim that California is the real world?

I spent the autumn (or 'fall' as I must learn to say) producing accurate scale drawings of formations. This is a contemplative - even meditative - ritual which brings me so much real satisfaction that its anticipation softens the blow of the end of the season. It becomes an extension of the season for me as I have to spend days close to the detail, dimension, proportion and geometry of each formation. The wall behind the drawing board is covered with photographs. No matter how accurate the measurements, the spirit and character of the shape has to be incorporated. This is difficult to explain.

In the early hours of last night I finished my drawing of the Milk Hill formation. There has been much talk of its 198 circles. Personally, I never bothered to count. All I know is that when you spend hour after hour positioning, sizing, drawing, and filling in these circles, you enter a truly focused state in which a closeness to the form (and even, dare I suggest, to the intelligence which originated it) becomes inevitable.

I have no doubt that everybody interested in circles should draw from their photographs, no matter how crudely. There is so much for everybody to learn from this exercise. In many ways, the confrontation with the circles' essence which results from hours working on a drawing is more direct than that which most people can achieve in the formation itself.

It should never be done quickly. Too much can be missed.

Some of you may have heard my intemperate little outburst at Glastonbury this summer (see page 10) where I vented my anger at the hoax boosters who masquerade as researchers and poison the well for everybody. I hoped that this would be some kind of catharsis which would allow me to stay clear and get on with my work.

But it doesn't go away. Perhaps I am having to redeem myself for sins committed in previous lifetimes. In the last issue of SC Peter Sorensen implied that I advocate book burning and censorship. Before I get my jackboots fitted I must try to conclude this matter once and for all. Crop

circles are a mystery. Nobody can explain them. For many, the inexplicable is intolerable so they cling to the old discredited hoax hypothesis. Now there was a time when this might have been believable but, in 1997, it can only be sustained by blind faith. Why is there never (not rarely, but *never*) any evidence? Now dear Peter, who was for so long one of our valued soldiers has become a hoax booster (see the last two SCs for Peter's response to this accusation - Ed). Another good man lost to us. Bless him. I wish him nothing but good. However, after this last season I get the impression that fewer and fewer people will agree with his assertions anyway. For my part, I've had enough. I am bored to tears. How can these people continue to address the miraculous as vandalism, high art as petty crime? I will not waste valuable column inches, nor will I waste readers' precious time, on paranoid hoax fantasies. When someone provides hard evidence for hoaxes (or even one hoax) we might discuss it. Until then don't hold your breath.

A whole thesis could be devoted to the quintuplet. This form was for me the first incontrovertible evidence of the intelligence behind the circles. They always seemed to obey four design rules in their construction. First, they conformed to right angled geometry. Second, the centre circle was always larger than the four satellites. Third, the four satellites were of equal diameter and, fourth, the satellites were the same distance from the mother circles. These rules were rarely broken. In 1996 a German quintuplet was defiantly eccentric. It conformed to right-angled geometry and the centre circle was larger but the satellites were of different sizes and distances.

In 1995 we lectured in Santa Barbara and, at the end, the audience suggested that they meditate on a shape for the forthcoming season. I had spoken about quintuplet geometry and - rather unimaginatively I thought - they wished for a quintuplet. (I should mention here that an audience this spring chose a hexagon. We were doubtful and said that, although six-fold geometry had been common for years, the hexagon was unknown. I need not point out just how successful they were.) The Santa Barbara people were rewarded with the 1995 'quintuplet of quintuplets' at Telegraph Hill, a form never before or since recorded. Looking back, with the experience of the beautiful Koch snowflakes this year, a quintuplet of quintuplets is also a kind of fractal. Just as the triangles of the Koch fractals could, theoretically, reduce and reproduce infinitely, so could the quintuplet satellites themselves become smaller quintuplets *ad infinitum*. With the snowflakes the process stopped at the third iteration when the technology of wheat bending reached its limits. This was the point at which triangles were replaced by circles.

And this season, the sharp-eyed will have noticed two new games being played within the quintuplet rules. The Morestead and, more particularly, the Headbourne Worthing formations of July are significant variations on a theme. What is planned, quintuplet-wise, for next year? MG