

*THE MONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND*

73

FEBRUARY 1998

£1.00

**Focus
On
Sussex
1997**

**Letters
Bite Back.
Again.**

**Glickman
Video
Reviewed**

**The Sacred
Maze Formations
Of Germany**

SC's readership expansion across the globe continues. We'd like to welcome aboard our first new reader in... Kathmandu! For geographically-challenged readers, this is the capital of Nepal high up in the Himalayas. What the postal system is like up there we don't know but it's nice to hear we're reaching areas previously uncharted by cereal publications. We trust all our readers in the farther-flung reaches (we have many in all sorts of countries now) will keep us informed of any circular activity in their parts of the world.

This seems a good point at which to mention that in only two months time SC will be celebrating its 75th issue! It hardly seems possible that two years have elapsed since our 50th anniversary special. As before, we'll be celebrating our seventh year of business with a special edition - don't miss it. There will also be a chance to catch up on just what the last two years' worth of cryptic margin messages actually mean... (You mean you haven't noticed them?)

Thanks to everyone who has sent in articles and contributions recently. Don't be disheartened if it takes a while for your piece to appear - or never at all! There's a general stacking system in place but sometimes bits get usurped by more topical items and never quite make it. Contributors mustn't be offended by this and we encourage everyone to continue sending stuff in, all greatly appreciated.

Likewise, all at SC receive a lot of personal mail, either electronically or by post, and sometimes bits which need replies get overlooked or misfiled. Our apologies. If you correspond with us but don't get a response within a reasonable period, please contact us again. All our work is voluntary and sometimes real life pressures or pleasures impinge on our reaction times. Or something.

This month we feature our regular and traditional look at events in SC's home counties of East and West Sussex (which was, of course, how this publication started). Although some of the measuring surveys are credited to Barry Reynolds and myself, recognition must be given to everyone else who directly helped with 1997's investigations, in particular Martin Noakes, Nigel Tomsett, Debbie Pardoe and Michael Hubbard (without whose aerial photographs, some of our stranger events from the season might never have been discovered). Thanks to anyone else, informers, observers and second-hand reporters who aided or attended in any way.

ANDY THOMAS

SC

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CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND

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

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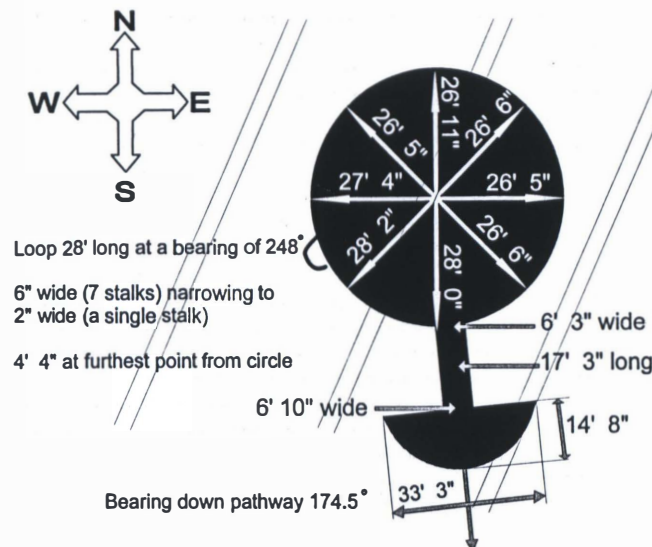
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Front cover: Upham, Hampshire, June 1997. Photograph by STEVE ALEXANDER.

Focus on... '97 CIRCLES OF SUSSEX

Each year we give detailed coverage of the crop circles in just one part of the world - East and West Sussex, SC's home county, as a microcosmic example of the many things which go on in just one area and the type of observational data which often gets overlooked when only the wider circle picture is reported. Since 1995, Sussex's best year for formations, things have quietened considerably and the patterns have become much less spectacular for unknown reasons (see Offham report for possibilities). However, interesting things are still afoot and the Southern Circular Research team was there, as ever, to document them. BARRY REYNOLDS and ANDY THOMAS round up the Sussex events of 1997...



REF: Sussex 1997/01
DATE: 20 July 1997
DESCRIPTION: Dumbbell with semi-circle one end
LOCATION: Newhaven, East Sussex
CROP: Wheat
SWIRL: All laid clockwise
OS MAP: 198
GRID REF: TQ 438 017
SURVEYED BY: Barry Reynolds and Andy Thomas

DETAILS: A dumbbell in ripe wheat where one circle was actually a 6' deep semi-circle. The formation contained many standing stems and was in a field on a slope in which the wheat was growing quite sparsely. The formation was similar to one at Denton in 1995 (Sx 1995/08) which would have been only 2km (1.25 miles) away across the other side of the River Ouse valley. Another formation (Sx 1997/02) later appeared just over 3km further north up river, with yet another formation (Sx 1997/03) appearing a further 7km upstream a few days after that.

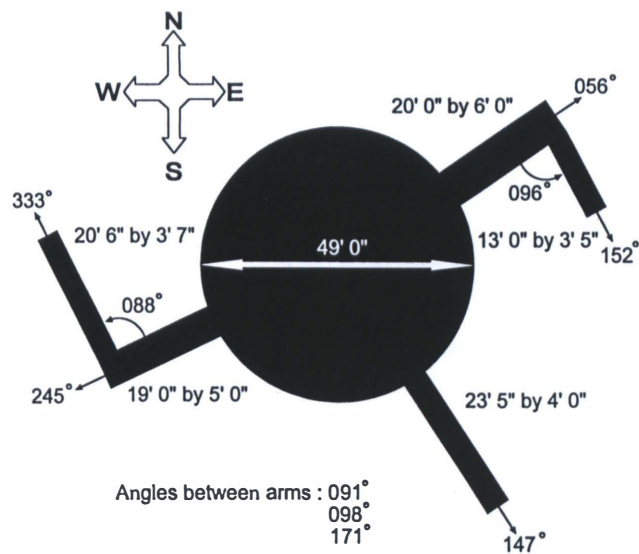
Although all crop was predominantly laid clockwise the formation had many complicated underlays and counter-rotation lays. For instance, the pathway itself was actually laid in both directions whilst the main circle had a thin band laid anticlockwise around one-third of its circumference. In the centre of the main circle, through which a tramline ran, there was a bowl-shaped, bare patch of earth (which is not unusual to find). There were many stems at the outer edges particularly

on the south-western side, which had been pulled into the lay from behind other stems which had been left standing. It is interesting to conjecture as to how the circle-making force achieves this effect which has been noted before in some Sussex formations.

A small loop emanated from the west side of the main circle beginning as an underlying path which crossed half of the large circle. As it exited from the circle it was 6" wide and consisted of only seven stems of wheat. Over a length of 28' it gradually petered out until it was made up of only a single stem.

At a distance the formation could be widely seen from the A26 into Newhaven but was almost invisible from the road to Lewes which it was directly adjacent to, being on the brow of a hill. Reported, with a photograph, in the Sussex Express newspaper.

Survey Details: Average diameter 53' 9". Total length of formation 86' 6" at a bearing of 174.5 down the pathway.



REF: Sussex 1997/02
 DATE: 5 August 1997
 DESCRIPTION: Circle with three arms, two bent at right angles
 LOCATION: Southease, East Sussex
 CROP: Wheat
 SWIRL: All laid clockwise
 OS MAP: 198
 GRID REF: TQ 422 047
 SURVEYED BY: Barry Reynolds and Andy Thomas

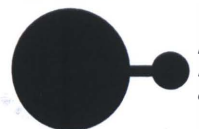
DETAILS: This circle with three arms appeared in a field of ripe wheat in the field next to the 1995 double ringed circle in rape (Sx 1995/01) and only 3km further up the River Ouse from Sussex 1997/01. Another formation appeared four days later a further 7km upstream.

All crop was laid clockwise or away from the centre. Some stalks, noticeably around the edge, were laid in the opposite direction, much like the Newhaven formation. A bowl-like depression was observed at the centre of rotation, a common occurrence often noticed in Sussex formations and not indicative of being man-made. Short, green barley stems growing within the formation were still standing upright.

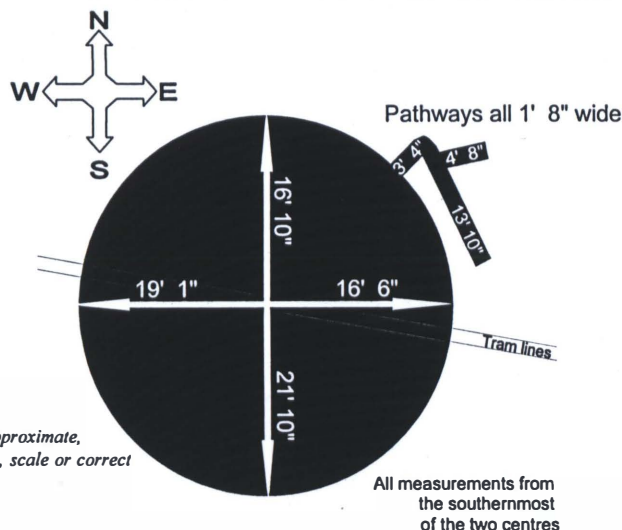
Although the pattern had been present for several days and was clearly visible from the Newhaven to Lewes country road, it wasn't reported until one day before harvest. Luckily, Andy Thomas managed to get inside the formation at dusk, make observations and take some photographs, not knowing it would be gone the next day. The full survey was carried out on what remained two days later.

The gradient of the field was taken using a 'Cowley level' to see if the slope of the field affected the ovality of the circle. Two-way radios were used to co-ordinate this procedure, preventing the need to shout hundreds of feet across the field.

REF: Sussex 1997/03
 DATE: 9 August 1997
 DESCRIPTION: Circle with pathway and separate dumbbell
 LOCATION: Offham, East Sussex
 CROP: Flax
 SWIRL: All laid clockwise
 OS MAP: 198
 GRID REF: TQ 405 117
 SURVEYED BY: Barry Reynolds and Andy Thomas



Dumbbell diagram approximate, not shown to distance, scale or correct angle with circle.



All measurements from the southernmost of the two centres

DETAILS: The single circle was the northernmost of two formations in the same field, listed here as one. The southernmost, a dumbbell, was smaller and visible from the railway line on the way into nearby Lewes. Unfortunately the survey team did not visit the dumbbell as there was some confusion at first as to whether or not there was actually one or two formations. The circle actually entered turned out to be different to the one initially reported! The dumbbell could not be seen from here. Subsequently it was proven that there were two separate patterns in the same field approximately 200 yards apart.

The formations were in the southernmost corner of a triangular field bordered by a railway line to the west, the River Ouse to the east and a country lane to the north. It contained several drainage ditches fed by the river which is still tidal at this point (this field often floods in winter). The eastern perimeter of the circle was actually right at the edge of the field bordering the river bank.

The circle had a double centre and a small forked pathway coming from the north-eastern side. A pair of tramlines ran through the centre of the circle although this was not immediately obvious as they were so overgrown.

DETAILS: A field containing many animal and/or human tracks but also several small patches of non-geometric crop formations, circle-making 'energy' randomly splattering the field? The fact that a footpath crosses the field makes the paths likely to be dogs and children but some of the potentially vandalistic shapes are intriguing.

Was this animal tracks, children playing, bird damage or non-geometric crop formations, circle-making 'energy' randomly splattering the field? The fact that a footpath crosses the field makes the paths likely to be dogs and children but some of the potentially vandalistic shapes are intriguing.

REF: Sussex 1997/05
 DATE: 22 July 1997
 DESCRIPTION: Non-geometric shapes, possibly crop damage
 LOCATION: Edburton, West Sussex
 CROP: Wheat (probably)
 OS MAP: 198
 GRID REF: TQ 23 11 (approx)

DETAILS: A series of non-geometric shapes towards the edge of a wheat(?) field was seen by Mike Hubbard from his micro-light the same day as the Angmering shapes (Sussex 1997/04) and an aerial photograph was taken. The field was never pin-pointed or examined at ground level.

The 'damage' is much more

There are only two other known flax formations apart from this one. The first was at Little Missenden, Buckinghamshire in 1990 and the other at Skimmel Bridge, Cornwall discovered during 1997. The hallmark small blue flowers had almost vanished at Offham by the time the circles appeared. Because of the fluffy nature of flax the lay and thus the circle were indistinct but the swirl and stem bending was impressive. The stems are smooth and pale green, without nodes. Samples were collected for Dr Levensgood in the USA to test for biological changes, the first examples of flax he has ever received.

It is interesting to note that if crop formations only appear above aquiferous rock or terrain which holds water, a much overlooked observation claimed in the past, the only three definite formations to appear in Sussex during 1997 all formed within a stone's throw of the River Ouse. Dowsers have often claimed the presence of water is vital to the creation of crop circles. The water table in Sussex has been extremely low for the last two years in what have been near-official drought conditions even in winter. The lack of water may explain the dearth of formations in this area since 1995, hence the adherence of these patterns to the River Ouse as a source of water.

REF: Sussex 1997/04
 DATE: 22 July 1997
 DESCRIPTION: Large area of tracks and non-geometric shapes
 LOCATION: Angmering, West Sussex
 CROP: Wheat (probably)
 OS MAP: 197
 GRID REF: TQ 08 04 (approx)

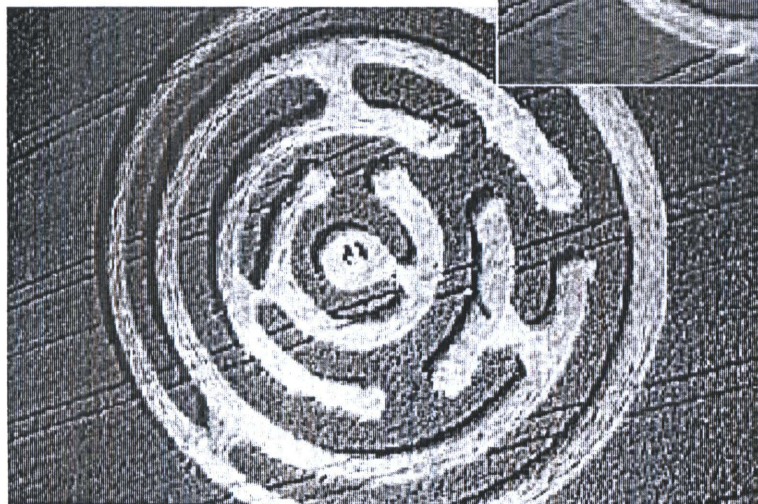
regular than at Angmering. There are no tracks or untidy messes just neat non-geometric patches, one of which is a distinctive arrow-shape. All of these areas appear to be centred on tramlines. This is possibly bird or animal damage, but the specific natures of some of the lodged block-type areas are curious.

Continued page 8 >



TOP: Sacred maze in grass at Cissbury Ring. We assume it to be a man-made ritualistic pattern but its resemblance to the adjacent pictures is curious... Photo: MICHAEL HUBBARD

BELOW: Maze formation at Bodenhausen, Germany, 1997. Photo: WOLFGANG SCHOPPE



LEFT: A yet more spectacular maze formation at Burghasungen, Germany, 1997, not far from the above. Photo: WOLFGANG SCHOPPE

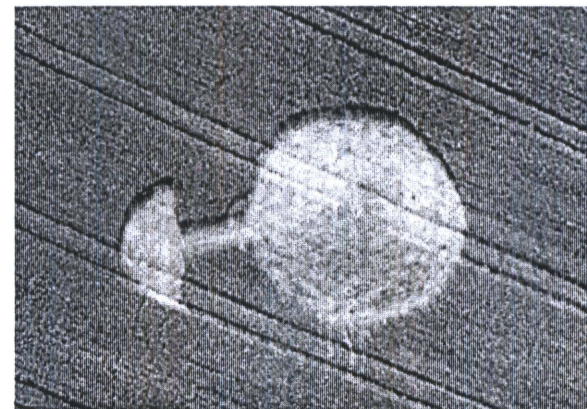
RIGHT: Splodges and rough shapes at Angmering. Whatever or whoever made the mess in this field, the farmer must have gone bananas when he saw the amount of damage going right across the field... Photo: MICHAEL HUBBARD



#9 '97 CIRCLES GALLERY

A look at some of the Sussex events of 1997 together with two German photographs for comparison to the Cissbury maze. Though less spectacular than larger formations elsewhere, and indeed than many previous Sussex formations, ALL crop circles should be considered and researched in the wider scheme of things.

TOP: Inside the semi-circle of the Newhaven dumbbell, looking north. Photo: BARRY REYNOLDS

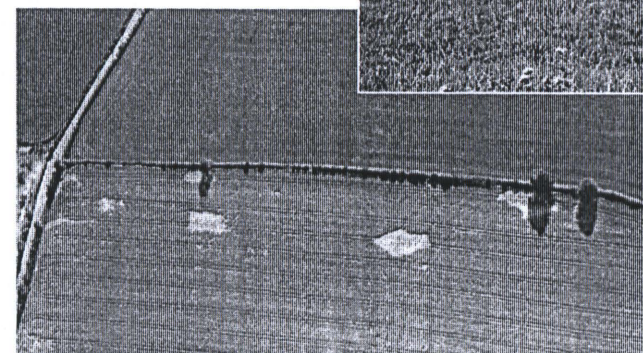


LEFT: From the air, this is just the sort of formation which woolly-minded researchers might dismiss as man-made but inside was another story, with intricate and seemingly inexplicable underlays and stems swept into the circle from behind standing stalks. Photo: MICHAEL HUBBARD

RIGHT: The flax circle at Offham, as seen from the river bank. Photo: BARRY REYNOLDS



BELOW: Strange shapes at Edburton. Bird damage, standard lodging or odd formations? Photo: MICHAEL HUBBARD (Below right: close-up)



REF: Sussex 1997/06
DATE: 22 July 1997
DESCRIPTION: Sacred maze
LOCATION: Cissbury Ring, West Sussex
CROP: Grass and scrub
OS MAP: 198
GRID REF: TQ 14 08 (approx)

DETAILS: A grass and scrub field on the side of Cissbury Ring was found to contain a large Celtic-type maze by Mike Hubbard whilst on the same mid-croflight trip which picked up the Angmering and Edburton shapes. This was presumably made by people as a ritual of some kind and was perhaps actually cut into the grass. However as it was never found and examined on the ground and two

similar, but much more complex and accurate sacred maze formations were discovered in Germany during 1997 it is included here just in case.

A detailed examination of the photograph reveals its complexity and something at the very centre. The small circle in the middle is actually made up of a tightly bound spiral and contains an object - either a person or, maybe, a pile of stones.

DETAILS: This formation was visible from the B2139 Amberley to Storrington road and was reported as being a small pictogram of some description. Apparently the farmer surrounded it with traffic cones to stop people entering!

Unfortunately, the formation was never visited. A contact of SCR knew it was there but didn't tell anyone until after it had been harvested because he assumed

we must have known about it..! There's a lesson here: NEVER assume we or anyone else knows about a new pattern. Unless you've already heard it officially reported, please let us know about any Sussex crop circle sightings courtesy of the SC editorial address and number. Several formations have been reported in this general area in previous years.

REF: Sussex 1997/07
DATE: Before 19 August 1997
DESCRIPTION: Pictogram of unknown design
LOCATION: Amberley, West Sussex
CROP: Wheat (probably)
OS MAP: 197
GRID REF: TQ 13 04 (approx)

DETAILS: This 'formation' was described by the farmer as being six crop circles in a row which he reported to a friend, who contacted Chris Stonor. An extensive air and ground search was conducted but the circles were never found. However, the farmer eventually allowed Chris into the field and his photographs seem to show that the six irregular areas of downed crop (NOT circles) were, in fact, lodging. It seems strange that a farmer should report what looks like standard irregular lodging as six crop circles.

However, it should be noted that tests performed on similar areas in the USA, by Dr. Levengood, have shown that the same biological changes that occur in genuine crop formations also appear in some non-geometric areas of downed crop that have always been referred to as 'lodging'. It could be that the force utilised to create specific patterns can sometimes discharge at random. Unfortunately, we cannot tell whether this is so here as the crop itself was not actually checked for changes.

REF: Sussex 1997/08
DATE: 1 August 1997
DESCRIPTION: Non-geometric shapes
LOCATION: Wineham, West Sussex
CROP: Wheat
OS MAP: 198
GRID REF: TQ 23 19 (approx)

So that was the Sussex 1997 season with only three viewed proper designs to its name! If the comments in the Offham report about lack of water being the reason for the low activity

are valid, it'll be interesting to see whether we get more in 1998 as rainfall has been much higher this winter. If not, perhaps the formations have finished their Sussex task!

Videos of lectures are traditionally amateur and boring, defined by shots of a blurred slide screen across a hall, the speaker a shadow in the surrounding gloom and the soundtrack almost unintelligible behind tape hiss and audience coughing. Recordings of even the best live performances can be rendered laborious by these pitfalls.

The Crop Circles: History & Geometry is a welcome exception to tradition. Principally a Californian lecture in March 1997 by Glickers and his research partner Patricia Murray, a simple bit of care and attention to presentation has produced an hour and a half which isn't a struggle to get through.

Little things make all the difference; the dialogue is cleanly miked up with ambient sounds from the audience in the background as opposed to the other way around, parts of the lecture are divided into individually captioned chapters, replete with brief musical interludes, and, best of all, many of the slides have been re-imaged over the soundtrack in post-production with pointer cursors, avoiding the contrast-focusing troubles usually encountered by live pictures of projection screens. Before you've heard a word, you find yourself biased towards liking the video for these reasons alone.

What of the content? Anyone familiar with Michael's SC columns or previous fiery presentations may be surprised by the restrained but appropriate tone here, but there is one flicker of mischief right at the start when, artily edited and in a very grave manner, he concocts an incredible story about someone vanishing into thin air inside the 1996 'DNA' formation, to the audience's audible astonishment - before revealing it as a complete lie. The lesson therein is clearly a sly dig at some of the more dramatic unsubstantiated stories delivered by other circle-folk over the years and audiences' irrational thirst to hear them. That done, Michael behaves himself, avoiding even his customary onslaughts on sceptics, settling into his stool Dave Allen-like to divulge his circular discoveries and observations in calm, quiet tones. With little emphasis on speculation or the general impact of the phenomenon, he concentrates instead on his true vocation; dissecting the shape and form of the crop circles. Too many fail to appreciate that this is where much of the magic of the formations lies. Other evidence for a mystery beyond the capabilities of mass-hoaxing has its place but it's in the geometrical bliss of the patterns themselves that their true genius is revealed. Michael has a gift for extracting these revelations of mathematical harmony and uses it to the full after a very quick brush through early circle history. Joined by Patricia Murray for the second half, the intense

REVIEWS *The Art Of* GLICKMANSHIP

Michael Glickman has been a firm circle conference favourite for some years; now one of his US presentations with Patricia Murray is available on video. ANDY THOMAS switches on for a night's viewing...

mood gives way to a chattier, daytime TV-like atmosphere, the later pictograms and associated anecdotes and observations aired conversationally. Provocatively, the tape climaxes with the Oliver's Castle video. In a brave break from current overriding prejudices and reservations, it is presented simply as the real McCoy; a video of

a crop circle forming, the original story told without the saga which followed. There is no mention or discussion of accusations of fakery. It's here that viewers will find it's all or nothing with Glickman and Murray. Enraged, you will either turn it off at this point, disgusted at such naiveté, or rejoice that someone shares your view that the film is

genuine and is prepared to put their cards on the table. Either way, the scheduling of this subject as the tape's finale faces you with a direct choice as to whether to go with the Glickman view of the entire phenomenon or plough your own furrow of discernment. Whatever, many will find themselves uncomfortably humbled and impressed that someone, somewhere can be so sure of their beliefs as to air them so publicly and unashamedly against massive adversity - a rare, though sometimes troublesome, faculty.

As a video which unlocks some of the hidden depths to the patterns themselves, this is indispensable for anyone trying to come to terms with their function and form, unharmed by the occasional minor factual error or odd caption ('The Galaxies of 1995' to describe the general pictograms of that year?). The laid-back but heartfelt enthusiasm of the presenters is evident and refreshing. It's entirely partial, of course, and clearly, though subtly, biased towards the cosmic intelligence theory at the expense of all others - but you don't buy Glickman for balanced views. Nevertheless, most will applaud the sentiments of the final closing captions beneath a simple shot of two beautiful circles: "Thank you, whoever you are, wherever you are". AT

The Crop Circles: History & Geometry, 1 hr 25 mins approx, is available from:

(UK - PAL format) Nexus Magazine, 55 Queens Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1BG. Price: £16.00 (inc. p&p) Cheques payable to 'Nexus Magazine'.

(USA - NTSC format) Crop Circle Radius, PO Box 2077, Santa Monica, CA 90406-2077. Price: \$22.00 (plus \$2.00 p&p) Cheques payable to 'C C Radius'.

LETTERS

And just when we thought it was safe to delve back into the post bag... The Sorensen/SC tussle revives - and ends - here...

Truly, as Andy Thomas said in his October editorial, "...raising a voice against misleading information [is] important." I first began writing to SC last summer to address some issues that I felt were being treated one-sidedly. I take it as a left-handed compliment that there has been so much ink devoted to contrary responses to my position - not only by the editor but from other readers' letters, columns and articles.

Having opened my case with my two previous letters (thank you for printing them uncut), I shall close it with this one. There is so much I want to say, that it would be impossible to present it in this forum.

What I will do, for those who are interested, is devote more time to developing my position in depth within my own video productions and articles than I have previously. In the past I've reported evidence, pro and con, that I find in circles, but I haven't discussed the details of hoaxing in general. But clearly some people are in serious need of informative material on the matter.

For instance, Geoff Ambler says in his letter (speaking for many of your readers, no doubt), that my "silly comments on a few broken stems are basically meaningless". And he sarcastically adds, "can anyone positively identify a Doc Marten's imprint on flattened crop or be certain that no humans have been there beforehand?" Well, I can't identify specific brands of shoes but I can absolutely recognise human footprints on green crop. This is not bluster, it is a learnable skill.

Concerned by the widespread naiveté, I am planning to shoot a special video this coming summer that will show everyone how to detect footprints and other clues of human circle construction - as compared with positive evidence for the real circle-makers.

In the meantime, I am just now finishing editing my video about the 1997 season, and - along with my coverage of the wondrous gifts we received in 1997 - I will show close-up evidence of the hoaxing that reared its ugly head in several formations. Also, in a

frame by frame analysis, I will explain the smoking gun that proves the Oliver's Castle video is a fake. The voluminous, passionately heartfelt, but appallingly blinkered defence of the OCV by the Believers has never squarely addressed this fundamental problem, the 'motionless fields'. The evidence is difficult to spot without it being pointed out but it is undeniably there - and it could not have originated in Wheyleigh/Wabe's 8mm camera. (And it turns out that the realistic 'camera shake' that's touted as so prohibitively time-consuming and expensive has a laughably low-tech solution. It requires nothing more than re-shooting the animation, hand-held, off a high quality studio monitor which has invisibly blended scan lines. I've kept this secret back until now to prevent copy cats but someone else has let the scam out of the bag.)

Incidentally, Michael Glickman stated in his October article that the footage I shot of the crop lay in the Oliver's Castle formation was "suppressed information". How can he say stuff like that?! My best shots of it are included in my 1996 video *Valentines From God* and I readily gave him a copy of all the raw footage when he asked for it. Michael also failed to mention that Wheyleigh/Wabe's "place of work" is a video special effects company, where he operates precisely the kind of equipment needed to create the OCV. (I got a good look at Wabe as he sneaked out the back door of his studio and slipped through the fingers of the Japanese TV crew this summer. And, despite his bleached hair, I positively identify Wabe as the shy cameraman who called himself John Wheyleigh in August of 1996.)

I'm sorry that my reporting upsets so many people. I am not a "hoax booster", I jus' callz de shotz like I seez 'em. I'm quite certain that the circle phenomenon is better served with our eyes and ears open, rather than blindly worshipping with our heads in the sand - er, corn. And I feel the circle-makers must be appalled at the inability of some fundamentalist individuals to distinguish between Their Gifts and the imitations. (Peter's bold type)

Peter Sorenson, Pasadena, USA

The tone of this letter and the fact that Peter seems to have taken the overwhelmingly negative response to his views in SC as a 'left-handed compliment' is worrying to say the least.

Instead of pondering the alternative views voiced

against his and considering that someone might have a point, his response is to declare that we are all in "serious need of informative material" as if only he has access to the real information. Everyone else is just wrong or misinformed even when judging the same evidence. Our whole point all along was that Peter was fully entitled to his views but that they were just his opinion and should be presented as such, not as fact as they too often imply. Now it seems he does see his own opinions as gospel.

Peter's criticism of Geoff Ambler becomes a general slur on all SC readers when he states Geoff is "speaking for many of your readers, no doubt", the implication being none of you out there know what you're talking about either.

It seems clear that Geoff was simply using the term 'Doc Martens' for the word 'boot' in his letter, not suggesting Peter was saying he could spot brands of footwear! We addressed the shortcomings and subjectivity of identifying human activity with "learnable skills" in one of our previous replies to Peter. Making a video about using these techniques will help no-one and do nothing more than create a generation of arrogant novices loudly declaring this or that formation genuine or hoaxed based on opinionated second-hand 'skills' they got from some video or other they once saw. Who is this going to help? - only the sceptics who will laugh at how easily cropies can be stirred into paranoia. And what about the 'hoaxers' Peter believes in? If they do exist, surely giving away modes of detection is simply going to encourage them to improve their methods? As we've said before, how can people be sure they are always the first into new formations anyway and that so-called tracking skills aren't just discovering traces of the first visitors instead of the perpetrators? Making a video of this kind will only help brand Peter the 'hoax-booster' he says he isn't, as people on the fringes tend to pick up on the negative above the positive every time and will simply go away with the impression that mass-hoaxing is rife - for which there is no conclusive proof whatsoever, certainly none which will be produced with these techniques.

As for Oliver's Castle, there's little more to be said. We look forward to seeing Peter's 'fields' detection analysis but would point out that video specialists others have heard from have cast doubt on the reliability of this procedure. So who's right and who's wrong? As for everything else, just because something can be faked and someone may even have the ability to do it, doesn't mean it is faked, and the fact

that an individual is chased across a car park from their work place by a TV crew is not quite the same as an admission of guilt. Surely anyone would run away if someone suddenly burst into their office in this way? As we've said a million times, the OCV may be fake and if it is we'll acknowledge it freely but hearsay, probability and assumption is only that and not unequivocal proof, which is still awaited.

Peter's final sentence though, brazenly fanfared in bold typeface, takes the biscuit. Let's hear it again: "The circle-makers must be appalled at the inability of some fundamentalist individuals to distinguish between their gifts and the imitations." Well, Peter said it - so what makes him so sure this can't also be applied to him? A case of over self-confidence, we think.

Unless anyone besides SC and Peter has some views on these issues, this correspondence is now closed - Ed.

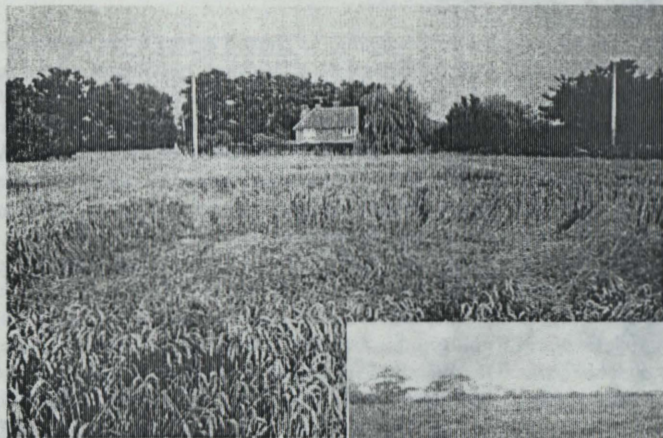
We also received this letter a few months back and now seems a good time to print it. It says it all about the insane negativity at the centre of croppiedom, much of which is born at its supposed 'Mecca'...

After my first ever pilgrimage to Wiltshire this year and feeling very elated at just meeting my kind of people, drinking at The Barge, breathing in my first ever crop circles and feeling at one with infinity I should have been the happiest person alive. But alas, as your articles in recent SCs reveal, I too experienced some very, very negative vibes especially in and around The Barge - and that's apart from the bloody pool table and sometimes infantile juke box. The word "HOAX" 'cropped' up (excuse the pun) from all directions, not the type of thing me and my partner or our dog needed to hear. I was getting steadily more and more depressed!

After travelling all the way from Norwich towing an old shed on wheels and a very 'hot dog' (not edible) to our chosen Mecca I just felt like crying. If it wasn't for meeting two or three of the real faithfuls and heroes of ours we may have just got totally drunk and jumped into the 'cut'.

However, I somehow read SC 68 and gained much comfort from almost all of the articles. And yes I will be renewing my subscription for another year - maybe somebody loves me after all.

Dave Devlin, Norwich, Norfolk



SUSSEX '97 PHOTOS EXTRA

A few more images from the
Southern Circular Research
1997 scrapbook...



ABOVE: Lodging or circles at Wineham? It certainly resembles lodging but the farmer, who must be used to seeing wind damage, thought these patches strange enough to report them as "six crop circles in a row". Dr Levensgood in the USA believes some 'lodging' may not just be weather-beaten but made by semi-formed circle-making energies.

ABOVE & RIGHT: Measuring the incline of the hill in the harvested remains of the Southeast three-armed circle. The device being used is a 'Cowley level'. One person looks through the telescopic sighting device (mounted on the tripod) while another holds up the marked stick it focuses on, enabling the gradient of the slope to be taken. This shows whether it has affected the ovality of the formation. Whether this procedure will yield any interesting results remains to be seen but you don't know until you try. Note dodgy 'field-wear' fashion by some team members (especially the white hat and shorts combo far left of lower photo)...

