



**THE BIMONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND**

86

**SEP / OCT
1999**

£2.00



**THE STARGATE
CONSPIRACY**

**CROP CIRCLES OF 1999:
THE FINAL ROUND-UP**

"Superstition is rooted in a much deeper and more sensitive layer of the psyche than scepticism" JOHANN GOETHE

First of all, apologies for the extreme lateness of this issue. Various things conspired against its punctuality, not least the upgrading of the SC computer, personal circumstances, the time it took to round up the last formations of the year and all points in-between. We'll make sure the next issue gets us back on track.

As you can see, we've acquired a slightly new look and a revised logo, courtesy of Jason Porthouse, so the time wasn't spent idly. Thanks are due to Martin Noakes and Jason for helping to set up the new gear. Some of you will have already seen our modified logo on the *Crop Circle Connector* web site. We are currently sponsoring the site as we feel it provides the best Internet circle information service (all contemporary listings totally free) and want to support its development and continuance. For those with access, the 'net is certainly the quickest way to find out what's happening in the fields these days and for photos and further details of many of the formations listed this issue, it is well worth checking out. You can find the site at <http://cropcircleconnector.com>. How's that for a bit of advertorial? But it's also true.

Gratitude is due, incidentally, to Ronald Koons who included a substantial donation to Southern Circular Research with his recent SC subscription. Thanks also to others who have made unexpected gifts over the last year. All SCR finances are ploughed back into the journal or enable us to help support services like the *Connector* in times of need, so such donations are used to good effect.

So much has happened in the last few months. The much-vaunted total eclipse passed without major incident (but quite a lot of cloud), the English circle season ran its course, the traditional media debunks did their worst (see Avebury report on page 8), the conferences came and went and autumn arrived before anyone knew it. Most of this issue is devoted to documenting all the events in the fields since our last instalment. Whilst it may not be universally riveting reading, it's essential to get a feel of what's been happening up and down the country. What else is a crop circle journal for if not to document the appearance of crop circles? These are the most comprehensive listings available in any printed journal. We'll report on the summer's conferences and events in SC 87 and also review some of the new books, calendars, etc, which have recently popped up.

Lastly, as some of you may already know, Richard Andrews, a very familiar face in the crop circle community, died recently and Michael Glickman pays tribute to him opposite. We extend our sympathy to his friends and family.

ANDY THOMAS



THE BIMONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
CROP CIRCLES
AND BEYOND

Editor: ANDY THOMAS
13 Downsview Cottages
Cooksbridge, Lewes
East Sussex
BN8 4TA
England
Tel: 01273 474711

SC E-Mail Address:
101476.1452@compuserve.com

SC: Edited and produced by ANDY THOMAS on behalf of Southern Circular Research (SCR), with assistance from Barry Reynolds and Kaye Thomas. Financial affairs: Martin Noakes. Articles, letters and contributions to the editorial address please. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not SC as a whole, unless otherwise stated.

SC Copyright (C) 1999: permission must be sought for any reproduction of material. Copyright for individual articles and illustrations lies with the original authors, artists and photographers.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: To subscribe to SC (six issues over twelve months), simply send a cheque to the address below for one of the following amounts:

£12.00 (UK) £16.00 (Europe)
£22.00 (Overseas) \$33.00 (USA)

Cheques payable to 'SCR' please. Cheques & POs for non-USA subs must be made out in sterling (ie. English currency), drawn on a bank with a British branch. Eurocheques accepted. Cash accepted but sent at own risk. USA subs can be made out in dollar cheques.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND GENERAL MAILING ENQUIRIES ADDRESS:

Di Brown & Jason Porthouse
36 Graham Crescent, Mile Oak
Portslade, East Sussex, BN41 2YB
Tel: 01273 885117
E-mail: SCR@landl.freemove.co.uk

Front cover: West Meon, Hampshire, June 1999. Photograph by LUCY PRINGLE

Richard was the first crop circle person I ever met. This was 1990 at the time of the East Field pictogram explosion and I remember everyone was pretty shaken. But even amid this craziness Richard was a model of generosity. I had called him out of the blue. I cannot now recall how I got his number. But even though he had no idea who I was, where I came from or what I wanted, he invited me, with my young son, into his home and gave us his undivided attention and hospitality for hours.

He took Max, who was 13, into the back garden and gave him the 40 minute Andrews dowsing course. He was sent away with a gift of his own rods. I recall my amazement, as we left, at this openness, this kindness. These were qualities that remained undimmed throughout the following years until his death.

He had been a farmer and a crop inspector and was well known in the Hampshire agricultural fraternity. He was a talented and respected dowser and was, in earlier years, the only true countryman we had. His profound experience of the land will be irreplaceable.

As is well known, we occasionally disagreed. He was a devout subscriber to the high-percentage-hoax hypothesis and upset some of us by airing these views in unhelpful places. Despite these disagree-

ments, we never fell out, and, as one recent obituary states, he forgave his critics. (The same testimony chides that "consciences" will now have to be dealt with, but if a man cannot be politely taken to task during life, when can he?) Richard had been unwell for some years. In the early days he was a ubiquitous presence in the fields and at conferences but his failing health limited his activities. Then suddenly, at the Alton Barnes weekend this summer, he appeared. Absolutely alone, though he clearly needed help, walking with a stick, looking awful, but - above all

- so clearly delighted to see everyone. He did the rounds, sitting for a few moments with each of us. We knew this was a farewell visit and we were all shaken. Richard, however, seemed cheerful. (With hindsight, here is an almost poetic irony. His last appearance was at Alton Barnes surrounded by a new generation of cropies who, though they do not know him, owe him so much. Down there, in East Field was a magnificent 1000' reprise of the pictograms of 1990, his heyday.) He was a big man with a comfortable and reassuring presence. He was always civil and friendly, inevitably amiable and courteous. His decency was unquestionable. He will be missed. **MG**

reports as we can, updating events since the last issue and filling in a few earlier ones which got missed. Assume all these formations appeared in wheat unless otherwise noted. We will attempt to round up the overseas formations of the year next issue.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Oakley, Nr Bedford: On 24th July, a messy dumb-bell pictogram (circles 10m & 4m) was found near a much used foot-path although it could barely be seen from it. A small T-shape protruded from the 5m shaft.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Great Staughton, Nr St Neots: Two simple formations were found near the A45 on 29th July, one a simple, tidy 30m thin ring and the other a 25m

Another season, almost unbelievably, has come and gone. Whilst in no way could it be described as disappointing, it's interesting that from the total solar eclipse of August 11th,

things unexpectedly quietened down just as it seemed they were about to reach a major peak. The formations which appeared around the country in the weeks after seemed subdued and less numerous, though plenty of fields were still standing. Though one last biggie was produced at the start of September, this hiatus left some with a feeling of anticlimax. Despite this, we could hardly complain... Note, incidentally, how many patterns seemed to appear on 29th July, apparently the peak of activity. A statistical blip or was this date significant?

In this report, we wrap up as many outstanding circle

Another season, almost unbelievably, has come and gone. Whilst in no way could it be described as disappointing, it's interesting that from the total solar eclipse of August 11th,

things unexpectedly quietened down just as it seemed they were about to reach a major peak. The formations which appeared around the country in the weeks after seemed subdued and less numerous, though plenty of fields were still standing. Though one last biggie was produced at the start of September, this hiatus left some with a feeling of anticlimax. Despite this, we could hardly complain... Note, incidentally, how many patterns seemed to appear on 29th July, apparently the peak of activity. A statistical blip or was this date significant?

In this report, we wrap up as many outstanding circle

FORMATIONS 1999 Report #3

Though things quietened down more quickly than expected, 1999 delivered its fair share of impressive crop glyphs. ANDY THOMAS rounds up the remainder of the most recent English formations since last issue.

standing crescent in a circle. Both were swirled clockwise and neatly laid. Electricity cables crossed the field very close by.

Hail Weston, Nr St Neots: An extremely neat single circle which looked as if a huge rubber stamp had made it was found here on 29th July (see what we mean about the 29th July? - read on). A tiny grapeshot lay just outside.

Sibson Airfield, Nr Stibbington: At a site where Jim Lyons, scientific officer of CCCS, has been conducting a major and detailed study of the many circles which have appeared here for some years now (results were published in a recent *Circular*), a very crisp-looking 'wheel' comprising a thin outer ring, three thinner curved spokes and a small central circle, was found on 29th July. Oddly, it had been placed at the very edge of the field, actually shaving off part of the ring, rather like the Chilcomb Down mandala in Hampshire (see below).

Wimpole Hall, Nr Great Eversdon: A very neat representation of a three-dimensional hollow cube contained within a large ring, very difficult to describe here but resembling something M C Escher might have produced, was reported on 23rd July. An aerial picture put on the wall of *The Barge* copyrighting the image to an alleged human circle-maker of old raised suspicions in some that he was actually claiming the formation, not just the photo, but there is no evidence either way, and, in fact, very few details are available about the formation at all. Did anyone out there actually visit this?

DERBYSHIRE

Chesterfield: An unusual horned or pincer circle with two connected standing rings at the centre and two outside smaller circles was reported by junction 29 of the M1 (formations seem to like the M1 - see Yorkshire reports) on 16th June. Resembling some kind of stinging-type creature and reminiscent of the Furze Knoll pictogram of 1994, some observers claim this pattern mutated into this shape overnight from an initial rectangular pattern made from many small squares but there was no evidence of this in the lay.

DEVON

Rousden, Nr Axmouth: A neat pictogram of unknown design was found on 25th July (vague reports say it contained some straight lines!) but appeared to have been there for several weeks. The lay was apparently good.

DORSET

Preston, Nr Weymouth: A 30m ringed clockwise circle with a protruding mushroom shape on a short path was found under a local chalk horse carving just off the A352 on 12th August, recalling the Newhaven, East Sussex formation of 1997. The lay was tidy and nicely swirled. Rougher grapeshot circles were scattered around the field.

DURHAM

Redworth, Nr Newton Aycliffe: A small dumbbell with an off-centre shaft was reported on 22nd June very close to units on an industrial estate.

HAMPSHIRE

Danebury Ring: Briefly reported last issue, the formation here turned out to be a very unusual triangular glyph, like a set-square with a curved-edge triangular standing centre and was found in barley on 10th June.

Chilbolton, Nr Andover: A diamond-shaped grid made from 138 connecting 10' circles was found in barley on 16th June and apparently resembles what's known as a 'Sierpinski Gasket', a recognised fractal sequence. This appeared next to a radio telescope stationed here and seemed to be a precursor to the West Overton hexagon grid (see last issue).

Chilcomb Down: An elaborate mandala of four-fold rings and circles was reported here on 1st August. Oddly, one of the outer petals had been superimposed over a mown track which crossed the field (*predating* the formation), leaving part of the design chopped off. There was no overtly visible indentation in the track itself.

East End, Nr West Meon: Many of this season's Hampshire designs seem to share a tidy floral theme and are clearly related. Nearly all, like this formation in barley which arrived on 21st June, featured two small standing blobs, this time in a flattened oval nipped out of a petal in this three-fold cloverleaf shape. The petals, made from crescents, revolved around a central standing ring with three circles breaking it at equal intervals. (Photo: page 10)

Henwood, Nr East Meon: What can only be described as a very neat 'ship's wheel' was found here on 3rd August, clearly part of the local 'floral series', including the small standing blobs signature just inside the perimeter circle. A circle containing a standing hexagonal 'washer' around a triangle with a central ringed circle was augmented by six radiating 'handles' made from three decreasing circles. (Photo: page 10)

Mapledurwell: A rough single circle was spotted from the M3 near Basingstoke on 4th July.

Meon/Thruxton: Somewhere between these two points, a chain of five rough small circles connected by long, thin wonky paths was videoed from the air on 3rd August.

Meonstoke, Nr Horndean: A nice entry in the Hampshire floral series was found on 23rd July, being a neat standing ring with three radiating petals, encompassed by three standing crescents (one of which has a ringed grapeshot within it) and the 'signature' of two small blobs. (Photo: page 10)

Micheldever: Three floral stars, each a variation on six petals contained within a ring, two with central rings, one without, were discovered in the same field next to the A303 near the railway station on 12th July. These together would make a rather good wallpaper design, although there was a slight tendency toward crudeness in their geometrical construction. Despite their petalled quality, they didn't feel quite the same as others in the local series.

Warnford, Nr Winchester: Yet another in the proper floral series, complete with the signature standing blobs chopped out of one of the petals, appeared on 12th July. Looking rather like three balls of wool held together by knitting needles, three intersecting rings merged at the middle while three small circles radiated out from each niche. A thin 'spike' emanated from one side. Again, a very crisp and well-defined pattern. (Photo: page 10)

KENT

Borstal, Nr Rochester: A quite staggering triple-arm design of almost indescribable tapering circles, connecting semi-rings and semi-circles was reported on 27th July. The lay was extremely neat and complex. Unfortunately, the field was cut before aerial photos could be taken, but enough of the shape remained visible from the air for diagrams to be made. A separate small ringed circle lay nearby. When approached, the farmer was particularly abusive to members of CCCS Kent.

One local couple had been 'requesting' a formation in this area all year and were rather pleased to receive this latest masterpiece from a county which, until recent years, wasn't known for its spectacular crop designs. Now it seems to be making up for lost time with this and the other ambitious efforts of 1999.

Lenham, Nr Maidstone: A 230' long pictogram arrived next to a war memorial cross carved in chalk on 19th August. An L-shaped path incorporating two small anticlockwise circles emanated from one side of a 95' clockwise central circle while a short path led to a small circle on the other. Two grapeshot lay nearby. Some visitors to the formation reported high-pitched whistling sounds akin to the mysterious 'trilling' noted in years past.

Trottscliffe, Nr Maidstone: On 20th June, two very beautiful formations were discovered. One was an attractive nest of three very large and very thin crescents pointing outwards, all overlapping at the centre with standing areas marking the overlaps, covering a total area of around 600'. In the adjoining field, the other pattern was one of the most pleasing works of the year, a kind of triple Julia set fractal with the tapered ends of each arm bent in to touch the base of the next. A small central circle marked the centre of each curled arm. Some circles had notably geometrically offset swirl centres, some with standing tufts. This was very much the descendant of other Kent formations from the last couple of years, which have often displayed fractal qualities but never this boldly.

Whitstable: A smallish dumbbell was found on 6th August. A thin 30' path protruded from the smaller circle, which had excellent S-shaped double centres to it. Aerial phenomena were reported in the Canterbury/Whitstable area that week, and featured on local *Meridian* ITV news.

LEICESTERSHIRE

Morcott: An intriguing development took place at a formation which started as a 127' ringed circle containing a very neat standing spiral path (rather like the 1995 Beckhampton spiral) around a smaller central ring on 29th June. When photographed from the air on 17th July, the spiral had mysteriously been flattened (tidily) into paths in the lay instead. In the same field (just off the A47 near the local windmill), two small triangles, flat sides to each other, lay further away in one corner of the field.

NORFOLK

Attleborough: Not far from the A11, a dumbbell with circles of 20' and a shaft of 47' was found in a crop of rye on 1st July. Oddly, the seedheads in the laid crop were all missing, although whether this was the work of hungry birds or something stranger isn't known for sure.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Brixworth, Nr Northampton: 25th July saw the appearance of a slightly odd double ringed circle with a separate satellite circle and tiny grapeshot between the two. From the central circle, two slightly unpleasant thin paths and a crude crescent reached out to the first ring.

OXFORDSHIRE

Asthall: Just off the A40, a neat dumbbell pattern arrived around July 16th, one circle 35' (ringed) and the other 30', crop laid anticlockwise.

Chilson, Nr Chalbury: A 28' "quadranted" circle split into two standing/two flat areas diagonally opposite each other was found near the A361 between Burford to Chipping Norton on 4th August.

Garsington: A tidy clockwise ringed circle of 80' containing six equally spaced grapeshot between the ring and the circle appeared around 17th July. A long emanating tail of 180' tapered off, leaving it looking somewhat like a tadpole.

Playhatch, Nr Caversham: A 50' single circle in late rape was found on July 22nd just off the A4155 in a field which had a formation in 1995.

Faringdon: Local radio reported a formation of then unknown design between Pusey and Faringdon in mid-July, just off the A420, but researchers were unable to locate it on the ground for a few weeks. Later, however, an elaborate 350' dumbbell made from a celtic cross leading to a circle with a 'headphones' halo (two circles and an arc) was found

at Farlington on 15th August, and was, from its apparent age, probably the lost pattern. A strange large blob of crop discoloration lay adjacent to it.

Toot Balden: In the same barley field as one of the two formations reported last issue, a 105' design of two standing facing crescents appeared between 10-13th June. The tips of the crescents tapered down to the width of one stem. A scattering of grapeshot lay 100' away.

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh: At some point during the summer, three formations of unknown design were seen in this area.

SOMERSET

Corston, Nr Bristol: This area gave birth to a series of flower-of-life-type geometrical shapes in 1999. 3rd July saw the simplest, being a clear-cut cloverleaf shape of three superimposed circles, the outer edges of each being clearly visible in the laid crop. On 4th July, a far more complex version arrived, this time with thin outer rings and seven curved edge triangles inside at logical geometric points. Its size was almost identical to the first in the series. Some of the flattened triangles had double swirl centres. Of all people, TV entertainer Rolf Harris apparently visited both these formations and spoke excitedly to the farmer's wife about the phenomenon. Whether he said "Can you see what it is yet?" as he entered the circles or attempted to anaesthetise any sick animals isn't known.

Easton in Gordano, Nr Bristol: A circle with two protruding thin paths, each leading to circles (like large insectogram antennae), was seen from the A369 on 6th July.

Marksbury, Nr Bristol: Another in the flower-of-life series, very similar to the second Corston formation (above) but with four curvy triangles at the centre, was found on 19th June.

Penny Quick Hill, Nr Bath: Continuing the series above, an almost identical pattern to the Marksbury event (above) was found on 20th June.

Radstock: A radiating bow-tie formation (two standing/two flattened triangles pointing inwards) contained within a circle with Y-shape forks protruding from opposite sides was found at Radstock Hill around 13th July.

Stantonbury Hill, Nr Bristol: On 29th July a design very similar to last year's Danebury seven-fold appeared here, this time utilising nine in-folding small semi-circular petals outlining a circle. A similar-sized circle with a standing crescent lay nearby.

Stanton Prior, Nr Bristol: A 100' thickly ringed circle was reported on 29th July. In the middle circle lay an off-centre raised inner ring, while five grapeshot lay in a nearby extremely thin strip of barley, grown for reasons unknown.

SUSSEX

Patching, West Sussex: The beautiful 170' flower design which appeared on 30th July, comprising a triple ringer with six surrounding petals (all components standing) contained in a scalloped flattened area, was somewhat of a surprise, being very un-Sussex like in its look and more reminiscent of the 1993 Bythorn mandala. It could be seen clearly from the A280 between the A27 and Fldon and was first spotted at about 4.30am by a driver on the morning it arrived.

The central circle was 26' as was the average of each petal from the base to the tip. Like similar petalled designs of years past in other counties, each petal was outlined with thin paths while the main lay filled in around it. Curiously, one side of the formation was swept clockwise, while the other half was anticlockwise.

This formation was placed on one of the steepest slopes yet seen in Sussex - it was like mountain climbing to get from the bottom to the top and very difficult to traverse.

Povnings, West Sussex: On 1st August, a dumbbell comprising two anticlockwise 40' circles inside a thin 110' anticlockwise ring connected by a short path to a thicker 62' ring with a 26' rectangular bulge, appeared at the foot of the South Downs near Devil's Dyke, a famous Sussex rift valley. A good view could be had from the South Downs Way footpath which runs near the main car park. Three grapeshot in a line and a squat triangle lay nearby.

The lay in the main circles was neat with pleasing swirls, though the thick ring was more haphazard. The overall length of the dumbbell was 181'. 29' from the main ring, three small grapeshot, two anticlockwise and one clockwise, lay next to a small triangle of around 13'.

This same field hosted a simpler dumbbell in 1991.

Plumpton, East Sussex: Whilst flying, SCR micro-light pilot Michael Hubbard spotted a line of two single ringed circles and one double ringed circle in a small barley field adjacent to the B2116 on 6th August. They had clearly been there for some weeks by the rough state of the flattened crop (the barley overall was very ripe, low and scrappy) and lay at the northern foot of the South Downs, near the beauty spot of Blackcap.

The double ringed circle was 43', the middle single-ringer 29' and the end single-ringer 35'. The total length of the formation was 130'.

Curiously, or suspiciously, depending on how you wish to look at it, the spine of the three ringed circles was placed on a little-used footpath which crossed the field. Given that it has been suggested before that any descending force might naturally align to a gap in the field (ie. tractor lines, hence their occasional use as central spines), it's interesting to note that the tramlines in this field were very overgrown and almost invisible, so instead the footpath attracted the circles.

Mill Hill, Nr Shoreham, West Sussex: On 22nd August, another very late barley formation was dis-

covered at this field which has given birth to three previous glyphs in 1990, 1993 and 1995, just below the listed building of Buckingham Barn and adjacent to the busy A27.

The 66' ringed circle was swirled anticlockwise as was the 33' triangle which lay to the north. The corners of the triangle were particularly well-delineated and though the crop itself was again very low and scrappy (unusual for barley to still be standing at this time of summer) the general lay was fluffy and bouncy and the formation clear and pleasing. The main circle was laid in plied grooves, giving a three-dimensional feel. The farmer was surprised at the news of this formation's arrival on the 22nd August because he had looked into this field earlier that day and seen nothing. Later that afternoon, SC maller Jason Porthouse discovered it - a daylight occurrence or had the farmer simply not noticed the pattern in the morning? In an amazing cosmic 'coincidence', Jason had meditated in the lay-by at the top of this field a few nights previously, asking the circle-making forces to re-visit the field. It seems his call was heeded... Jason must be very much in tune with whatever's behind all this because he did exactly the same thing in 1993 - an 'insectogram' arrived in this field the night after he made a similar request from the same car park. And before that, in 1992, he and his brother Mark invited the crop circles to do their thing at Sompting, only to receive the first of a string of formations in that area two days later. Some guys have all the luck. (See the book *Fields of Mystery*.)

Southwick Hill, Nr Portslade, West Sussex: 3rd August saw the 'materialisation' of three sets of lettering directly adjacent to the A27, just east of the tunnels which bore through to Shoreham. A chalk tumulus lies in a crop field and children from the nearby estate regularly play there.

Just below this, what were almost certainly man-made initials could be seen. The three largest letters (56') were fairly well executed and read 'S V T'. Below these, the same letters appeared again, but much smaller at 15'. To the right of these, the much cruder 20' initials 'N E R' lay.

Upper Beeding, West Sussex: 25th July saw the arrival of a double ringer with an outline ring of 16 rectangular boxes, a three-leaf cloverleaf design and eleven grapeshot of varying sizes in a field very visible from the A283.

This attractive collection of shapes seemed to have an astronomical or floral look to it, appearing in the same field as a pictogram from 1995 which contained a similar cloverleaf design as part of its design. A cloverleaf pattern also appeared in another Sussex formation from 1995 at nearby Mill Hill, Shoreham. In yet another hark back to 1995, the ring of 16 rectangular boxes seen in this new formation also featured in an elaborate dumbbell formation which appeared at Clissbury Ring, West Sussex, exactly four years ago to the day.

The diameter of the double ringer (minus the boxes) was 72'. The crop was very neatly laid. All the circles had good swirls but the cloverleaf circles were in fact outer rings with the rest of the crop laid outwards from the centre of the design in straight lines to form

the circles. Some of the small circles/grapeshot lay in-between tramlines - no entry marks were visible on first inspection. One small circle had a central standing tuft.

The farmer was extremely angry at the sudden new arrival and took to patrolling the field in turns with his father, shouting at visitors from a Land Rover. Despite having obtained permission to enter the field, the SCR survey team were still accosted by the police whilst measuring the shapes - exactly what happened in 1995. Actually, the police (who turned out to be nice blokes) were rather impressed with the formation and went away quite convinced that it wasn't the work of the local kids the farmer suspected.

After a series of very quiet years since the busy summer of 1995, Sussex had a renaissance this year, with nine events. Could this be due to the increased water table in Sussex after the drought conditions of the last three years, given the increasingly talked about aquifer/geological connection to crop circles..?

WARWICKSHIRE

Moreton Paddox, Nr Stratford-on-Avon: A single circle was spotted on 29th July, not far from the old Foss Way Roman road.

WEST MIDLANDS

Sutton Coldfield: A 26' circle with an emanating 42' L-shaped pathway was found here on 9th June.

On 26th June, a new formation was discovered bearing an alarming resemblance to a horned skull adjacent to a messy 30' six-pointed star with a triangle at each 'corner'. Local cropples had apparently carried out a meditation that afternoon, requesting a new formation. Somebody had drawn a six-pointed star at the meeting. (Are they sure, given the 'skull', that there weren't any Satanists also meditating in the area the same day..?)

WILTSHIRE

Aldbourne: An elaborate nine-pointed star framing a triple ringed circle and outlined by a ring of small circles and multi-ringed circles (rather like the 'asteroid belts' of 1995) which was found on 24th June was somewhat neglected by the cropple community in terms of the small fuss made over it. This may have been because it appeared in fairly immature barley which was already recovering substantially by the time it was discovered and was thus poorly defined in photographs. A shame, because in many ways this is one of the more complex patterns of the season.

(Incidentally, did you know that Aldbourne was where the BBC filmed the famous Jon Pertwee *Dr Who* story *The Daemons*, you know, the one where The Master is dabbling in Devil worship and the church blows up at the end? Just thought I'd mention it.)

Allington: One in a series of seemingly genetic-looking octopod fractals (see East Kennett below) was found here on 26th June, a wiggly triple-armed design of 28 differing-size small circles with an overall

diameter of 230'. The lay and centres of this pattern were very well executed, with a variety of central standing tufts and splays. A lot of wild grass was growing in amongst the crop, leading to one circle being almost completely composed of grass.

The pattern which then appeared here on 23rd August was one of two to be instantly removed on the morning of its arrival by the farmer (see also the Bishops Cannings 'basket weave'), leaving an unsightly hole in the middle of the field. From aerial shots of what was left, it seems that a beautiful formation was lost. It appears to have been a double ring with three back to back crescents superimposed (joined at the middle) and radiating outwards. This new tendency for farmers to remove glyphs as soon as they appear (presumably to discourage visitors who might damage crops) is worrying and may in time lead to many more designs being lost before anyone can document them. Researchers are going to have to start flying very early each morning to combat this threat. Can the simple appearance of a crop circle really warrant such a reactionary rising of blood pressure from farmers who go out of their way to specifically destroy it long before harvesting the whole field? It may be time for cropples to cultivate better relationships with the farming community (even through compensatory financial arrangements?) if this is to be avoided in future.

Alton Barnes: After the huge pictogram which had appeared in June, a rather more modest and somewhat cheekier inscription appeared in the East Field... 11 letters and a copyright symbol spelling out '© Lucy Pringle'... (Photo: page 10)

Avebury: A number of events, as ever, closely surrounded this, the apparent centre of global circle activity this year. Beginning humbly, if rather late, a classic simple dumbbell popped up next to the stone avenue on 29th July.

However, another formation which appeared nearby the same night proved to be the most controversial of the year. A very large circle containing 33 standing pillars of crop with pathways inscribed in each, creating the optical illusion of six three-dimensional cubes, was claimed a week later as a creation made for the *Daily Mail* in a two and a half page article devoted to debunking the whole phenomenon (interestingly, the dumbbell wasn't claimed). The usual suspects (John Lundbergh, Rod Dickinson, etc. - known collectively as, er, Team Satan) were reportedly employed to create the design. The news story predictably upset some cropples and almost certainly helped turn away the shaky interest of waverers and fringe observers - but then if anyone believes everything they read in the papers there's not much hope for them anyway. CCCS apparently had some members on the phone in tears. Why there should be such a hysterical reaction to this old and boring trick though, is a puzzle. Haven't we all been here many times before? Last year *The Guardian* pulled the same stunt. Interest in the circles didn't die then and nor will it now in those with the imagination to see beyond such vaudevillian stunts.

There's two ways of looking at this event and opinion seems to be divided. On one hand, several observers

have pointed out the inconsistencies and lack of evidence in the *Mail* story that the formation was man-made. Certainly, all there is to go on is the contradictory word of the journalist and a few photos of people standing in dark fields, which proves nothing. So the first view is that the newspaper simply laid claim to, or augmented, a pattern which wasn't their's - Michael Glickman puts the case for this in this issue's *Cornography* (page 20).

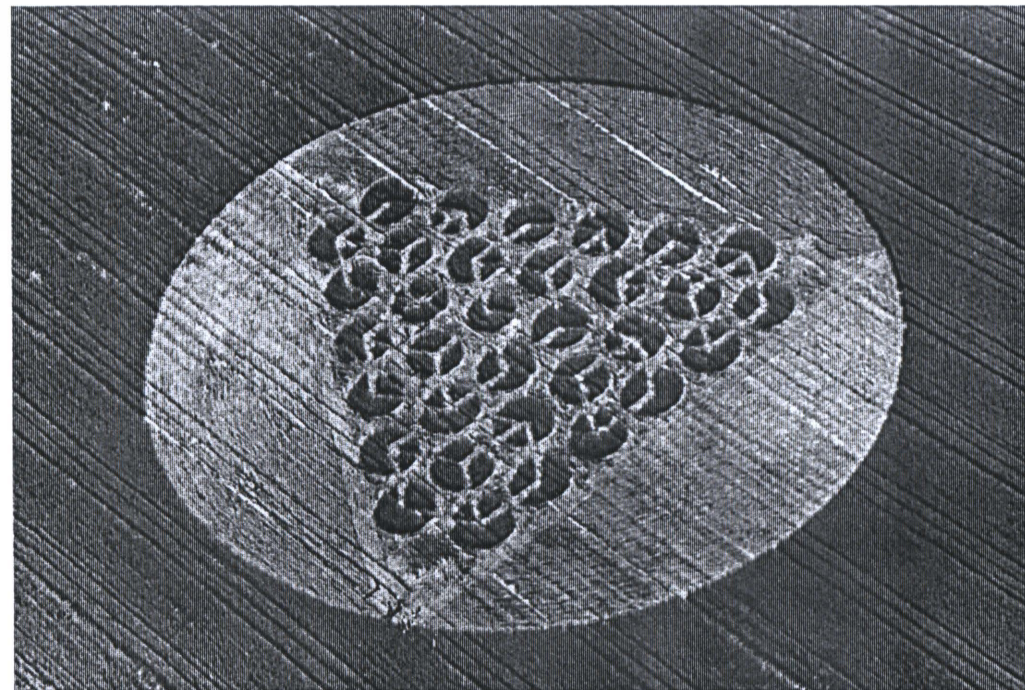
The other view is that although the design is very clever, it is also rather messy - several researchers had expressed their dislike of the lay and inaccuracies in the standing pillar pathways, which are certainly uneven, days before the news story broke. Pictures of 'Escher cubes' made in this way had also been circulated on the Internet in the weeks before (after the Allington cube appeared - see last issue), so such a design may have had time to gestate in human circle-makers' minds. Various dowsers got nothing out of the formation either, which whilst not necessarily meaningful, is curious. Certainly, visually, it is one of the less attractive patterns of the year and some find it grudgingly acceptable that it could well have been man-made. (Photo: page 9, opposite)

The fact is, we shall never know, just as a firm verdict over last year's *Guardian* formation at Silbury was never reached (see letter in *SC* 81, page 16). And, frankly, given the many gifts in the fields we've had this year, does it matter? All the article has done is show that *one* formation out of thousands this decade may have been man-made. With the typical shoddy logic we expect, this is supposed to show *all* formations are the work of human artists - as we know, there is a lot of evidence to suggest otherwise. So why get worked up about it? In a blatant display of the fickleness of the press, the *Daily Mail* ran a positive article by Lucy Pringle a few weeks later without making any reference to their own previous debunk. If the perpetrators of these stories have such short memories, why should we worry?

Blissfully free of intense debate, on 31st July, a small but enchanting six-fold flower-of-life (standing petals in a flat circle) arrived nearby, this time, notably, in oats. Each gap between petals was laid as a swirled circle with a tufted centre, merging into the next.

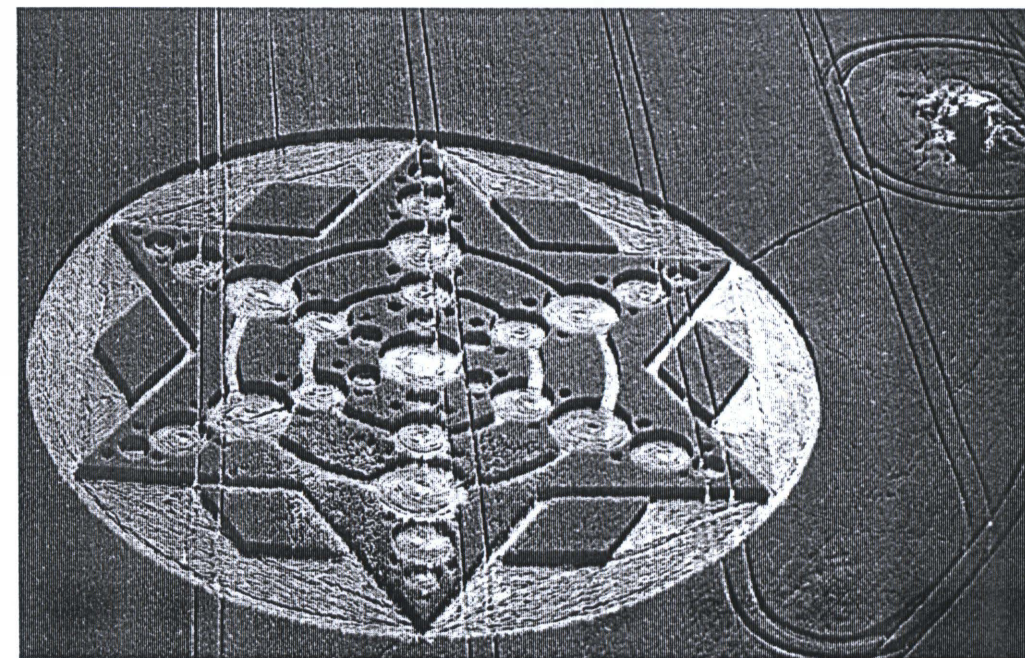
The last English formation to date, and the closest thing we had to the slightly mythical but traditionally awaited 'grand finale' of the year (usually attributed simply to the last of the best to be reported) appeared to the north-west of the stone circle on 1st September. Essentially a circle with an exquisite double radial burst at the centre, it had eight radiating arms each consisting of two large circles, the outer with a small standing crescent and attendant outer grapeshot. Rather interestingly, the Greek symbol for Pi lay 100' or so away. Each circle in the main design seemed to display a different example of astonishing swirl, most notably of the standing curled 'sausage' variety in some cases, first seen in one of the grapeshots at the 1997 Milk Hill fractal star.

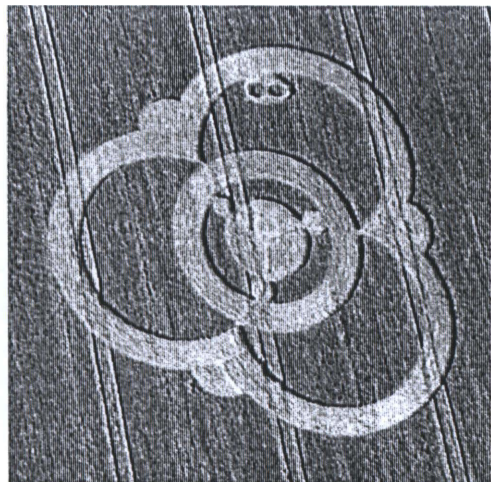
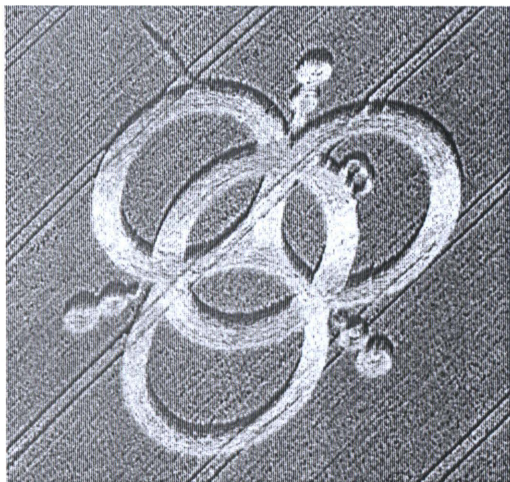
Unless something appears in an autumn crop, which would be unusual, there's every chance that this was the very last formation of the 20th Century. It also closes a decade of wonders no-one could have dreamt of 15 years ago.



ABOVE: Avebury, Wiltshire, 29th July. The most controversial formation of the year - claimed as man-made by the *Daily Mail*, denied by others. Fuzz your eyes and watch the cubes appear. (Report: page 8) Photo: LUCY PRINGLE

BELOW RIGHT: Devil's Den, Wiltshire, 19th July. The Devil's Den itself is the stone quoit to the right. Note the helicopter damage to the bottom left of the star. (Report: pages 13-14) Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER





THE HAMPSHIRE 'FLORAL' SERIES

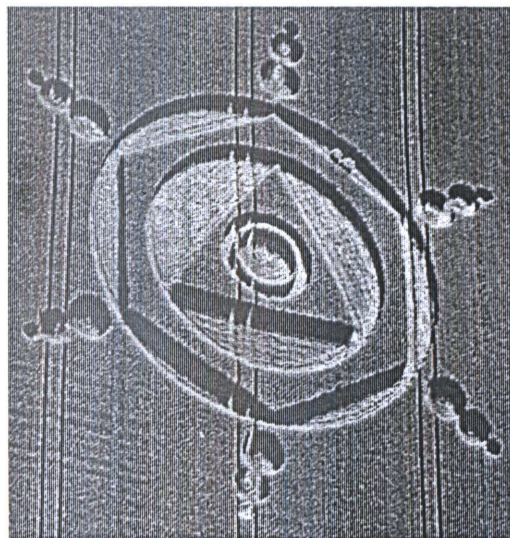
The 1999 season saw this collection of clearly related designs in the county of Hampshire. All share a similar theme and have a little 'signature' of two small standing clumps somewhere in the pattern (although the Meonstoke ones seem to have become separated). Reports: page 4. Photos by: LUCY PRINGLE

ABOVE LEFT: Warnford, Hampshire, 12th July.

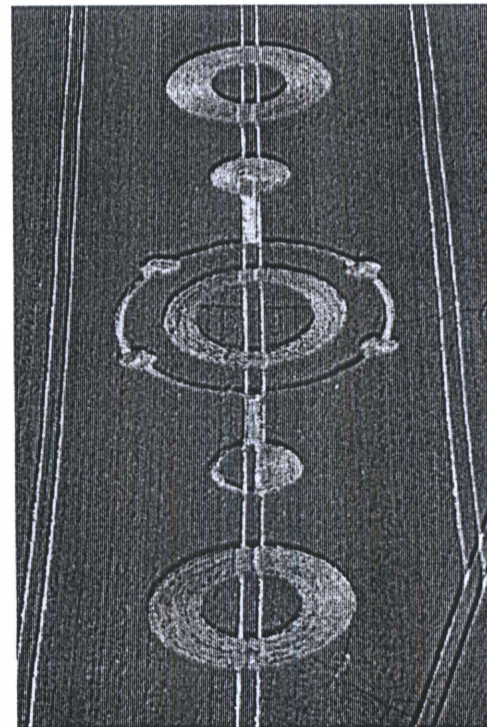
ABOVE RIGHT: West Meon, Hampshire, 21st June.

MIDDLE: Henwood, Hampshire, 4th August.

BELOW RIGHT: Meonstoke, Hampshire, 22nd July.



BELOW: Alton Barnes, Wiltshire, 18th July. A love letter from the Lucy Pringle fan club... (Report page 8) Photo: Copyright, er, STEVE ALEXANDER



FORMATIONS

1999

Gallery #2

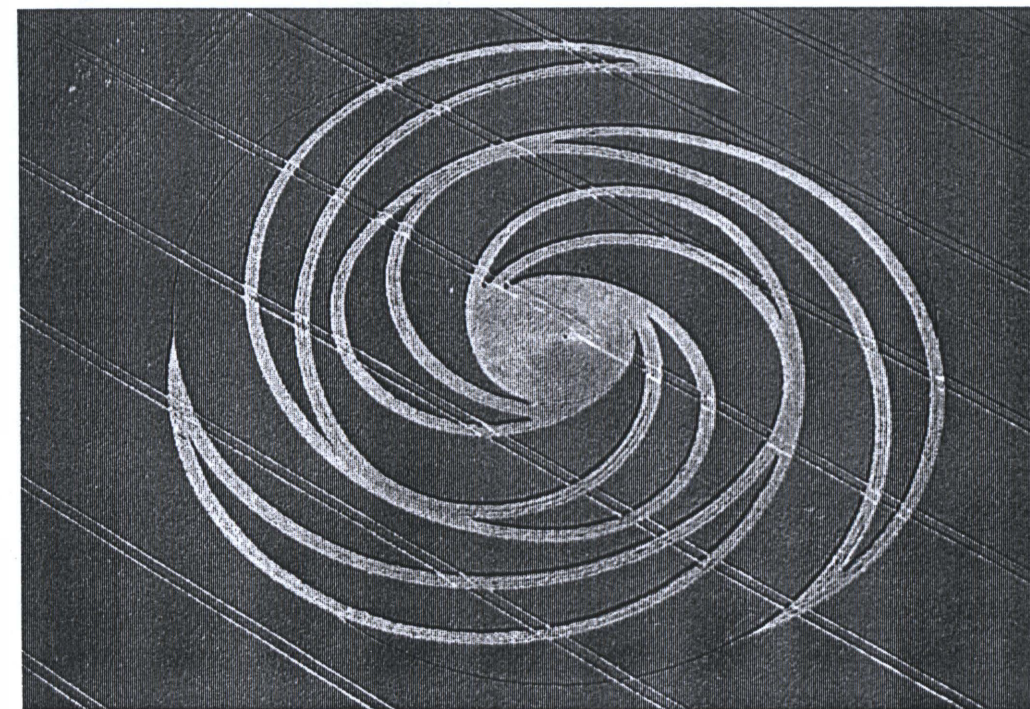
Full colour original copies of Steve Alexander and Lucy Pringle's photos can be obtained from:

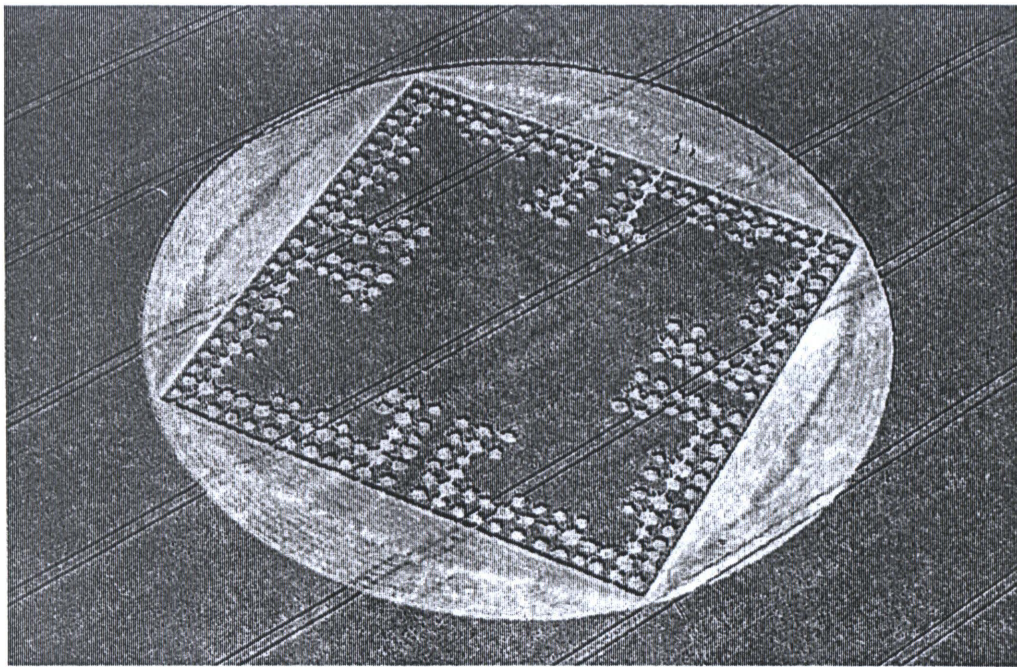
LUCY: 5 Town Lane, Sheet, Petersfield, Hants,
GU32 2AF, tel/fax 01730 263454
e-mail: LucyPringle@compuserve.com

STEVE: 27 St Francis Road, Gosport, Hants,
PO12 2UG, tel/fax 01705 352867

LEFT: Stanton St Bernard/All Cannings, Wiltshire, 24th June. The biological effects on circle-affected crop sought by Dr W C Levenson (see SCs passim) were particularly strong in this pattern. Photo: LUCY PRINGLE

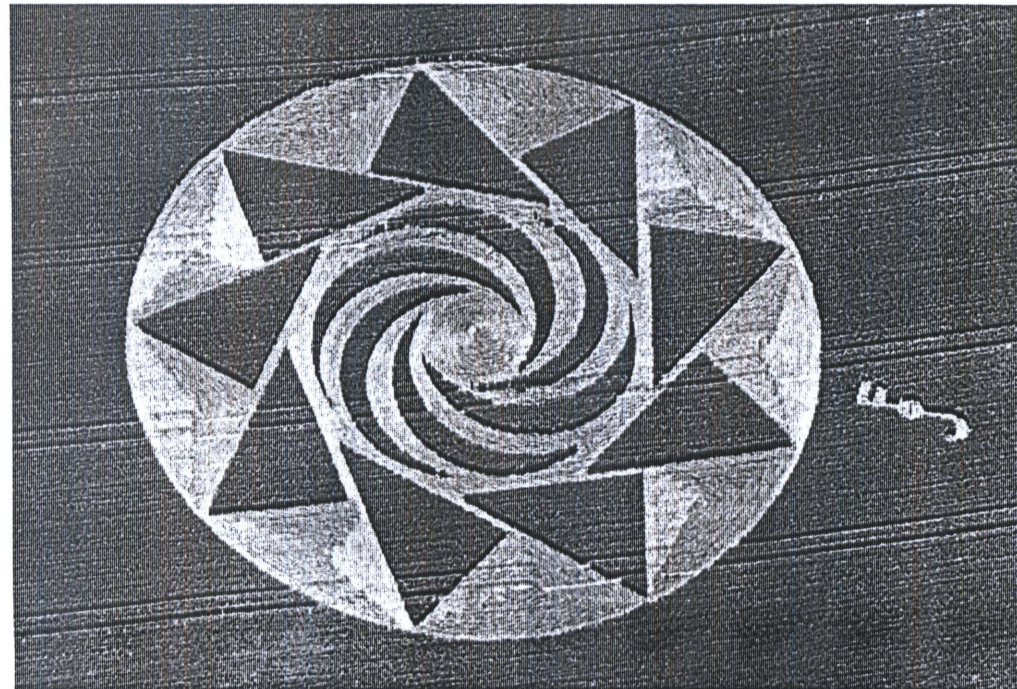
BELOW: Hackpen Hill, Wiltshire, 4th July. One of the most extraordinary designs of the summer - try making an accurate scale drawing of this and you'll see what we mean. (Report: page 14) Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER





ABOVE: Windmill Hill, Wiltshire, 16th July. A record-breaking formation - this square contains 288 small circles, the most ever found in one pattern. (Report: page 15) Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER

BELOW: Cherhill, Calne, Wiltshire, 18th July. One of the very best formations of the year, in terms of its striking design and accuracy. Note the symbol for Ganesha alongside, a Hindu elephant deity. (Report: page 13) Photo: STEVE ALEXANDER



Avebury Trusloe: A strange circle with a long wavy tadpole tail and five other radiating wiggly arms and grapeshot was discovered on 23rd August. The at-first-unpleasant-looking design is actually cleverer than it seems, on closer inspection looking rather like a sun giving off solar flares. Let's hope it's not a warning, as one of the arms is much larger than the others.

Barbury Castle: 23rd July saw the arrival of an extremely precise, crisp motif, simple and yet ingenious and elegant. A large 300' circle contained a very thin standing ring, within which three wide crescents interlocked in a three-dimensional manner (an increasing technique) like three bananas in a bowl. The lay was possibly the neatest of the year and the interconnecting flows of crop were impressive. On 7th August, a visitor looking down on the formation from the nearby hill videoed a small white ball of light fly briefly in and out at high speed. This sequence is impressive and can be seen on the *Crop Circle Connector* web site.

On 5th August, a long, thin, undulating pathway with a ringed circle and halo crescent at one end and a tight question mark-like spiral at the other also appeared here.

Beckhampton: In the same field as the 'Wings of Horus' design reported last issue (or 'Barge of Hathor' - another Egyptian connotation - others have said), a more straightforward collection of circles, two linked with a scroll arc, grapeshot and a broken ringed circle were found in the same field on 17th July, not far from the *Waggon & Horses* pub. Nicely laid and closely positioned to each other, just a thin curtain of standing crop separated some of the circles.

Then, further south, this time in the same field as 1998's 'manta ray', a quite lovely emblem like a neatly twisting, overlapping standing ring of rectangular ribbon (forming a central hexagon) inside a 250' flattened circle graced the crops on 28th July. A very neat lay and a very tidy appearance made this one of the most pleasing events of the year. Several electronic malfunctions and claims of 'missing time' were reported by some visitors.

Berwick Bassett: A bizarre and rather untidy pictogram turned up on 30th August. A thin arc linking two small circles adjoined a circle, lozenge-shape and a ringed oval, leading it to be nicknamed the 'umbrella man' for some unspecified reason.

Bishops Cannings: Though its immediate destruction at the hands of the farmer (like the Allington formation above) has perhaps given the formation which appeared here on 6th August an exaggerated mythical quality it might not otherwise have had, it is fair to say the pattern which existed for just three hours before being deliberately eliminated was one of the most beautiful and unusual of the year. Basically a seven-pointed star of radiating standing rings against a flattened bed of crop (unique and gorgeous in itself), what distinguished it was the astonishing way the laid crop had gone down in a series of overlapping rectangular swathes, giving the impression of a basket-weave or chequer board. Nothing

like this has ever been seen before. The weave effect was not continued inside the standing rings, which had superb S-swirls instead. Unfortunately, the best (only?) footage of it which exists was a lucky video sequence taken just before the farmer moved in with the combine. There's little doubt that had it remained, it would have been one of the most revered formations of the season (despite a slight geometrical error in the spacing of the seven arms). As it is, it is now being spoken about like the lost Holy Grail, although some of the Internet obituaries about its loss to humanity were slightly over the top. Surprisingly, the circle-making forces failed to deliver a replacement design using these techniques, which many had predicted, leaving hot anticipation for something similar next year.

As if in protest at such desecration, like sores around a wound, a series of small glyphs appeared on 22nd August surrounding the long path left by the combine harvester across the field, looking like commas, punctuation marks and other curious markings. One of these shapes actually encompassed a water trough with a ring, recalling the 1992 'charm bracelet' formation which also utilised a trough.

On the same date, a 50' pear-shaped design appeared nearby sporting two slanted standing lozenges, giving very much the look of an 'Grey' ET face. Others have appeared before now and, ironically, given the belief of some cropies in such creatures, all have been dismissed as man-made! This is certainly the best ET face yet to have appeared, with a nice radial swirl above its 'eyes'.

Cherhill: One of the very best formations of the year arrived below the white horse and needle monument just south of the A4 to Calne on 17th July in very green wheat. A geometrically sophisticated yet beautifully simple mandala (or 'spinner' - it looks made to revolve), nine standing isosceles triangles swirled like a camera shutter around a smaller twist of six crescents at the centre, all contained within a circle. The neatness and accuracy of the design was stunning. Although not unheard of, nine is an unusual number for the circles to play with and they have developed its use a few times this year. Just outside of the main area lay an old friend from last year's Dadford star - the Hindu symbol for Ganesha, an elephant deity used as a talisman in that religion.

Although a public footpath ran up the side of the adjacent hill, many idiots couldn't be bothered to do the sensible thing and instead traipsed right across the intervening field of flax which lay between the formation's field and the A4, prompting a despairing signpost from the farmer begging them to use the footpath. (Photo: page 9)

Chiseldon: A small circle with two large orbiting thin rings (biggest: 200') was seen in barley on 12th June. Then, on 12th August, a line of four large, thin overlapping rings, two of which formed a vesica piscis in the middle, was discovered. The crop flowed well. Two small grapeshot lay 100' away.

Devil's Den, Nr Clatford: An astoundingly complex mandala comprising a double ringed circle, a five pointed star containing radiating circles and a

hexagon all superimposed on each other, enclosed within a circle, was discovered in this remote area east of Avebury on 20th July. Despite the shock value of the complexity of the design and the excellence of its execution, there was a slightly cluttered, over-worked look about it to some eyes. The Devil's Den itself, a surprisingly almost unknown stone quilt on private land lay in the same field just 100' away. Circle researchers Karen Douglas and Steve Alexander had been doing some photographic work at the quilt in the preceding weeks and were taken aback at the gift they received.

This was one of several formations damaged by selfish low-flying helicopters trying to get photographs - haven't they heard of zoom lenses? The downdraft from such a visitor mashed up one side of the mandala only a day or two after its appearance. Anyone seen hovering low enough to damage the crops is contravening air safety regulations and should be reported to the CAA - something worth remembering next season. (Photo: page 12)

East Kennett: A small, unimpressive dumbbell appeared very visibly at Lurkeley Hill next to one of the main country routes to Alton Barnes on 18th July and, ironically, considering its roughness, was probably one of the more seen formations of the year. However, on 21st July, something more promising turned up, another in the series of miniature fractals (see Allington above) which some have interpreted as diagrams of genetic material, DNA strands, etc. This was the most elaborate, looking something like a dancing octopus, three wiggly mini-Julia Set arms of 13 small circles emanating from a central 32' circle.

Furze Hill, Lockeridge: A slightly crude double ringed design with six circles and semi-circles snaking across its centre was found in barley on 20th June.

Hackpen Hill: One of the very finest of this season's events was discovered in a field below the chalk white horse of Rockley Down on 4th July. A quite staggering 390' swirled design made from crescents spiralling in a vortex, the geometrical construction of this was mind-boggling. Walking inside gave little idea of its totality but even viewing it from aerial shots took some working out. Essentially, the crescents fanned out to create three main arms, but the whole thing was outlined with a thin perimeter path. The lay inside was meticulous and quite beautiful. A great view could be had from the car park on the hill.

On the night it formed, researchers from the *Crop Circle Connector* web site were actually carrying out a cropwatch from the same car park. Shortly after midnight, small lights and what looked like a searchlight beam scouring the fields below were witnessed by the group. Whether the nearby farm buildings had seen the lights and were then searching with powerful torches to find the source or whether something yet more peculiar was going on isn't known but next morning the formation lay below.

Some researchers have pointed out the similarity of this crop glyph to diagrams showing the paths created across the Earth's surface by the Moon's shadow during a total solar eclipse. Given the eclipse motifs we'd had in earlier months (see last issue) and the

forthcoming date of the real eclipse which would - coincidentally? - mark a sharp decline in the numbers of formations from thereon, could this design have been significant? (Photo: page 11)

Honey Street: Just a couple of fields away from *The Barge's* campsite, a three-dimensional-looking motif of a sphere contained within a cube, in turn contained within a ring, appeared on 16th July. Although first appearing as an odd design of spindly lines, once the eyes (or the brain) clicked in, the effect suddenly leapt out when seen from the air. Instead of greeting this as a gift to the centre of cropple activity, however, typically, some were sceptical about the proximity of a design to the campsite, even though no-one sleeping there saw or heard a thing on the night of creation.

On 22nd August, a further pattern turned up nearby, a small 60' 'scroll'-type dumbbell with a grapeshot either end. All circles were nicely swirled, the two in the scroll having standing centres.

Liddington Castle: An attractive and elaborate motif, almost like an ornamental garden with low hedges was found here on 21st July. Three semi-circular rings at the circular perimeter orbited a central ring while three complex arms of paths and grapeshot linked them. A keyhole-like glyph lay 100' or so away.

Milk Hill: Near the site of last year's *Country File* man-made formation debacle, the alleged Creator of the Whole Crop Circle Phenomenon (™) Doug Bower returned here on 1st August (exactly a year on) for mysterious reasons of his own to make an unspectacular - if neater than some previous efforts - small ringed circle with a thin emanating pathway. Perhaps his kudos was running low or something and he returned for a ego top-up.

Pewsey: Just below the white horse carving, a 100' six-petaled flower with a central standing ring appeared in very fluffy barley on 16th June. The lay was very nicely 'combed' to create floor-lay patterns.

Rockley: The simplest of this year's mini-fractals (see Allington and East Kennett above), a 14-circle triple-armed 'Manx runner', was reported on 10th July. Again, the centres and lay inside were impressive.

Roundway, Nr Devizes: The gorgeous 14-pointed star/jackstone design which appeared here on 31st July was, for many, one of the loveliest emblems of the year. Having only introduced seven-fold geometry last year, now the circles are playing with it big time. Essentially a circle, seven 72' circles on protruding tapered paths were interspersed with seven 32' versions of the same. A continuous clockwise path swept around the entire perimeter of the formation, creating the circles, continuing back along the shafts, up again and into the next circle, and so on. Some of the best centre swirls of the year were found here, and the middle of the entire pattern was marked by a low 7' ring of built-up crop in the floor lay. Crackling power cables ran across one edge of the formation, creating an oppressive atmosphere.

Stanton St Bernard: On 14th August, a thin, tight spiralling path forming an ammonite-type design ending in a small ringed circle and single grapeshot was discovered.

The same day, a very strange, rather untidy, weave of thin paths (looking rather like those 'cheese lattice' things bakers make) accompanying a circle with a short 'monkey tail' was also found.

Upavon: Arriving in a military air exclusion zone made life rather difficult for aerial photographers attempting to record this formation which appeared on 22nd August (just five minutes flying permission was finally given for a microlight to skim it). An odd, four-fold brooch-type pattern, a standing 'box' of exploded triangles lay at the centre.

West Kennett: In a field which has seen many crop patterns in years past, a four-armed jagged 'sawtooth' fractal was found on 24th July in the field south of Silbury Hill and the A4. Small circles and tiny grapeshot filled the gaps between 'teeth'. At the middle of the slightly messy lay were four curious bird's nest-type centres, like little built-up baskets (imaginative centres have been common this year). On the date the formation appeared, a night visitor to the Silbury Hill car park reported seeing the whole field bathed in what he described as "ultra-violet" light at one point.

Those who ask why we seldom get crop squares (not so anymore) would have been gratified by the fractal mandala of squares which then appeared on 4th August, not far from the famous Long Barrow. In what would make a rather nice rug motif, these 18 overlapping, increasingly smaller squares laid with clear radial lines gave the optical illusion of flying directly over a complex of superimposed pyramids. Alternate large-small grapeshot outlined the entire perimeter of the pattern while an elaborate 'Mexican hat' standing weave marked the centre.

Windmill Hill, Nr Avebury: Somewhat in the style of the Yorkshire formation at Riccal (see last issue) and recalling the Etchinghampton 'grid' of 1997, this standing square contained within a 315' circle broke records as having the most circles ever found in one formation - 288 of them arranged within the square, creating a Templar cross effect outlined in grapeshot. Appearing on 16th July, many of the small circles had exquisite centres, even if some of the placing was a little messy. Even the flattened areas between the square outline and the circle perimeter had swirled centres, little standing nests with hollow centres. Oddly, people used the deepest as a wishing well and dropped money and sweets into it as some kind of offering (to who though - the farmer? The circle-making forces?). (Photo: page 9)

Woodborough Hill: Each year, the German duo Koch and Kyborg create (with permission) a man-made formation they believe replies to the previous season's designs. Replies to who? Beings from the star system Orion, apparently. What this year's effort was saying - two double rings with small emanating key shapes on each side, creating a vesica pluces filled with a grid of rectangles - is anyone's guess as

Koch and Kyborg inscrutably never tell, but it was made on 19th July.

Wroughton: Near the RAF airfield, a crude ringed circle with assorted strange shapes and paths within it and a curious blobby tail was reported on 23rd July.

YORKSHIRE

Hovland: On the same site as last year's 'sunflower' pattern, a double ringed circle, one small, thin ring hugging the 18' central circle and one large 300' ring forming a large perimeter, was discovered near junction 36 of the M1 on 29th June. Two small facing semi-circular rings were cut into the gap between the main rings.

Dodworth: At this busy circle-site of old, a large ringed circle with an elaborate tail of diminishing semi-circular rings and circles was spotted just off junction 37 of the M1 on 7th July.

Scotch Corner: Next to the A66 in North Yorkshire, a spindly pictogram of a ring with a central pathway leading to a Y-shaped end was discovered on 17th August.

West Bratton: Visible from junction 38 of the M1, this formation in West Yorkshire was seen on 22nd June. A kind of 'thought bubble', the main component was a 105' ringed circle with four semi-circles placed at quarters on the inside of the ring, while a double ringed circle and two more increasingly smaller single ringed circles formed the 'tail'.

Worsborough Common, Nr Barnsley: The effect of the rather nice circle containing a pentagon and a double ringed circle found here on 4th August was somewhat spoilt by the addition of the crude letters S, H, I and T which then appeared next to it, probably courtesy of youths from the nearby council estate.

And on that peculiar note, that pretty much wraps up the three-issue round-up of this year's English formations, with overseas stuff to follow soon. There's still the odd late report coming in but if one or two have been missed, you've certainly got the essentials. As for what the new century will bring... we await with interest. **AT**

Thanks to: Steve Alexander, Kevin Constant, Ray Cox, Crop Circle Connector and its contacts, Karen Douglas, Lucy Pringle & all the many people, too numerous to mention, who have fed us tidbits of info and reported sightings over the summer.



LETTERS

In the wake of our otherwise well-received article on the Rockefeller funding of circle research in the last issue, we received this riposte from Colin Andrews... Bracketed bold numbers in the text refer to response notes which follow:

BAD 'FELLERS

I think you must be big enough to accept that for reasons I do not personally understand, there continues to be a definite poor attitude towards me in your writings (1). I am not going to tackle each one in your latest edition (SC 85), as tempting as it is to do so. I do, however, want your readers to have the facts and not the drivel you have recycled from newspapers and a thousand rumours regarding the funding of my research by Mr Laurance Rockefeller in New York.

The first thing your readers should know is that while you set the article off by saying "How much of this is fact or fiction... Andy Thomas investigates", the only source for the facts pertaining to this story outside New York is myself and you did not even trouble to give me a call to check out the details - what kind of 'investigation' is that? This kind of sloppy reporting is why many of the recycled and new details you mention are simply wrong (2).

The source of my funding is even wrong, the whole point of the latest stories. The Rockefeller Foundation is not funding the research. Mr Laurance Rockefeller personally is funding me (3). Secondly - a very serious error in my view - the line "Colin Andrews simply asked for, and received..." is not true either. Mr Laurance Rockefeller's advisor asked me to submit the costings - very different to the picture you paint (4). You gingerly and untrusting use language like "staff are supposedly being employed..." Not fiction - fact (5). We engaged staff over a year ago on this series of research projects.

In your usual untrusting and doubting form you say about the contracting of a detective agency "if the detective agency exists at all" (6). Here you must not have seen all the newspaper articles published on the story because several have carried pictures of the head of the agency concerned, who is a retired Hampshire Police CID officer. The agency received journalists' questions to check out their involvement from the major TV networks. As a result pieces were transmitted on ITV Meridian and on NBC in the USA. Regarding my flying back to the UK last winter to excavate part of East Field and take another look at the area which housed the seven-fold 'snowflake' design during the summer of 1998, focusing on the discovery of items buried there was to miss the point entirely. Very interesting magnetometer survey readings is what dictated my return, not the buried keys, pottery and coins etc. We are currently expanding the survey to include other sites. The findings have been published and are in the libraries

of two major European Research libraries. They are likely to be made fully public soon (7).

I would like to close by just saying that the Rockefeller funding made national headlines due to the treachery of a journalist who spoke to me in confidence. I regret where it went from there, but after the fire was lit Mr Rockefeller's office was kept fully informed and concurred with my handling of the media situation - again very different to what you said in your report (8).

I know you and I continue to cross swords but you do not do yourself or the subject any favours in bringing your personal dislike of me into your columns in this way (9).

Let's have another go at getting along.

I do hope that these facts will be appreciated by serious readers and researchers alike.

Colin Andrews, Branford, Connecticut, USA

ANDY THOMAS replies: After we received this, Colin and I spoke at length on the telephone and cleared up some of the points raised here. It was a productive and respectful conversation and on reflection Colin understood many of my reasonings for writing the article as it was despite our differing views. Nevertheless a printed response is necessary here for the benefit of SC readers. It's length reflects the need to set a few things straight in general about our relationship with Colin. We will take each point as it comes up in the letter, as denoted by the bracketed bold numbers:

1) Neither I, nor SC as a whole, has any agenda of bias against Colin. Many SCR team members began as ardent admirers of his work and we openly acknowledge that he laid the foundations for circle research as we know it and will always respect him for this. However, when one disagrees with things being said, they have to be tackled. When Colin became increasingly sceptical about the authenticity of many formations in the mid 1990's, we at SC - and many others besides - while respecting his right to an opinion, disagreed with his reasoning and methods and openly said so. This created bad feeling and Colin reciprocated with a number of unconstructive, and in some cases blatantly untrue statements about SC and what it stood for (we were especially misrepresented over our collective attitude towards the Oliver's Castle video, see SC's passim.) This is how croppie vendettas begin! In our recent conversation, I put it to Colin that there was some kind of Freudian air about all this - sons wanting to destroy fathers and vice versa - and we laughed. Nevertheless this situation was, and is, unhelpful. People should be allowed to disagree without having to fall out.

So what have been our concerns with Colin? One thing we find hard to accept is his claim that 80% of formations are man-made, a figure impossible to prove (in fact, CCCS statistics show that only around 5% of any given year's circles can be categorically shown to be hoaxed).

I asked Colin how he arrived at this percentage. His system is intriguing: All formations in his database apparently start out by being awarded an equal

number of points. Detrimental factors then reduce the points, i.e. if a trail was found going across the field, points off; if it was geometrically dodgy, points off; if alleged human circle makers were spotted anywhere within a 100 mile radius that night, points off, etc. At the other end of this process, if a crop pattern fails to come up to a certain level of acceptability set by him, it is considered to be man-made. Colin states that 78% (aha - not 80!) of formations fall into this category. Leaving aside our own view that this process is clearly flawed (i.e. what human artist would then spoil things by leaving a trail through crop when he can walk up the tractor marks?), why not simply state that 78% of formations have, say, 'uncertain qualities' - or even better, take a more positive attitude and instead declare that a significant 22% show features which remain unexplained by the human hypothesis? This would be a much more constructive way of communicating research rather than the harmful path of continually harping on about hoaxing. Reg Presley, for instance, has lost a lot of respect in the crop circle community by his continual and loud insistence that "95%" of formations are man-made, without then saying anything very useful about the other 5%. There's no better way of turning off potential interest in the subject from those on the fringe and this is why this matters. It's as much the approach that is of concern, whatever the percentages in question.

But this is not the same as a "poor attitude" towards Colin as a person and nor does it mean that we do not respect the very good work he has done. SC has NEVER cast aspersions on Colin's character or personal life. Colin himself has never been less than charming and polite in conversation with us. After our spat two years back, we and Peter Sorensen have managed to cultivate a better atmosphere between us; I hope we can now do the same with Colin.

2) Two things here; a) Communication, b) The purpose of the article. a) As some others who have tried to contact Colin will appreciate, there have been several times in the past where calls to him from SC have simply not been returned, or at least not without endless persistence, so calling again regarding this story seemed a futile exercise! SC has hundreds of regular subscribers around the world and is passed around and read by many more besides. Despite this, Colin's statements and press releases are rarely sent to us, when we know they are often received by other sources and publications. This almost wilful avoidance of feeding information to one of the most influential crop circle journals is highly puzzling and surely counterproductive to CPR International - thus we have to rely on other information channels. The PR splash about the Rockefeller story in the newspapers was the best we had to go on - and, tellingly, what most of the world read. We all accept the media twists things and the possibility of this was clearly acknowledged in the article. Colin and I have promised to set up better lines of communication with each other in future.

b) Recording the fine detail of the genuine Rockefeller story was not the highest purpose of the article, so perhaps "investigates" was an inappropriate choice of word. Rather, its main object was to look at the

implications of the funding and to express the hope that it would be used well. That Colin has not objected to anything on this side of the piece suggests it achieved this aim successfully. Given what some croppie commentators have said in private about Colin's funding and their beliefs as to its motives, our article was incredibly kind and fair!!!

3) Fair enough - but again, this was the story much of the world had, which takes us back to point 2a.

4) See point 2a again.

5) Colin is being too sensitive here. This line was not intended to be sarcastic but was simply quoting the Evening Standard. The 'supposedly' reflected the fact that this was what the press were saying.

6) This line does not appear anywhere in our article. What it in fact says is "...these agents, if they exist, will presumably be used to scour croppie haunts in a bid to track down hoaxers". The very acknowledgement in the surrounding lines of the "previous escapades" regarding the Oliver's Castle video suggests strongly that we do believe they exist; we were just covering ourselves for reasons given in point 5.

7) The fact remains that the web site story gave overt coverage of the discovered objects way above the importance of the magnetometer surveys, and the 'key which resembled the 1990 pictogram' was trumpeted as a major find. Colin acknowledged in our conversation that perhaps the story was unintentionally misleading in its presentation. But if the magnetometer findings are of interest, why are they hiding in 'European Research libraries' instead of being released to the crop circle community?

8) Other close sources have supported our version of events here, but let's not argue. Given Colin's previous knowledge of the media though, especially given his comments about "drivel recycled from newspapers" in his first paragraph, he should know better than to trust a journalist!

9) I have no "personal dislike" of Colin whatsoever. I've always found him pleasant company, and, as I've said before, have a great respect for his work and position. That doesn't mean I'm going to sit still for things I don't agree with though - which takes us back to point 1.

There are some who hate the squabbles of the croppie world and feel such wrangling has no place in this area of interest, surely resenting the amount of space devoted to this letter and its even lengthier reply. But we're all human beings, and somewhere, I feel, all the strange dances of relationships and disagreements in croppiedom are actually part of the lesson the circles have for us, provided, of course, that solutions and harmonies are ultimately woven. With this in mind, I hope we can enjoy a more rewarding and productive balance with Colin in future, while agreeing to disagree in certain areas without it ever being an issue of personal conflict. AT

The influence of Ancient Egypt has reverberated throughout history. Today more so than ever. The immense structures, the detailed texts left carved in stone and sheer depth of knowledge evident from just a cursory reading of the subject leaves modern man bemused.

Surely with all the research and investigation which has gone on, especially during the past 200 years, some definitive answers could be expected? Or is there something which everyone has missed? An influence so unexpected, so weird it has been seen, but discounted?

The Stargate Conspiracy of the title refers to the now popular idea that the human race was created by extraterrestrial 'gods' - and that these 'gods' are about to return! Certain intelligence groups, due to their contacts and ability to acquire information, have become aware of this. They have used

individuals and groups who are widely trusted by what is broadly referred to as the 'New Age' to influence the beliefs which large sections of 'alternative' cultures hold to be important. This includes encouraging interest in things like crop circles and UFO's, according to this book, thus creating an environment in which it is easier to direct and ultimately control our hearts, minds and souls.

While this view may tend to confirm the idea that there is an overarching conspiracy directed by a 'Mr Big', the authors show that such a simplistic concept is far removed from the tensions of real world Politics, Big Business and Academia. That there are links between authors of 'alternative' history is undeniable: *The Stargate Conspiracy* lays out as detailed an account of such links as has been published to date. However, as has been shown in another new book *Giza: The Truth* (by Ian Lawton & Chris Oglivie-Herald - review coming soon), the basis on which much recently published 'alternative' work is based can now be seen to be flawed in some aspects.

Because so much of the modern 'alternative' literature is centred around Egypt and links to the Face on Mars, with this being directly connected to extraterrestrial influences, it is easy to lose sight of the considerably longer history of such ideas. To fully understand where we are today Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince have carried out invaluable research into the origins of these sources and their influence on current writers.

It is when the 'Council of Nine' (*The Only Planet of Choice*) and their teachings are introduced, along with the people involved in disseminating the knowledge so gained, that the authors signal their note of caution. Channelling by its nature has to be subjective. It is through the interpretative biases of others that such material can be manipulated for ends far removed from the intentions of its original sources. If any one attitude could be shown to have brought about many of the problems faced by people through-

out the world it is the systematic suppression of women in the name of religion, both East and West. The power of the word 'priestess' still precludes its use even today in the Anglican Church. The male-dominated intellectual concepts which have formed modern civilisation, again in the name of religion, account for so much of the waste and imbalance in society. To utilise the one religion known to have

accorded women equal rights - that of Ancient Egypt - to underpin New Age ideals would appear to be inarguable until, yet again, the male domination of the hidden agenda of those connected with its advancement becomes clear.

The Stargate Conspiracy, by its title and subtitle, may seem to be yet another peer into the paranoid world of conspiracy theories. It is not. No theory could withstand the concerted investigation detailed in its pages. No conspiracy could remain

hidden when so many diverse participants are seen to be involved.

It is a book which will provoke heated discussion. It will be argued over. It will be dismissed and embraced in equal measure but is unlikely to be ignored. That some readers will turn away from the ideas presented here is likely, but if they are prepared to persist, despite initial reservations, they will only be doing what so many have always demanded that more 'orthodox' writers should do - look at the 'alternative' evidence before dismissing it. It is only when 'alternative' ideas can withstand the withering criticisms of wounded beliefs that they become the foundations of new knowledge.

By introducing, almost as an afterthought, shamanism and its use of psychoactive and hallucinogenic potions derived from plants to enhance and expand consciousness, the authors open up a wholly relevant and intriguing connection with the origins of knowledge. Mind-altering substances have been used throughout history, with the individuals doing so being accorded reverence for their insights.

Recent research has shown just how very little modern society truly understands about the power of such potions; could the real conspiracy be that by being denied such knowledge, through an irrational, or more likely created fear of the unknown, we are also denied the voyage through our own Stargate? **MA**

The Stargate Conspiracy: Revealing the Truth Behind Extraterrestrial Contact, Military Intelligence and the Mysteries of Ancient Egypt, by Lynn Picknett & Clive Prince. Published by Little, Brown & Co. 1999 ISBN: 0 316 64861 2. Hb £18.99, 429 pages. Available through bookshops or from Nexus Magazine at £20.00 (Inc p+p), 55 Queens Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1BG. Tel: 01342 322854, Fax: 01342 324574, Email: nexus@ukoffice.u-net.com

REVIEWS PYRAMIDIOCY CONSPIRACY..?

The alternative Egypt theories (beloved by croppies) backlash begins with a new book *The Stargate Conspiracy*. But are the allegations and criticisms valid? **MARCUS ALLEN** reads on with an open mind...



GA-GA: The state of most researchers at the end of a season. Also indicative of the state of most croppies at the end of a night at *The Barge*.

GALLOPING: There's been much tell over the years of horses going wild inside crop circles. What no-one has ever satisfactorily explained is a) why horses are being ridden into the middle of sown fields, and b) how they actually get inside without causing major crop damage. Perhaps they go astride the tractor lines, one set of legs in each.

GEIGER COUNTERS: The very few, if highly apocryphal, cases of alleged radiation-sickness in some formations doesn't put off many intrepid croppies traipsing into fields wielding boxes they don't understand which make funny crackling noises when swung around. If the crackling should suddenly rise (a bit like a pork-roast) they'd be well advised to run extremely quickly in the opposite direction. A cheaper alternative to this generally pointless exercise is to stand for a week or two in a crop formation and see if any limbs drop off.

A couple of scientists in the early 90's claimed to have detected radioactive isotopes in a couple of formations. By the time most croppies had reached for their dictionaries to find what 'isotope' actually meant, the claims had already crumbled into the dust of doubt and recrimination. Radioactive dust, of course.

GIZMOS: There's a long history of home-made electronic 'litmus test' gadgets for crop circles. Nearly all have a dial with an excitingly flickering needle and a protruding aerial. Some even make the exciting crackling noises. And nobody knows what any of them actually do or what they are detecting, hence the application of the dubiously revealing name 'gizmo', a friendly-sounding christening which appears to give some kind of validity to something utterly useless. By God though, if the needle doesn't flicker then the formation must be a man-made dud. Always good for impressing novice croppies, a single flash of a gizmo in a formation (furrowed brow and look of deep concentration a must) will have holidaying Sid and Doris from Clacton at your feet and hanging on your every word in a matter of minutes as you will look like an important scientist (see also **GEIGER COUNTERS**). Such devices are also reliable totty-magnets when used by male cerealogists and the old gizmo manoeuvre has led to much huffing and

paning in tents at *The Barge* later. If a genuine scientist (rare in this community, admittedly) or someone sporting a bigger gizmo than yours appears though, the game will be up and you will see how fickle gizmo-attraction can be, in which case retire from the formation quickly with as much grace as can be mustered, ie. leg it quick.

GLASTONBURY: Site of the world's biggest annual crop circle gathering, yet, oddly, not of any actual crop circles.

Such is its reputation as a spiritual haven, this picturesque town, with all its good energies, holy wells and souvenir tat shops, actually employs living gargoyles to walk the streets frightening off evil spirits. At least we think that's what the ugly, foul-smelling, unkempt-bearded shufflers nursing beer cans and lying in pools of wee outside Londis must be for.

GOSSIP: The eternal fuel of the croppie community, no validation required. The Internet has nothing on the speed at which this commodity flies through the information channels of, well, the gob, basically. The World Wide Gob is an important source of vital data such as who's siagging who off, who was seen in whose tent at *The Barge* the night before and, of course, which hoaxing team made what formation that week. The joy of the World Wide Gob is that no corroborating evidence beyond what you heard through a ten-pint haze at the bar is necessary in convincing your listeners of the veracity of the data. Many sources rely on the WWG nowadays to send messages and transmit important lies, sorry, information, to those hooked up to this valuable system. Some have based whole careers on it.

GROPING: Cerealogical practice much carried out by aging male researchers on younger, usually female, researchers at conferences, traditionally under the guise of "Oh (*whoever*), come and give me a hug, it's been so long since I've seen you..."

GUNS: There has been much scaremongering from old guard croppies for years about the likelihood of trespassing circle sightseers getting blown away by irate farmers, spoken of with much shaking of heads and doomy rising and falling "you mark my words"-type intonation. The fact that a) killing people (or even shooting at them) is actually illegal, and that b) this has never happened in a decade and a half of active circle interest, doesn't seem to put them off. On the other hand, a farmer did find himself in court recently for blowing away a burglar, so perhaps we'd better watch it. Given the higher likelihood of US researchers actually bearing arms themselves, though, any American farmers thinking of taking pot-shots at apparently harmless croppies could find themselves in a return-fire all-out shoot-out and therefore this course of action is even less recommended in the States. **DS**



cornography

with Michael Glickman

Many people were shaken by the *Daily Mail's* claim that they had, with 'Team Satan', engineered the Avebury Triangle (page 8). (I digress here to consider what kind of person, with what kind of motive and at what moral and ethical level would choose such a name for their organisation.) If anyone had asked me, after ten years of study, which was the cleverest crop formation in terms of number and geometry, I would have to put Avebury in the top ten. I recognise that this means nothing; it's no more than my *opinion*.

However, I am impressed by the fact that, the night before, Chad and Gwen Deetken were actually by that field until 12:30am, Andreas Muller was in the formation surveying it by 5:30 am, the manager of the Henge Shop was working by his window overlooking the field on a moonlit night until 2:30 am and the Avebury Social Club, right by the field, had an event which lasted until 2:00 am. I know this counts for little; these are only *witnesses*.

It is interesting that many of the facts claimed in the article were demonstrably untrue. There is no "eight-bar gate" to climb over, and even if there were, it is possible to get directly into this field without crossing a fence. Why were the journalist and photographer so stunned by the aerial photo, two days after the formation had been made, supposedly in their presence? Why did the *Daily Mail*, apparently so confident in their scoop, take more than a week to publish it? But these are only *minor questions*.

Ignoring our witnesses, then, this breathtaking formation was constructed - by their own claims - in six hours and thirty minutes. If we forget the main circle, overlook the measuring, disregard the setting-out, discount the magical hexagons impressed into the drums, then you are left with just over 11 minutes to make each of the 33 standing cylinders. Boy, these guys are fast, even if we have to lean over backwards to make these spurious calculations.

But the reality is even more sinister. We must now accept the fact that a major British tabloid is not simply lying, but creating false stories to feed the

public. We must now swallow the truth that the public is seen to be - we are seen to be - deeply and pathetically stupid. What does this say about our media? What does this tell us about the society we live in? What can we learn about our lemming-like acceptance of the deceptions fed to us?

For those with a comprehensive filing system, the following exercise is instructive. Read the *Today* article of 1991 which revealed the Doug and Dave fraud, then read the *Guardian* article of 1998 which claimed that the 1998 Silbury mandala was a hoax then, finally, read the *Daily Mail* Avebury confection. Observe the photographs. Compare and contrast. Assiduous students of these texts will notice that we have here what is - fundamentally - the same article.

As I said at the Glastonbury Symposium, we have *won*. The whole scuzzy hoax hypothesis is shown to be the foul falsehood it always was. People may still choose (they still do choose) to believe it, but there is never an atom of evidence to support their claims. But, if it helps them sleep at night, then bless 'em.

Curses, however, on the heads of those who, trusted to supply information, give us instead deception and falsehood. For those who help them, and especially those in our own community, I am beyond words.

But look. Let's get back to the real world. This has been a summer of such beauty, such variety and inventiveness, such an abundance of treasures that I can only feel pity for those who were not here and even more for those who were here and tried to pretend they weren't.

I am still in Wiltshire as I write. The harvest has begun with a vengeance. Formations that had become dear to us are disappearing by the hour. The Allington Cube, which arrived the day I did, was cut two days ago. Throughout the season it had been a kind of marker for me, a beacon, on the road to and from Devizes. Hackpen Hill has gone but the wonderful Cherhill Spinner is still - for the moment - there.

There have been more telling changes. The atmosphere at *The Barge*, for so many years a sump of negativity, is appreciably lighter. Elsewhere, too, there is increased optimism and enthusiasm. New faces arrive every week and are welcomed without question. The paranoia count is lower, conspiracy theorists thinner on the ground, ego controlled.

I was rather ill during the Glastonbury Symposium - a circumstance made worse by the inevitable overheating and lack of air in that otherwise most lovely of rooms. (We have been promised that matters will be improved next year, with welcome talk of air-conditioning.) I spent a couple of days in hospital for a tune-up and a change of spark plugs and I am feeling better and stronger than I've felt for years. For those who expressed, or even felt, concern, my thanks. For those anticipating my nemesis, sorry to disappoint you! **MG**