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CROP CIRCLES 1990

By Michael Chorost
& Colin Andrews

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Cover photo of the first multiple pictogram
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THE SUMMER 1990 CROP CIRCLES

By Michael Chorost with Colin Andrews

Aerial Photographs by Colin Andrews / Diagrams by Richard G. Andrews

Michael Chorost, MUFON's Crop Circles Consultant received his Masters in English from the University of Texas, Austin. He is presently pursuing his doctorate at Duke University. Colin Andrews is co-director with Pat Delgado of Circles Phenomenon Research, including Operation Blackbird, and co-author, again with Delgado, of *Circular Evidence* (1989) and *Crop Circles: The Latest Evidence* (1990). Those paragraphs preceded by [CA] were contributed by Andrews.

The summer of 1990 saw an explosion in the complexity, size and number of crop circles in England. About 600 were discovered, double the number reported in 1989. One previously unseen shape was found at Longwood Estate on June 6, and dubbed a "quarter-arc" formation (picture and diagram page 4). Another previously unseen configuration was the first of the so-called "dumbbell" formations, found on May 23rd, near the foot of Telegraph Hill (page 5). In terms of external form and internal crop lay, it was by far the most complex formation yet recorded.

Many more dumbbells followed (see pictures accompanying and diagrams). Later in the summer, the "multiple pictograms," complex formations one-eighth of a mile long, began to appear. They sported odd-looking, fork-like extensions, and entourages of smaller circles nearby. Four of them were discovered in all.

The new formations were a shock to everybody. Much more than the circles, rings and quintuplets of earlier years, they seemed to mean something, though no one knew what. They appeared both part of the earth and detached from it, as if they would slide

away along the tractor tracks once their anchor-lines were cut. They looked at once cryptic, fragile and luminous.

"Dumbbell" in Detail

On July 3, six days after it was made, I examined a dumbbell formation at Longwood Estate in detail. It was 48 meters long, so large that people walking around in it looked like marbles rolling around a plate. It was made of two circles of wheat flattened along the ground, one with a ring. They were connected by a bar, inside which the flattened wheat plants pointed toward the unringed circle. There was a sort of "tail," more technically called a spur, where the plants pointed in the opposite direction from the bar. Four rectangles flanked the bar. In the inner two rectangles, the flattened wheat plants pointed toward the unringed circle; in the outer two, they pointed the other way.

The most complex part of this formation was where the bar intersected the ringed circle. The bar crossed the ring and the band of standing plants, but stopped at the perimeter of the inner circle. In this area, the plants in the ring lay on top of the bar, meaning that they had been flattened after the bar was formed (see page 10). Hence the formation was made in at least two stages. Also, whatever formed the ring did not affect the plants already laid down in the bar. While the ring was being formed after the bar, the bar's plants stayed put; they were not realigned to become part of the ring.

The same kind of thing was evident at the other end of the bar, where it met the unringed circle. The plants in the circle overlapped the plants in the bar by a few inches, showing that the unringed circle was also made after the bar. This is a small clue about how

these things are made. They aren't stamped out all at once, cookie-cutter style; instead, something forms the parts in a definite sequence.

Most of the plants seemed to be alive and green (young wheat is green). However, a friend with me saw that about a third of the plants whose stems were next to the tramlines had turned yellowish. We could only speculate that those plants, having gotten less fertilizer, were less hardy than the rest.

Strangely, some of the plants inside the formation were not affected by whatever force flattened their fellows. On either side of the tramline running through the formation, many plants remained upright (page 10). This also occurred in the ring itself, where isolated individual plants remained standing here and there, completely unaffected, like lonely survivors of a massacre. (See also *Circular Evidence*, p. 133.) Colin Andrews speculates that the formative force may work like a paint roller, flattening plants in strips and swathes, and thus may miss a plant here and there between passes.

I was fascinated by the giant rectangles (see page 11). Rectangles of a sort have been seen in earlier years, as spurs extending out of circles (*Circular Evidence*, pages 54 and 42). These, however, were true rectangles. From the ground, they looked like giant, sharp-edged bathtubs.

In each rectangle, three sides looked as if they had been cut with a razor. However, the "forward" end of each rectangle — the end to which the plants pointed — was not straight, but jagged, or "notched" (page 13). Whatever made the rectangles faced a considerable challenge: how to flatten the plants right at the end without also knocking down the standing plants

making up that end. It solved the problem by pushing the flattened plants down in bunches *between* the plants at the end. The standing plants appeared unharmed; they stood perfectly upright, and their leaves were not stripped off. This "notching" effect was also evident at the end of the "tail." It is a characteristic feature of virtually all rectangular elements.

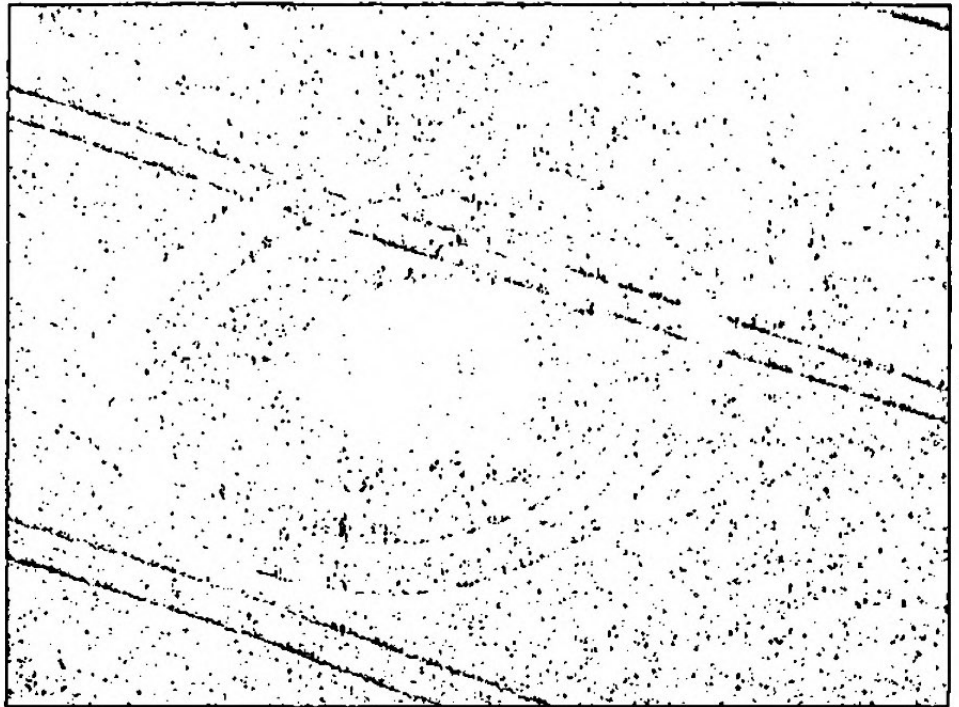
Operation Blackbird

[CA] Operation Blackbird was the largest surveillance operation ever conducted to discover and film the cause of the circles. Between July 23 and August 10, 1990, 12 special cameras were focused on a corridor of land about one mile long and 700 meters wide at Westbury. The cameras ranged from thermal imaging to low-light, with sensitive listening devices for good measure.

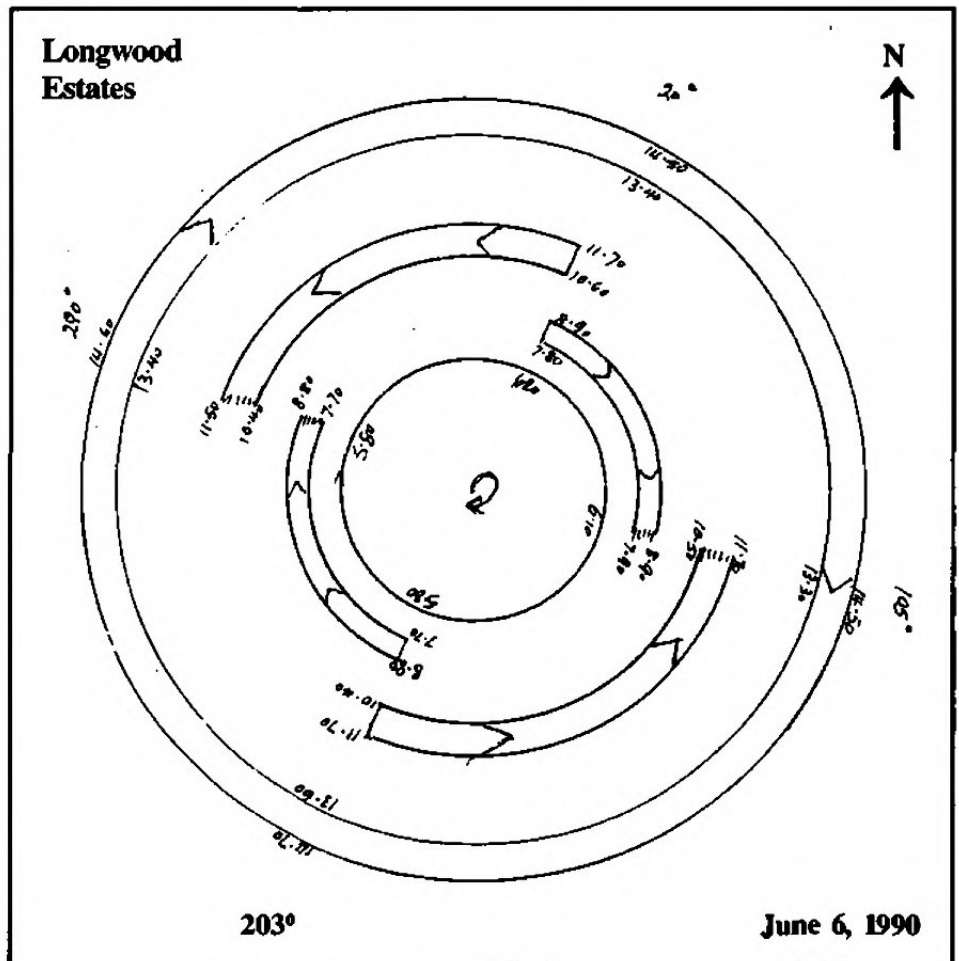
[CA] Blackbird netted two significant results. One was the Army's filming of a "ball of light" above Silbury Hill, near Avebury. The film shows an orange ball of light in the sky south of Silbury Hill. Its scale and height are difficult to gauge. It was initially stationary, then moved slowly to the east, then descended behind a hill, where it shone through the trees before it was lost to sight.

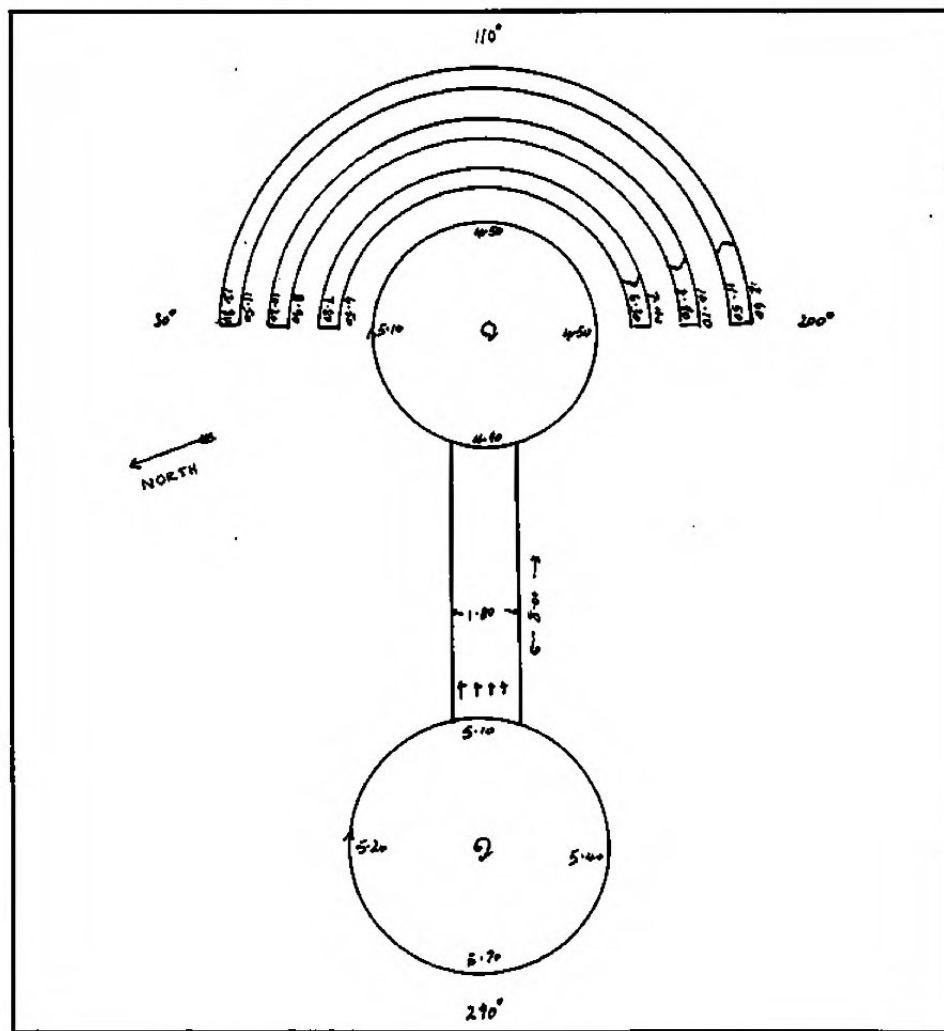
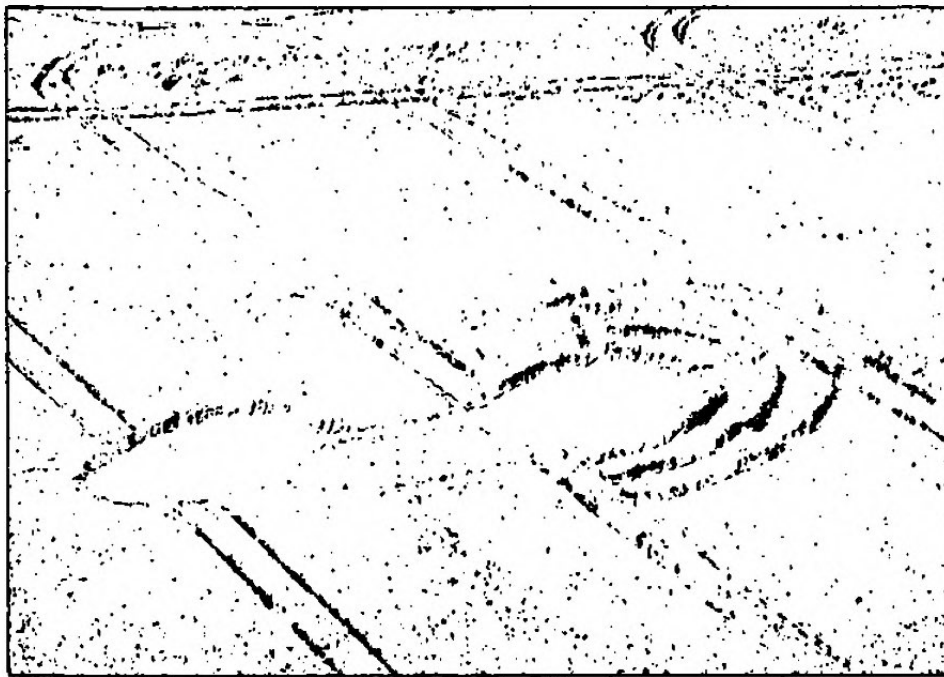
Orange balls have been seen before. Richard Beaumont writes of an orange ball reported on June 29, 1989:

"In the early hours of the morning, a most reliable source spotted an orange ball of light, about 35 feet in diameter, descending into a field well known for circle formations. The eyewitness said that it appeared to bounce slightly as it touched the ground. He also said that it appeared to have a flat bottom, but assumed that it must have looked flat because of its descent into the cereal crop. The ball appeared brighter at the periphery, although at no point was it a brilliant light. There was no noise whatsoever. It then took on a hovering position for about seven to eight seconds, and simply disappeared as if one had just turned off a light bulb ... [Colin Andrews and the witness] could reference where the ball of light must



Quarter-arc formation found June 6, 1990 on Longwood Estate, near Winchester. Photo by Colin Andrews. Diagrams by Richard Andrews.





Early dumbbell at Telegraph Hill, Chilcomb, June 16, 1990. Photo by Colin Andrews. Diagram by Richard Andrews.

have been exactly. The next day the local farmer and others rang Colin. A new formation had formed exactly where the ball was seen!" (Beaumont, *Kindred Spirit*, vol. 1, No. 8, p 27.)

[CA] The other result of Blackbird was the BBC's filming of a set of circles forming at Westbury during the night of August 3-4. The film is of poor quality, even after enhancement, but it shows a darkened shape relating to the largest circle's size and location. In the morning, the formation was seen to be a large circle with a looping tail pushing out of it and terminating in a smaller circle about 10 meters away. Two other, smaller circles were also formed some distance away.

[CA] The BBC had promised to show both the Army's and its own films on a special programme, but they now inform me that somebody has decided that they are not compatible with the "Daytime UK" programme. The BBC have stated, in fact, that they do not plan to show the films at all. It is not clear why.

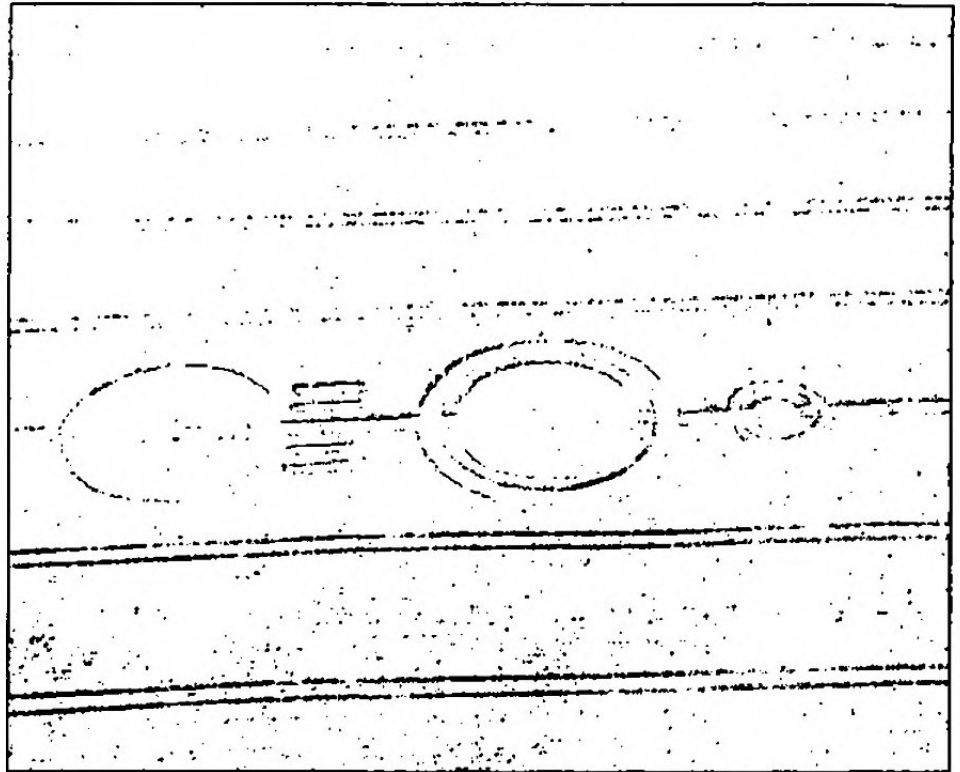
[CA] Blackbird also suffered from a cruel hoax. During the early hours of July 25th, several of the 50-strong observers witnessed unusual lights on one of the monitors. Key researchers, as well as members of UK and Japanese TV crews, were summoned. As the sun came up, the watchers and press could see that a large intricate formation had been made. Breakfast-time TV was on the air, and pressured me to make a statement. I agreed to do so, and stated on live national television what the observers had seen and that circles had appeared on the same spot. Within two hours over 30 TV networks were on the site and the news was bounced around the world that a UFO had been seen forming the mystery circles. Later, we walked into the field to view the circles firsthand. We found that they were all hoaxed, and that the lights on the monitors were from the hoaxers. Also, crosses and Ouija boards had been left in the circles by the hoaxers. Lively debate is still heard in the streets and pubs of the UK about this whole episode; however, genuine formations continued to form throughout the rest of the summer.

The number of circles reported has risen steadily in the last few years. Much of that is due to the rise in monitoring, but the number of circles per given area is also increasing. According to Terence Meaden's *The Circles Effect and its Mysteries* (p. 14) and his article in the Oxford conference proceedings (p. 22), 75 formations were discovered in 1987, 110 in 1988, and 305 in 1989. In 1990, according to Colin Andrews, there were about 600 formations. Thus, the progression seems to be geometric, with a factor somewhere between two and three. If it holds in 1991, we should get 1200 to 1800 formations. Assuming that the "season" goes from May to September, that works out to an average of eight to twelve new formations a day. Under such circumstances, the effort to document the circles, already inadequate in 1990, would be overwhelmed. Aerial flight for photography costs hundreds of dollars a day, and Richard G. Andrews reports that it takes several hours to document a large formation. The only solution is money and people — lots of them. Hopefully, new sources of funding will be located before the 1991 season starts.

[CA] HSC Laboratories in England have analyzed plants taken from a Celtic-cross formation type found at Blackland, Wiltshire, on June 1st this year, using a distillation process which crystallizes the plants. Electron microscope observation showed that the pattern of the crystals was dramatically different from those of the control samples. A great deal more work must be done before those early results can be confirmed as significant. Suffice it to say that three trials have shown similar results (see *The Crop Circles — The Latest Evidence*).

EM Effects

Electrical equipment continues to malfunction occasionally inside the circles. Busty Taylor reports that video cameras sometimes fail to record inside them; the tape advances, but the magnetic head records either erratically or not at all. Terence Meaden reports that a camera consistently refused to func-



Another dumbbell near Winchester, July 1990. This is a frequently recurring type, although no two are alike. Photo by Colin Andrews.

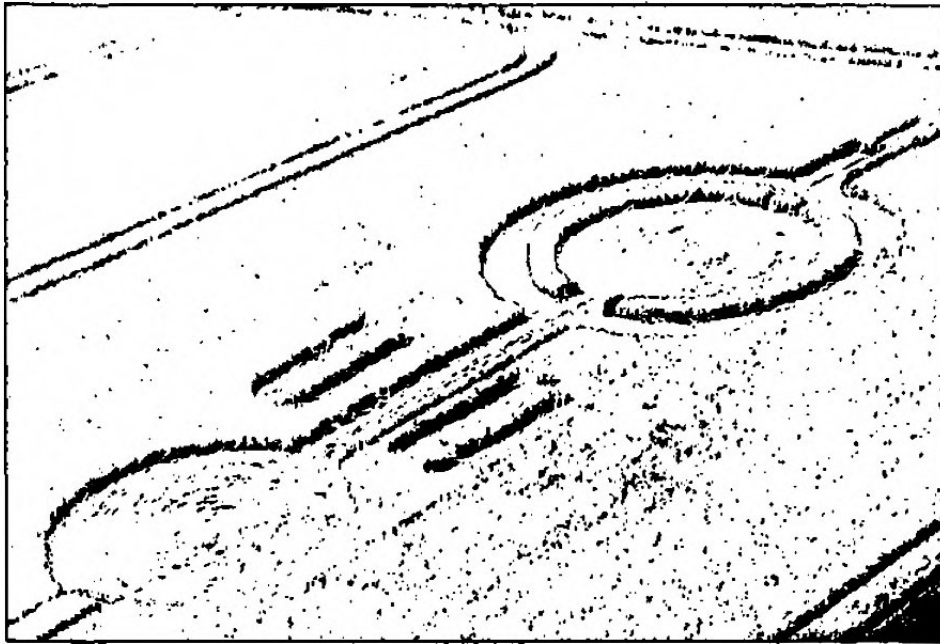
Electrical equipment continues to malfunction inside the circles. Busty Taylor reports that video cameras sometimes fail to record inside them; the tape advances, but the magnetic head records either erratically or not at all.

tion while pointed down to photograph the center of a circle, but worked in every other orientation tried (Oxford conference notes, p. 41).

[CA] Electromagnetic effects have been experienced on a number of occasions, not least on Thursday, August 10, 1989, at 3:30 p.m. when a BBC television crew was filming myself and Pat Delgado in a 100-foot diameter circle near Avebury, Wiltshire. The troubles began when the camera refused to function correctly each time it entered the circle and several smaller circles nearby. Even when elevated on a crane over the edge of the circles, it wouldn't work. It was agreed to start the next shot by holding the camera outside the circle, while we went inside with the sound engineer.

[CA] As the camera rolled and sound began taping, suddenly a loud, shrill, warbling noise blasted into the sound engineer's headset. This was a noise we had heard before at circle sites. Pat stood near the center of the circle and felt the effects of an energy field around him. The cone-shaped energy field was so clearly felt by him that the edges could be easily defined. Each time Pat walked out of the cone the buzzing noise cleared up from the engineer's headset. The noise was recorded and sent to the BBC's sound experts in London; they, as well as experts at the Birmingham studio, were baffled by it. The camera was found to be completely defunct and had to be rebuilt.

[CA] The event was shown on the BBC's "Daytime Live" program. Pre-



Longwood Estate dumbbell, June 28, 1990. Similar to the one on page 6, but smaller and lacking the tiny ringed circle on its spur. Photo by Colin Andrews. (Due to a lack of space, not all photographs and diagrams mentioned in the article have been reproduced.)

sumably by coincidence, as the transmission went on air, the electric supply into the whole studio complex was momentarily lost and seconds later all telephones were put out of operation.

There were anecdotal reports of positive and negative health effects on people who enter these formations. Busty Taylor reports that he sometimes feels the fillings in his teeth hurt in a circle, and he says other people suffer headaches and back pains. He and one other person once encountered a blob of strange white jelly in one circle, and came down with severe colds three to six hours later. A third person who was also there, however, remained healthy. There are also reports of dogs becoming ill when in or near circles (*Circular Evidence*, p. 65).

When I entered the formation in picture 4 on page 7, I had a friend with me who had had a severe headache for two days. Upon entering the formation, she felt it go away. It returned soon after she left the formation. (I, myself, felt nothing in any of the formations I

visited. Nor did I hear anything in the hearing aids I wear.) There are fields of an electrical or ionic nature inside the formations, and they could affect sensitive humans in the ways mentioned. Tooth fillings, for example, are metal wet by saliva, and might become electrically charged by induction.

Eyewitnesses

Terence Meaden writes of four eyewitness reports of circles forming in daylight before the eyes of surprised onlookers. In one event, a witness saw corn in a small area violently buffeted, then rapidly laid flat in a circle 50-60 feet in diameter (Oxford conference notes, p. 123). Meaden interprets these as the effects of stationary whirlwinds, but it is equally possible to postulate a force which either operates from a great height or acts invisibly.

As a graduate student in literature, I watch for mention of circles in the 15th and 16th-century texts I read. Robert Burton, in his book *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), writes: "These are they [fairies] that dance on heaths and greens, as Lavater thinks with Tri-

themius, &, as Olaus Magnus adds, leave that green circle, which we commonly find in plain fields, which others hold to proceed from a meteor falling, or some accidental rankness of the ground; so Nature sports herself" (p. 168). It could well be, however, that Burton's only talking about fairy rings, fungal infections which blight plants in circular patterns. It's hard to draw firm conclusions from this report.

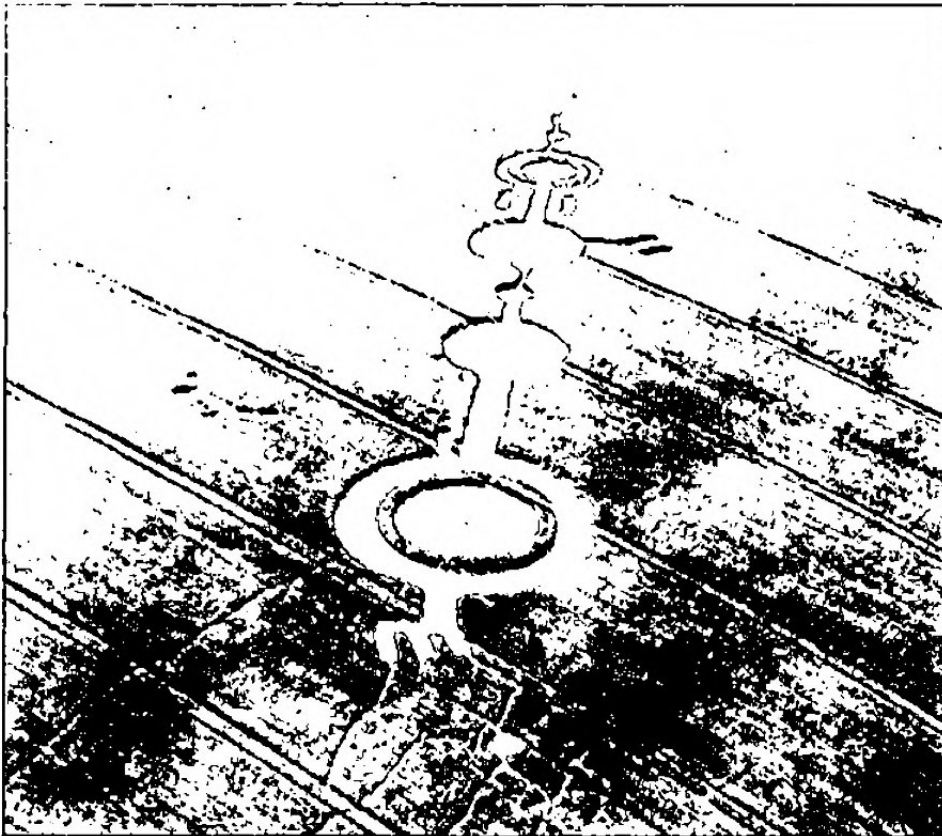
Hoax Update

The evidence against hoaxing is compelling. The absence of physical trampling, the precision of the crop lays, the rapidity of manufacture, the great numbers and immense sizes of the formations, the plants' biological changes, the electromagnetic phenomena of flashing lights and crackling/humming sounds, the "cones of force" sometimes felt by observers within the formations, the malfunctions in equipment, the health effects, the eyewitness reports of circles forming "by themselves," the apparent human inability to reproduce a "genuine" circle — all these observations argue against the hoax theory.

Oxford

The first conference on the circles was held at Oxford Polytechnic on June 23, 1990. Organized by TORRO (Tornado and Storm Research Organization) and CERES (Circles Effect Research Group), its speakers focused on the theory that vortices of spinning plasma in the lower atmosphere are responsible for the formations. There were over 150 people attending, among which were professional scientists, circle investigators, journalists and members of the public.

The primary figure at the conference was Terence Meaden, an Oxford-educated physicist specializing in the study of atmospheric plasma vortices. He argued that highly electrified, rapidly spinning vortices of air have enough energy to flatten large areas of crops. Grains of dust and pollen trapped inside the vortex rub together and generate a substantial electric charge, which increases the total energy borne



Allington Down, Wiltshire. The third multiple "pictogram," the first two being found at Alton Barnes. Photo by Colin Andrews.

by the vortex. Crucial to his theory is the presence of hills large enough to create wind lees — turbulence — in their wake. Under the right meteorological conditions, air moving past hills whips into spinning vortices, which travel for some distance before touching the ground. Their energy dissipates upon contact, leaving behind a perfect circular formation, broken up into satellites or rings according to the internal structure of the vortex.

Both Colin and I, and many others, find the theory of natural origin improbable in view of the complexity of the formations. However, the circles might be made by *intelligently controlled* vortices of the kind Meaden describes. For this reason, I think Meaden's physics shouldn't be dismissed out of hand.

Meaden also showed slides of a new and rare occurrence — a raised "cone" of braided plants discovered at the centers of some circles. The cones appear to be several feet high, and

rule out, Meaden argued, theories involving physical (as opposed to meteorological or electrical) compression from above. Cones were discovered in 10 of the approximately 300 circles found in 1989.

Another speaker was Dr. John Snow of Purdue University, who gave an informative lecture on the physics of atmospheric vortices. He showed that under certain circumstances, spinning vortices can spontaneously break up into two or three smaller vortices. This, Snow suggested, was the mechanism behind the "triplet" formations of a large circle and two satellites in a straight line, and, by extension, a potential answer to the problem of the gigantic quintuplet formations (a large circle and four satellites).

A physicist from Japan, Dr. Yoshihiko Ohtsuki, discussed plasma vortices in nature, which are already well documented as "ball lightning." His research focuses on the attempt to create spinning plasma vortices in the

laboratory. He showed films of short-lived (2.5 seconds), but energetic, spinning plasma balls he had succeeded in generating.

Other speakers were Tokio Kokuchi and Hiroshi Kikuchi (Japan), David Reynolds (England), and Paul Fuller and Jenny Randles (England). Fuller and Randles argued that plasma vortices can account for virtually all still-unexplained UFO sightings, and proposed that UFO studies should be considered a branch of meteorology.

But many thought the most important speaker was Busty Taylor. He showed slides and videotapes of recent formations he had filmed from the air. They were so new that most of the people in the audience had not seen them. Their impact was sensational. For many, they made the carefully phrased arguments for a natural cause disintegrate.

North America has "caught" the circles as well. MUFON's April 1990 issue reports a seven-foot, eight-inch diameter circle discovered in Gulf Breeze, Florida in November 1989. A 46.5-foot diameter circle in a cornfield was found in Milan, Illinois, on October 16, 1990. I have a letter from a farmer which sketches a May 31, 1989 discovery of a 20-by-18-foot diameter circle of uprooted tall grass found near Anderson, Indiana.

The October 1990 issue of the *Dakota Farmer* reports a formation discovered in Leola, South Dakota, in early August 1990, consisting of a "reversed question mark" surrounded by three rectangles arranged on the points of an equilateral triangle. The "question mark" is about 30-feet wide and 80-feet long, and consists of plants bent over exactly two inches above the ground. The width of the affected areas is a consistent five-feet.

There was highly concentrated activity in 1990 around Winnipeg, Canada. Chris Rutkowski of Winnipeg has submitted a preliminary report to MUFON noting at least seven formations. One circle, 59 feet in diameter, appeared on August 18, 1990, near a town called St. Francois Xavier.

Another, 62 feet in diameter, was discovered in Niverville on August 29, 1990. Most of the reports are of simple circles, though a triple-ringed circle is said to have been found.

The TV series, *Unsolved Mysteries*, keeps a listing of callers' reports. One caller, from Naples, Florida, reported a 10-foot circle in a field of tall weeds. Other reports come from Oregon, Minnesota, Ohio, Tennessee, California, Pennsylvania and New York State. Most are recent, but some go back as far as 25 years.

Variations

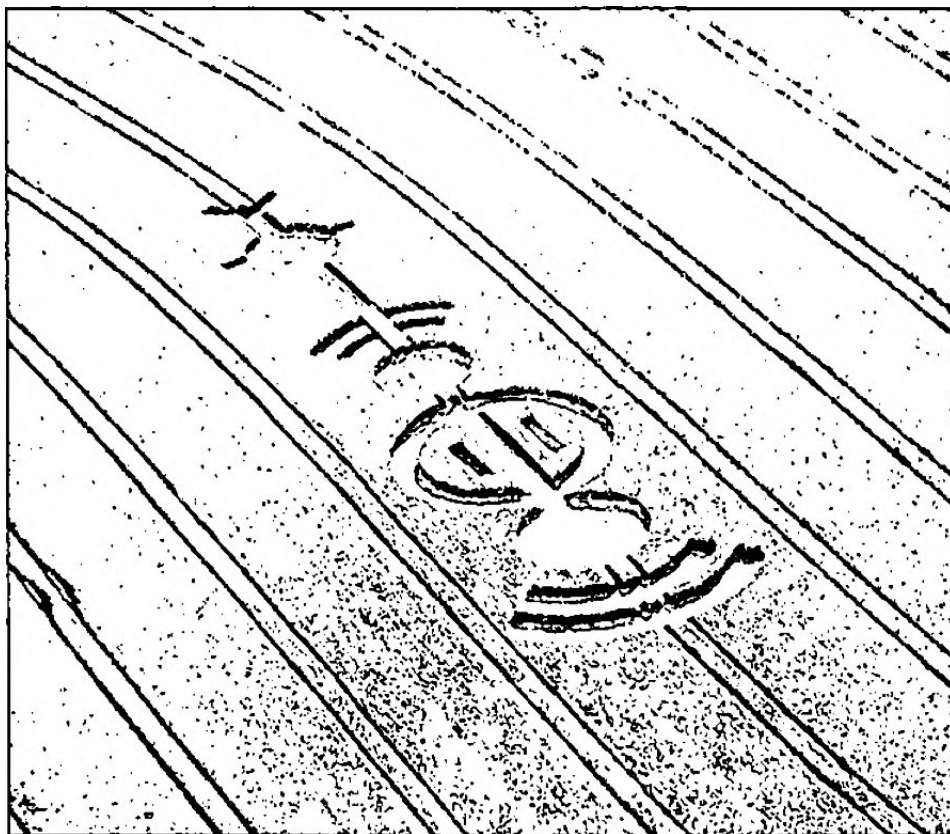
There is considerable variation in the types of formations reported in North America. Many are of flattened plants like the English circles, while others are of burned plants. In other instances, the plants are uprooted entirely, leaving a bare circle of dirt. No one knows whether these formation types are related.

Finally, in the UFO literature, going back at least 20 years, there have been reports of circles in Australia, America, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and the Soviet Union. MUFON's October 1990 issue reports a 35-by-45 meter circle found on June 21, 1990, near the town of Yeisk (near Krasnodar) in the Soviet Union.

One of the most interesting questions at the present time is whether the circles phenomenon in other countries will follow the English pattern. So far, the majority of non-English formations are simple circles, with a handful of more exotic shapes. Will the same English shapes as seen in 1990 appear in Winnipeg in a few years, or will the phenomenon take a different direction? The South Dakota "reversed question mark in a triangle" suggests that the latter may be the case.

New Publications

At least two new books came out this fall, and more may be on the way. The Centre for Crop Circle Studies (CCCS) has just published *The Crop Circle Enigma*, edited by Ralph Noyes, with contributions by Richard G. Andrews



This fourth pictogram, found at Fawley Down, near Cheesefoot Head, on August 11, 1990, is a complete departure from its predecessors. Photo by Colin Andrews.

(no relation to Colin), Terence Meaden and Busty Taylor, among others. Colin Andrews and Pat Delgado have just published *The Crop Circles: The Latest Evidence*, an 80-page paperback with color photos of this summer's formations.

Terence Meaden is planning to publish his second book on the circles, containing the Oxford conference proceedings and other material.

There are now at least two periodicals devoted to the circles. One is the *Circles Phenomenon Research Newsletter*, a quarterly edited by Pat Delgado. The other is *The Cereologist*, a thrice-yearly magazine published by the Centre for Crop Circle Studies, under the editorship of John Michell. *The Cereologist's* first issue came out in September 1990, and it has been well received. Among other things, it has given this fledgling field a name, "cereology." (See bibliography for ordering information on all items.)

Coded Message

Do we have a coded message on our hands? Nobody knows, but much can be done to try to find out. In this section I will propose some guidelines for such an effort.

The first thing to consider is whether the circles are a message. As I see it, there are three possibilities.

- The circles might not represent a message. They could be the side-effect of some intelligently directed process, the way tire-tracks and footprints are. In that case there would be no meaning to decode, only a process to discover.

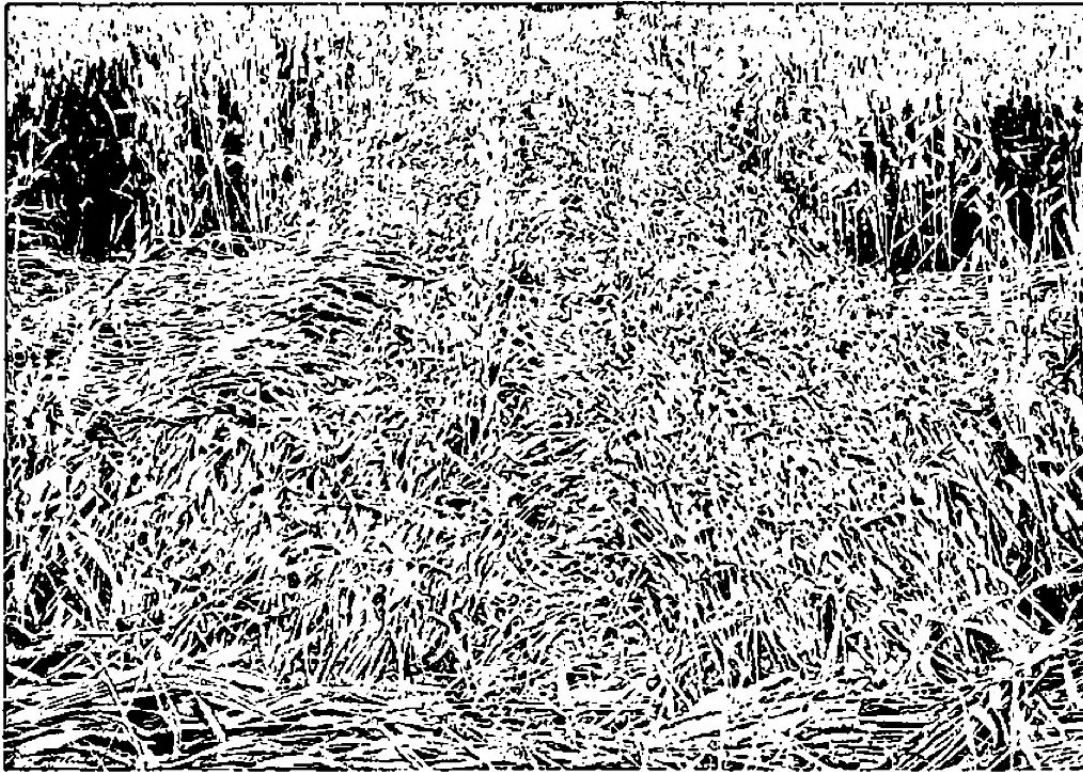
- The circles could be an anti-code, a null code. They could be intended to convey a message merely by their presence, like 2001's monolith. Their variety and complexity might be meant only to convince humans of their non-natural origin. If so, there would be no content to decode, only an awe-

inspiring calling-card to contemplate.

• The circles could be a positive code that we can crack. This is the most interesting idea, and the only one that can be developed at any length. For the rest of this discussion, let us abandon the foregoing possibilities, and assume that the circles are a code. How can we crack it?

a natural alphabetic language like English, a direct isomorphism of it (like a cryptogram), or an ideographic language (like Chinese). To crack such a code, we would need a "Rosetta stone" establishing equivalences between human and alien languages. So far, of course, we have none. We would have to be given one, or we would have

rectangle, the straight spur, the curved spur, the partial arc, and the "fork" of two or three prongs. (The "fork" may be decomposable into overlapping rectangles.) The elements might be semantically modified by variations in size and floor lay. The position of the formations relative to the tramlines, and to the countryside as a whole, could be



Inside the Longwood Estate dumbbell, looking along the bar from the ringed circle to its distant partner. Photo by Michael Chorost.

We can apply various kinds of coding strategies to the formations to see if any work. For convenience, I'll divide the possible codes into three broad types: *linguistic* ("words"), *figural* ("pictures") and *logical* ("sequences"). If we look for linguistic codes, we try to find ideograms or alphanumeric characters. If we look for figural codes, we try to find schematic diagrams, pictures of objects, maps or works of art. And if we look for logical codes, we look for mathematical or logical sequences. Let's look at the particular challenges of each kind of code.

A linguistic code is, of course, either

to find that the formations are adopted from an obscure or forgotten human language (like Mayan, which they do superficially resemble).

Lacking a Rosetta stone, we might be able to build a grammar of the code on the order of "x always follows y, z is always part of q," though this would not be a "decoding." But even a purely relational grammar would be a significant advance. We may have its raw elements at hand. The circles are composed of a limited number of elements which are combined and recombined to make a wide variety of formations. So far, the simple elements — the building blocks — seem to be the circle, the ring, the

additional modifiers. It is certainly possible to look for a grammar.

Personally, however, I am skeptical about the linguistic approach. The circles are growing increasingly complex, but compared to human language, they still seem simple. There are many variations, but they are relatively restricted (take the three double-dumbbells). Furthermore, if they are linguistic, the language is an inefficient one. The shapes are highly symmetrical, hence highly redundant. If most of the formations were cut in half lengthwise, they would still convey the same amount of implicit information; some could be cut in quarters. If one

looks at human language, one will see that nearly all words and ideograms are asymmetrical. This also holds for letters; most fonts are serified, making even "i" and "l" asymmetric. Symmetry wastes space. Asymmetry maximizes information content and transmission in a limited space.

Still, this does not eliminate the linguistic code theory, for inefficiency can be overcome by length. DNA has only four base units, but it is very long. The circlemakers, like Tolkien's Ents, might not care about brevity or efficiency.

All this being said, we are still left with a basic question: Why would the circlemakers use such a code at all? It would have been easy to start with something simple like a sequence of primes, and build up. The circles may be inscrutable for subtle cultural and political reasons, rather than out of any deficit of sense. Or perhaps we have a deficit of sense: the circlemakers could be sitting around (so to speak), scratching their heads (so to speak), and wondering "What is it with these humans? All the other planets got it right away." But I prefer to believe that our only deficit is in the attention we have given to decoding strategies.

Figural Codes

Turning to the second broad approach, the formations could be "pictures." They might be schematic diagrams, say of molecules, electronic circuits or constellations. To explore this possibility, people ought to distribute the pictures as widely as possible, hoping that somebody, somewhere, will recognize the code.

Or the formations might be literal images. They could be pictures of spacecraft, or alien physiologies, or body markings, or natural phenomena. As "pictures," however, they seem rather limited. There is no apparent effort at perspective or shading. Perhaps they are meant as two-dimensional images, like projections or shadows. Or perhaps there is a form of perspective at work, but one quite foreign to our conventions. (Consider how the Eryp-

If the circles are art, the point is not to produce the "correct" response; it is to respond, period. Thus a dialogue opens. It could be that the response to our amazement and wonder is the creation of even bigger and more beautiful formations.



Alex, a friend of the author's, standing in one of the rectangular boxes, or "coffins," associated with the more complex configurations. Photo by Michael Chorost.



Colin Andrews



G. Terence Meaden

tians and the Cubists drew the human form.)

Of course, the formations might be diagrams of wholly unfamiliar objects, in which case we would have no chance of recognizing them. A more unsettling possibility is that they are diagrams of quite familiar objects, but drawn by unfamiliar conventions.

Another possibility is that they are symbols of cultural significance, akin to our crosses and flags. There do appear to be motifs, such as the quintuplets and dumbbells, which appear repeatedly with variations.

Finally, they might be works of art. Certainly some of them are beautiful enough to be. We could try interpreting them as such. The double dumbbells look like meditations on mechanical fluidity; the eye spills from circle to circle, simultaneously drawn along and slowed down by the forklike extensions. The overall impression is of arrested motion. One can visualize the forks spinning round, the dumbbells gyrating like molecules around centers of gravity.

If the circles are art, the point is not to produce the "correct" response; it is to respond, period. Thus a dialogue opens. It could be that the response to our amazement and wonder is the creation of even bigger and more beautiful formations.

Logical Codes

The third approach is to look for patterns in the formations. There do seem to be some. For instance, each double-dumbbell has a three-pronged "fork" sticking off the largest circle, with a short spur on the other end of the circle. Each formation has a two-pronged fork on one of the other circles. And many of the single dumbbells have either two or four rectangles flanking the bar. And so on. The question is: Can we find a logical pattern? If we can, the crucial test would be to predict subsequent formations. It would be even better to make a new formation following the rules, and see if there is a response.

"Cereology" — the study of the circles — is proceeding (or, sometimes,

not proceeding) along four fronts: publicity, data collection, data distribution and data analysis.

Publicity is crucial, for only when people become deeply aware of the situation will they be moved to do something about it. Much has already been accomplished, on TV and in a number of articles in the mass media (see bibliography). But more needs to be done in America, since the people who have the resources to do something — scientists, policymakers, academics — have not been given enough information to convince them to act. Nor is information being targeted to the right places. Thus books need to be distributed to American bookstores and placed in the science (not New Age, not occult) sections, and in-depth articles need to be published in journals like *Scientific American* and *National Geographic*. So far, many upper-rank magazines are unwilling to get involved, but hopefully this will change as the dimensions of the phenomenon become more widely known.

Data collection is being done by a relatively small band of people in England, most of them amateurs. They mount nighttime surveillance operations like Blackbird, drive around looking for new formations, do aerial photography, makes surface measurements, mount weather stations, analyze plants and dowse. (The largest data base of information is held by Colin Andrews.) But as said before, the number of circles far outstrips their collective ability to keep up. As for North America, things still depend on the farmer or reporter who is willing to take pictures and make measurements, though Winnipeg seems to be gearing up fast.

The state of *data distribution* is difficult to assess from America. Certainly America gets little of the English data, though lines of communication are beginning to open. The CCCS in England is working to establish a clearinghouse of information. Within North America, people are beginning to find each other and correspond. But there is still an urgent need to create a North American and international network of data distribution.

Data analysis (mathematical, linguistic, chemical) is just beginning. Serious work can only take place when the three other fronts are functioning smoothly.

There may come a fifth front: *response/action*. If the formations constitute a message and we decode it, we may want to answer, as I suggested above, by tromping plants down to make patterns ourselves. (Interestingly enough, several days after the Blackbird hoax, genuine circles appeared in an adjacent field parallel to the hoaxed formation.) Or if they constitute blueprints or instructions, then we may want to start making or doing something. And this, too, would need organization.

If the readers of the MUFON Journal want to get involved, the best way is to pick a clearly defined goal for one's locality. For example, ask local farmers if they have seen circles on their land, or get the area bookstores to order some of the books, or persuade the paper or TV station to run a story, or start giving information to people with resources, or do data collection, or try to decode the circles oneself — there's no lack of things to be done.

While there is much to be managed, there is also the need for strategic patience. It's hard for people to accept that these luminous forms are truly part of our world. The concept takes time to sink in. And new concepts often get harsh treatment at first. Galileo's Ptolemaic contemporaries, presented with a telescope to look at Jupiter's moons, dismissed what they saw as illusions or refused to look. Since this kind of rigidity still exists today, it will take persuasion, publicity, and patience to convince people to look at them with a more open mind. And if the circles do lead to a conceptual revolution, the task will be to manage it wisely.

If any readers of this journal know of new formations, please report them! Document same with photos and measurements if you can, and send the data to MUFON, 103 Oldtowne Road, Seguin, Texas 78155-4099.



Closeup showing "notching" at the end of a rectangle. Photo by Michael Chorost.

Acknowledgements

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Americans have to pay high prices for publications available only from England, since the dollar is weak. There are two options: make out a check in Pounds at a bank, adding two Pounds to cover the extra cost of overseas postage, or send a check in dollars at the current exchange rate, factoring in an extra Pound to pay for currency conversion, and two more to cover postage. These are only guidelines, based on what's worked for me.

Citations are alphabetical by first authors.

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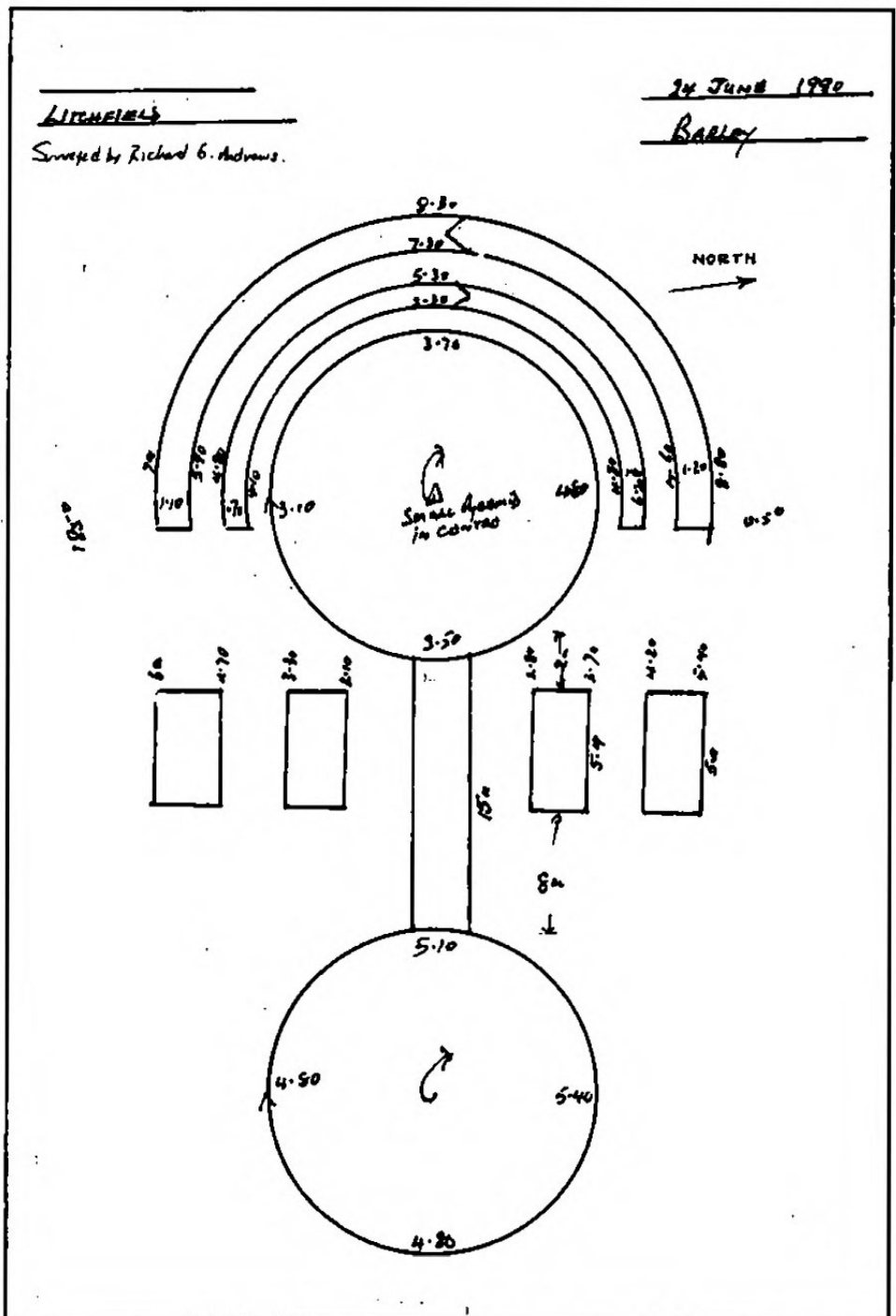
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An interesting combination of half-rings and rectangles at Litchfield, June 24, 1990. This one has a rare "pyramid" of wheat stalks leaning against themselves in one circle. Drawing by Richard G. Andrews.

which Randles suggests may be a crop circle.)

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MIDWEST CROP CIRCLES

By Erich A. Aggen, Jr.

MUFON State Section Director Aggen lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

Late on the afternoon of Friday, September 14, 1990, a photographer was traveling down a rural road near the farm of Roger and Linda Lowe between Bates City and Odessa, Missouri. Looking off to the side of the road she noticed a large circle of flattened sorghum plants. Upon closer examination she discovered another smaller circle a short distance down the road from the large circle. She then reported the circles to the news media and the *Kansas City Star* then contacted MUFON through Thomas Nicholl, the Kansas State Director in Leawood, Kansas. Mr. Nicholl subsequently called me and we drove down to investigate the site on September 18, 1990.

By the time we arrived at the Lowe farm on Tuesday morning numerous sightseers had already canvassed the circle sites and many of the sorghum plants had sustained some minor damage. This made an assessment of their original condition difficult, if not impossible. The smaller circle down the road from the large one appeared to be in a more pristine condition, but visitors had also compromised an evaluation of this site, too.

The nearly perfect symmetry of the circles when they were initially formed (according to the first witnesses on the scene) had been adversely altered by the great number of sightseers who had been through the area. The photographer who originally came across the circles also stated that the circles had "grown" in size, and changed shape with the addition of some irregular bulges and roughly rectangular offshoots. She indicated that this "growth" was not the result of sightseers to the area but rather a result of the phenomenon itself.

At the time of our investigation, the large circle measured 125 feet in diameter in its most circular portion



Kansas City Star photographer in one of the roughly rectangular offshoots of a circle near Odessa, Missouri.

and over 200 feet in length with the inclusion of one of the rectangular areas. The smaller circle measured 30 feet in diameter, with an additional 30 foot "finger" extending from it. The sorghum plants in the newly added areas were aligned in a very orderly fashion pointing toward the circular formations at both sites. The plants in the circles themselves were uniformly laid out in patterns composed primarily of spirals. This pattern was more obvious in the smaller circle. The large circle contained more gentle spirals and curves.

In an area next to the road by the large circle the sorghum plants were laid out in a "mushroom" shape. We determined that this was most likely the center of the effect that originally produced the large circle. There was no evidence that anything had landed in the

field; such an effect could only have been caused by some type of "force-field" or other phenomenon. Some specific features of the Odessa crop circles closely resembled photographs and films taken of crop circles in England and shown on TV programs such as "Unsolved Mysteries" and "20/20."

We interviewed various local residents and two persons reported bright lights in the sky prior to the formation of the circles. Power outages were also reported in the same general time period. The Lowes, however, experienced no electrical problems and observed nothing unusual in the sky prior to finding the circles. The photographer who first found the circles feels she was "directed," or somehow influenced, to drive down the particular road where the circles were located. There is also some question of "miss-



Part of the large circle showing a counterclockwise crop pattern around a small section of standing crop.

ing time" which she feels she may have experienced. These aspects of the case remain to be fully investigated.

In the September 21, 1990, edition of the *Kansas City Star*, reporters Donna McGuire and Eric Adler reported that new crop circles had been found in Missouri and Kansas. One circle, 30 to 40 feet in diameter, was discovered in a sorghum field on a farm southwest of Osceola, Missouri on September 14, 1990 - the same date the Odessa circles were found. Three circles, two 60 feet in diameter and one smaller, have been reported in a pasture southwest of Oskaloosa, Kansas and one circle has been located in a field west of Topeka, Kansas on the southside of Interstate 70 and east of Kansas Hiway 99. All of the circles, including those in Odessa, are near roads and trees. None of the trees have been damaged and no footprints or tire tracks have been found. Most residents living near the circles have stated that they neither saw nor heard anything out of the ordinary at the time the circles were formed.

The *Kansas City Star* article also

quoted Barry Karr, a spokesman for the anti-UFO "Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal," and UFO debunker Philip Klass, in an apparent attempt to provide prosaic answers for the crop circles. Some of the explanations offered were "microbursts" (powerful downdrafts of wind from storm clouds), "dust devils" (spinning vortexes of wind) and hoaxes.

Meteorological solutions are inconsistent, however, with the relatively gentle way in which the plants were pushed down and the nearly symmetrical uniformity of plant patterns in the affected areas. Some circles could be hoaxes but as the crop circle researchers in England have demonstrated, hoaxing crop circles is not as easy as it seems! To produce even crude circles 20 or 30 feet in diameter requires the concerted effort of several people working over a period of many hours. Such activity would have been readily noticed by nearby residents and the Lowes. "ATVs" or "All Terrain Vehicles" have also been suggested as possible culprits since they use large

low-pressure tires that would cause relatively little damage to soil and crops. ATVs also make lots of noise. One or more ATVs can be heard for over a quarter of a mile (the approximate distance from the Lowe farm to the circles). Yet, the Lowes reported no unusual sights or sounds on the day the circles were found or the day before.

Whether or not the Odessa crop circles were the result of UFO activity remains an open question. Some crop and soil samples were obtained for further study. Some elements of this case require more extensive investigation and further information may be forthcoming at some time in the future.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS MEMBERS/SUBSCRIBERS

Advise change of address (include county and phone no.) to:

MUFON
103 Oldtowne Rd.
Seguin, Texas 78155-4099

Looking Back

Bob Gribble

December 1950 ■ On the 27th, Capt. Art Shutts, a Trans World Airlines pilot, noticed a bright light ahead of his plane while flying from Chicago, Illinois, to Kansas City, Kansas. He thought it was a star until it started to "wobble and swerve unsteadily." Then, the UFO began to streak back and forth in a north-south line. It would shoot off at terrific speed, stop, then oscillate slightly and speed away. Finally, the light dimmed to a pinpoint and proceeded south slowly in a straight line. It "lurched," accelerated, jerked upward at a 45-degree angle, made a square turn, plunged downward and disappeared below the horizon on a north heading. The remarkable display lasted 25 minutes.

■ **1955** About 9 p.m. on the 11th, a fast-maneuvering round object, glowing orange-red, was reported by two airliner crews and numerous ground witnesses along the Atlantic Coast near Jacksonville, Florida. Two Navy jet pilots on night practice were vectored toward the object by the JAX Naval Air Station tower. When the jets tried to close, the UFO shot up to 30,000 feet, then dived back, circling and buzzing the jets. JAX officers and tower controllers saw the action on their radar scopes, and confirmed that the jets were helpless against the unknown object. The incident was confirmed by Captain W. J. Hull, of Capital Airlines.

■ **1960** On the 14th, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), was told that America should begin figuring out how to meet the psychological impact of a discovery that intelligent beings live on other planets. A research report said such a discovery could bring profound changes or even the collapse of civilization on earth. "Societies sure of their own place in the universe have disintegrated when con-

fronted by a superior society, and others have survived even though changed. Clearly, the better we can come to understand the factors involved in responding to such crisis the better prepared we may be." The 190-page report, headed by Donald N. Michael, was the result of a \$96,000 one-year study conducted by the Brookings Institution for the committee on long-range studies at NASA.

■ **1965** An eight-year-old boy, his mother, the state police and the military all added up to mystery on the ninth in a wooded area near Kecksburg in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. It all started when a UFO was sighted by the son of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Kalp. "Nevin saw it first," Mrs. Kalp said as she stood along a dirt road near the woods where state police and Army officials were searching for an "object." Mrs. Kalp said she had been told by a Navy officer not to "tell anyone where it happened" until the area was sealed and an investigation begun.

When reporters arrived on the scene they were denied entrance to the road leading to the area where the UFO had fallen. "We've been ordered by the state police and the Army not to let anybody in," explained Dale Howard, a Kecksburg volunteer fire policeman. As for Howard, who lives about a mile from the scene, he said he did not see the UFO, but felt its impact. "It caused a vibration at home," he said. "It hit with a big thump." State police and Army authorities pressed into service search teams with geiger counters and other instruments, and combed a wide area "inch-by-inch." Capt. Joseph Dussia, commanding officer of Troop A of the state police said that the search "uncovered absolutely nothing," despite eyewitness reports that something was carried out of the woods. (Featured September 19, 1990 on the TV program

"Unsolved Mysteries" and in the *MUFON UFO Journal*. Stan Gordon was the primary investigator.)

■ A huge circular-shaped object, estimated to be 150 feet in diameter and about 18 feet high, was observed hovering over high voltage electric transmission lines for more than an hour by three men near Salt Springs, Florida, the evening of the 14th. While they watched the craft from a distance of about 600 feet, they observed a bright shaft of light come from the underside of the vehicle and beam onto the transmission lines. A strange odor permeated the area and the witnesses said they had a definite metallic taste in their mouth. They attempted to call law enforcement agencies but their citizen band radios would not work.

■ About 11:45 p.m. on the 20th, Edward Bruns, 15, was driving his father's 1962 Ford pick-up truck home. As he was heading west near Herman, Minnesota, he saw a bright, oval-shaped object hovering several feet above the road. The craft "covered the entire road" and had a dome on top. A window-like structure surrounded the dome. Suddenly, the truck engine stalled, the headlights went out, and the vehicle was spun violently to the right. The truck ended up on the south side of the road. Bruns said the truck came down lightly into a ditch. The ice around the vehicle was left unbroken.

The stunned boy stared at the craft. Then, with a whistling sound and emitting sparks from the underside, the craft ascended and disappeared. Young Bruns ran about a mile and a half to his home. After telling his story to his parents, his father drove to the site. A flashlight examination of the area revealed no tire tracks around the immediate area. Reporter Willis Klason, of the *Herman Review*, said that he

found the truck in the ditch with complete absence of skid marks in the snow to account for how it got there.

■ Three girls were shaken by their experience on the 23rd when they had a close encounter with a UFO about 11 p.m., south of Goodridge, Minnesota. Gilda Manderud, 19, her 16-year-old sister, Lori, and 15-year-old Tammy Johnsrud, were returning home from a basketball game when they noticed a light which they first thought to be a sign in front of the car. The vehicle's engine stalled, the lights went out and it rolled to a stop. Gilda said the craft was orange, flat on the top and bottom and round on the sides. She said the craft seemed to cover the entire roadway about 20 to 30 feet in front of the car. After watching the object for about five minutes, they noticed a car approaching from the south and at that point the strange craft moved away. Instantly, the car engine started by itself, and the lights came back on.

■ **1980** Geraldine Shields, 15, spotted a disc-shaped craft hovering over her home in Hull, Wisconsin about 9 p.m. on the 12th. She said the vehicle was about 20 to 30 feet in diameter with a low crown, made a high-pitched sound and had red, yellow and white lights. She told sheriff's deputies the craft appeared over the house three times and that the house vibrated from the sound.

■ A UFO landed in Britain on the 27th and despite a massive official cover-up, investigators have proof that the mysterious craft came to earth in a red ball of light at 3 a.m. It happened in a pine forest called Tangham Wood, just half a mile from the U.S. Air Force Base at RAF Woodbridge, in Suffolk County. An American airman that was there said there were three beings in silver space suits aboard the craft. Farm cattle and forest animals ran berserk as the spacecraft, a sloping silver dish about 20 feet across its base, silently glided to land in a blinding explosion of lights. About 200 military and civilian personnel, British and American, witnessed the event. The

airman said the visitors appeared to be expected.

In a special report written by Lt. Colonel Charles I. Halt, deputy commander of the USAF 81st Tactical Fighter Wing stationed alongside the RAF at Woodbridge, the colonel confirmed the strange events in the forest that night. The man in charge of the USAF base at Woodbridge when the UFO came down said there has been no hoax. The Wing Commander,

Brigadier General Gordon Williams said: "I recall Lt. Colonel Halt's report. I don't know exactly what happened, it is all there. He is not a man who would hoax the British Ministry of Defense or the American Air Force." Gamekeeper Roger Boast, who lives in his cottage near the airbase said: "Something happened that night. The cattle in a nearby field ran amok. And deer and rabbits ran from the woods. It is all very strange."

Current Case Log

Dan Wright, Investigations

The following summarizes case reports received in August, September and October 1990 which are well prepared and represent recent events of significance to UFOlogy. Unless noted, no sound, vibration or odor was detected. All times listed are local.

■ **Log #900803:** 6/21/90, 2:15 p.m. event in Pensacola, Florida; investigator Joe Barron. Through a window at a business establishment, a woman noticed an unusual low cloud in the near distance and called it to the attention of her four companions. Momentarily, a large silvery disc emerged from the cloud and hovered. The object's bottom was described as a rimmed crescent lined with apparent portholes, overlying which was a "straw hat" like crown. The surface reflected the sun's glare. After three minutes, their attention was momentarily diverted to discuss the presence. When they looked back, it was gone.

■ **Log #900806:** 7/14/90, 4 a.m. event near Gulf Breeze, Florida; investigator Joe Barron. Driving along a highway, a man spotted an orange-lit, walnut-shaped object in the near distance. The object maintained the approximate speed and direction of the auto over a 25-mile span, at times disappearing

from view momentarily and seeming to travel in a somewhat zigzag pattern. Near Hurlburt AFB, the object once again blinked out and was not seen again.

■ **Log #900812:** September 1987, 2 a.m. event near Somers, Montana; investigator Ronald Penrod. A couple was driving when they noticed a fiery ball of white to their left, near the ground and pacing the car from a quarter-mile distance. Immediately, the ball of light divided into two parts, each with a short tail. One went over the car to the right while the second accelerated, still on a parallel path with the auto. After another mile, both were lost from view beyond nearby mountain ridges. Duration was estimated as two-and-a-half minutes.

■ **Log #900818:** 4/18/90, 11 p.m. event near Milton, Florida; investigator Terri Kussart. A man was driving when he noticed what at first appeared as a spherical object near the ground a quarter-mile away. It was described as dull white and 20-45 feet in diameter, with numerous bluish, aquamarine and white lights on the surface. As he chased the object along the winding road, it seemed to transform into first a bell shape, then a disc-like oval. The driver followed the anomaly to Pensacola.

Upon approaching the I-10 (Escambia Bay) bridge, the object stopped and hovered, then dove under the bridge and was not seen again. Photos attempted while en route were blank after processing.

■ **Log #900822:** 1/21/89, 10:58 p.m. event near Corydon, Indiana; investigator Fran Ridge. Four women and a teen were driving when they spotted an amber light trailing their car. They pulled to a stop and departed. The house-sized object passed almost directly overhead, seemingly turning onto its side, the witnesses not agreeing as to its outline. On what was assumed to be its underside were approximately nine bright white lights in an "X" pattern. Several photos were attempted and, though the object was apparently within 200 feet when closest, the film revealed only small, randomly placed white lights which may have been the result of processing.

■ **Log #900901:** 3/7/90, 7:20 p.m. event near Pocomoke Sound, Virginia; investigators Mark Blashak and Don Lovett. Two young sons were retrieving groceries from the family car for their mother when they noticed a bright light approaching at great speed with the sound of a jet, emitting fuzzy balls of blue light above a nearby field which dissipated before reaching the ground. The 9- and 10-year-olds then observed a domed disc slowing and stopping low and nearly overhead. A bright white beam immersed the older brother as the younger one scrambled underneath the car, followed by their dog. Momentarily, multiple beams circled the auto.

As described afterward by the boys, the dome slid back, revealing two entities of small stature, wrinkled skin and claw-like hands. A third joined them with a mechanical motion to observe the scene below. The dome then closed and the vehicle departed with the same jet-type roar. [Notes: The mother reported having heard a roar indicating both the approach and departure of the object. She went outside in time to see the fading light in the distance. An unconfirmed account by a NASA employee and friend of the family

indicated that the Wallops Island NASA facility near the event site lost its radar capacity in the same timeframe.]

■ **Log #901001:** 9/16/90, 7:52 p.m. event in Salt Lake City, Utah; investigators Mildred Biesele and Les Beard. A couple and their two children were driving home shortly after sunset when the wife noticed a large object behind and 30 degrees to their right, moving rapidly. They stopped and departed the car to observe. Estimated to be 2000-4000 feet in altitude, the silver-grey domed disc, with no other distinguishing features, crossed their path and continued on a straight-line or gentle arc until out of viewing range. The distance, portion of the horizon crossed and sighting duration indicate a speed perhaps in excess of 3000 mph. Duration was estimated as over 30 seconds.

■ **Log #901002:** 7/20/90, 7:30 p.m. event in Pensacola, Florida; investigator Joe Barron. A couple was driving when they saw a huge bluish white light in the distance, proceeding away from them in a gradual arc. Abruptly, the light proceeded downward, perhaps into the nearby Escambia Bay. The light appeared to be

spherical, larger than any aircraft, and illuminated internally. The husband is a retired Navy pilot. Duration of the sighting was 10-15 seconds.

■ **Log #901006:** 7/18/90, 2 a.m. event in New Hartford, Connecticut; investigator Randy Miles. A woman was lying awake in bed when she noticed bright flashing lights over her backyard that illuminated her second-floor bedroom. After a long moment, she arose and went to the window and confronted a smallish, domed disc 100 feet away and descending over the corner of the lawn. Circular red, yellow and white lights were positioned around the bottom rim and flashing. The vehicle maneuvered a few seconds while never touching down. It then accelerated rapidly and angularly between two trees and was out of sight in a second. None of her five dogs outside were aroused.

Two days later, a hired worker asked her about strange material on the grass, which she then realized was in the area of the sighting. After eliminating a lawn care company as being responsible, the woman reported the incident. The substance, coating some of the blades of grass, has been submitted for laboratory analysis.

In Others' Words ...

Lucius Farish

UFO sightings by Hollywood stars are the focus of an article in the October 23 issue of NATIONAL ENQUIRER. Reports by Cliff Robertson, Ed Asner and Olivia Newton-John are featured in this excerpt from the book, HOLLYWOOD AND THE SUPERNATURAL by Brad and Sherry Steiger (St. Martin's Press). The November 6 issue contains the results of an ENQUIRER survey which indicates that six out of 10 Americans believe that Earth has been visited by aliens from outer space.

The "Antimatter/UFO Update" column in October OMNI has an article by Paul McCarthy on the UFO research conducted by Cynthia Hind of Zimbabwe. Hind, the author of UFOs — AFRICAN ENCOUNTERS, also publishes a magazine called UFO AFRINEWS. Information is available from her at Box MP49 - Mount Pleasant - Harare, Zimbabwe. November OMNI reports on Dr. Richard Haines' study of pilots' UFO sightings. A book

Continued on page 23

News'n'Views ... Circles, UFO Course

Circles Network

North America has "caught" the crop circles. If events in England are any indication, they will increase in number and complexity as time goes on. It's time we got organized.

I would like to propose the creation of a data network. Its purpose would be to ensure that each of the major researchers on the continent gets the information gathered by all of the others.

There are a number of ways it could be organized. One possibility is to assign each person one or two other people to whom they automatically send everything they discover or receive. Since everybody would have an "input" and an "output," one could be sure that by sending a new piece of data to their "outputs," everyone else would eventually get a copy.

I would like to solicit organizational suggestions. There are several criteria that a successful network must meet:

- It must be fast and efficient. This rules out circular networks, for example, because one's "input" would have to wait for information to be mailed all the way around the circle before he or she got it.

- It must be readily expandable. It should be possible to add new members to the net without difficulty.

- It must be fault-tolerant. If a person goes on vacation, or drops out, the net should be able to keep going without difficulty. This would seem to rule out highly centralized networks.

- Each member must be productive as well as distributive. They should have some way of contributing new information to the net, whether by fieldwork, literature searches or data analysis.

I would like to suggest that the network be named "The North American Circle." If you have suggestions as to how the net could be organized, or would be interested in joining it, please write: North American Circle, P.O. Box 61144, Durham, NC 27715-1144 or

call (919) 286-0529.

— Michael Chorost

"Genesis" Press Release

Was a Russian satellite destroyed by a force from the tenth planet in our solar system? Are the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union attempting to unite the world against the threat from the tenth planet? In *GENESIS REVISITED: Is Modern Science Catching Up With Ancient Knowledge?* (Avon Books; October 1990; \$4.95 US/\$5.95 Canada) Zecharia Sitchin, a researcher of ancient languages and contemporary science, describes the events leading up to the destruction of the satellite, explains where the assault was launched from and tells how the leaders of the two great superpowers have begun to subtly reveal information regarding the existence of this planet.

Most astronomers concede the existence of a tenth planet in our solar system. NASA and other agencies are actively trying to identify it. In *The 12th Planet, Stairway to Heaven, Wars of Gods and Men*, and *The Lost Realms*, Books I-IV, respectively, of the *Earth Chronicles*, Sitchin has recounted the existence of a tenth planet called Nibiru. Based on his research of the Sumerian and other ancient civilizations, Sitchin has described the ancients' vast knowledge of the solar system, and has reproduced ancient Sumerian clay tablets depicting the planet Neptune, which was not discovered until 1846.

In 1989, as Voyager II approached the planet Neptune, Sitchin announced that the Sumerians had described Neptune as being "blue-green, watery" and having patches of color of "swamp-like vegetation." This description of Neptune's surface was confirmed by modern scientists when the Voyager II transmitted photographs in 1989.

In *Genesis Revisited*, Sitchin reproduces photographic plates of Mars provided by NASA. These plates, according to Sitchin, illustrate the possible existence of spaceports, paved roads, pyramidal structures and contoured farmlands. Of these structures, astronomer Francis Graham has said: "The conjecture that these are buildings of an ancient race of Martians must take its place among the theories of their origins." In *Genesis Revisited*, Sitchin theorizes that thousands of years ago ancient astronauts from Nibiru established a space station on Mars and that their descendants are now in the process of reactivating this station.

Sitchin also cites the 1989 disappearance of the Russian satellite Phobos 2 as possible proof of alien activity. According to Glavkosmos, the Russian equivalent of NASA, Phobos 2 had transmitted pictures of an "odd-shaped object" which appeared between the spacecraft and Mars. Commenting on the incident, Dr. John Becklake of England's Science Museum said: "They [the Soviets] saw something that should not be there." One of the satellite's tasks was to probe Mars with lasers for scientific experiments. Could this have been mistaken as a hostile act? According to Sitchin, this was the first incident of star wars, a retaliation for an intrusion of a space station on Mars.

Was this incident responsible for the dynamic thaw in East-West relations?

In *Genesis Revisited*, Sitchin details the acceleration in both the U.S. and Soviet space programs, including the possibility of a joint mission to Mars. On several occasions, President Reagan addressed the possibility of the two countries uniting against a threat from "some other species from another planet outside the solar system."

Sitchin reveals the 1985 meeting between scientists, legal experts, diplomats, NASA representatives and officials from other U.S. agencies in which they discussed how to maintain

authoritative control over an extraterrestrial contact. One of the concerns discussed by the group was how to control a "potentially panicky public reaction to the first evidence that humankind is not alone in the universe." In July 1989, NASA referred to this group in a report as "the special post-detection committee." At the recent Malta summit, President Bush and his Soviet counterpart Mikhail Gorbachev discussed the strategic defense initiative — star wars — in both offensive and defensive terms.

In *Genesis Revisited*, Zecharia Sitchin comes to an inevitable conclusion which he believes "some consider too incredible to accept and others too awesome to face."

Zecharia Sitchin was born in Russia and raised in Palestine, where he acquired a profound knowledge of modern and ancient Hebrew, other Semitic and European languages, the Old Testament and the history of archaeology of the Near East. He attended the London School of Economics and graduated from the University of London, majoring in economic history. He was a leading journalist and editor in Israel for many years. He now lives in New York. He is a member of the Israel Exploration Society, the American Oriental Society and the Middle East Studies Association of North America.

— Avon Books

"Hoagland's Mars"

Researcher and author Richard Hoagland advises that a 30-minute video program based on his studies of the so-called "Mars Face," in the region of Cydonia, will be broadcast via the Weststar 4 satellite as part of the NASA Lewis (Cleveland) Educational Television Series.

The program will be broadcast at 12 noon on January 6, 1991, and should be accessible to anyone with a satellite dish. Hoagland urges those not so equipped to call the program manager of their local PBS station and request that they air "Hoagland's Mars." PBS stations are granted access to the NASA

program. Depending on their schedules, they can either air it live or download and record it for presentation at a suitable time later.

NASA's scheduled 1993 Mars Observer will probably survey the region in question with cameras capable of resolving objects three feet (one meter) across — 50 times the resolution of Viking.

For additional details, write Hoagland (Route 4, Box 168, Wytheville, VA 24382) or call: (703) 228-5524.

New UFO Course

Dr. John R. Salter, Jr. will be presenting a course on UFOs at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, under auspices of the Division of Continuing Education. Entitled "UFOs, ETs & Close Encounters," the program is worth two undergraduate credits and can be attended either in person or via the North Dakota Interactive Video Network for persons living in Devil's Lake, Williston and Fargo. The latter format, broadcast live, allows distant students to see, hear and respond in person to the course instructor.

Says Salter: "This course, intended to be a sensible approach to the UFO phenomenon, accepts the reality of UFOs and their extra-terrestrial origins. It is not a course in mysticism, theology or parapsychology. (However, some parapsychological approaches are used by the 'aliens.' Humans sometimes find their psychic faculties enhanced after an encounter, and these facets will be explored.) The basic format of the course will be lecture and discussion, but there will be several films and certain primary materials, such as hypnosis tapes. Several encounters, including those of Betty and Barney Hill and that of my son and I, will be discussed in great detail. Other topics of discussion include UFO technology, close visual sightings and physical UFO traces."

Salter, Professor and Chair of Indian Studies, is a MUFON State Director for North Dakota and a member of the Canadian UFO Research Network. He says he and his son "were intercepted by friendly UFO humanoids in south-



Dr. John R. Salter, Jr.
North Dakota State Director

western Wisconsin on the evening of March 20, 1988," subsequent to what he calls "a cordial and fascinating one-and-a-half-hour meeting with them." ("The next day," according to Salter, "while in Illinois, the UFO descended to about 200 yards in front of our pickup for a friendly gesture of 'Adios.'")

The course, held between 2 and 4 p.m. Tuesdays, will run from January 15 to May 7, 1991, at a cost of \$168. For further information, call (701) 777-4235, or write: Department of Academic Programs, Division of Continuing Education, Box 8277, University Station, Grand Forks, ND 58202.

UFO Award

I would like to thank the members of MUFON for voting me the 1989-90 UFOlogy award, also known as the Isabel Davis Memorial Award.

Since Isabel was a close friend, the award is especially meaningful to me. It is always gratifying to have the approval of your peers.

— Richard Hall
Brentwood, MD

The Night Sky

Walter N. Webb

January 1991

Bright Planets (Evening Sky):

Venus gradually becomes visible at dusk. The brilliant object (magnitude -3.9) is very low in the SW after sunset, setting on the 1st around an hour after the Sun and by month's end, nearly two hours after. On the 1st use binoculars to locate Saturn only 1.2° to the upper right of Venus; the latter is some 60 times brighter. (You'll need an unobstructed horizon.) Venus and the lunar crescent form a nice pair on January 17.

Mars, in Taurus a few degrees below the Pleiades, stands high in the ESE at dusk and remains visible most of the night. As the Earth and the red planet continue to separate, Mars' brightness decreases from magnitude -1.0 to -0.1 during the month, while its disc diameter shrinks from $14''$ to $10''$ of arc. Our neighbor world resumes direct eastward motion on the 1st.

Jupiter, in Cancer, rises in the ENE an hour after sunset in mid-January, but by its opposition on the 28th, the big planet rises at sunset. On that date Jupiter lies opposite the Sun and remains in view all night (shining at magnitude -2.6). The giant world is above the waning gibbous Moon on the 2nd and near the full moon on the night of the 29th-30th.

Saturn (0.5), in Sagittarius, is visible at dusk very low in the SW on the first few days of January and then vanishes into the solar glare. Last September a bright white spot appeared within the ringed planet's equatorial cloud belts. Subsequently, the spot expanded from a mass $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the Earth's width to a feature girdling the entire equator. Several smaller white spots also appeared within the expanded main spot. This activity possibly was caused by an upwelling of gaseous material from some hot source deep in the planet's atmosphere. White spots on Saturn have been observed less than a dozen times since the 17th century. (See Venus.)

Bright Planets: (Morning Sky)

Mars sets in the NW about 3 a.m.

Jupiter sets in the WNW about sunrise (at opposition).

Penumbra Lunar Eclipse:

Sharp-eyed observers across North America may notice a slight darkening of the full moon's upper limb beginning about mid-night on the night of January 29-30. The Moon will slide into the outer light portion (penumbra) of Earth's shadow. Mideclipse is at 12:59 a.m. EST.

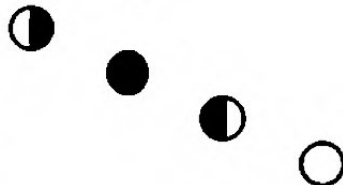
Moon Phases:

Last quarter — January 7

New moon — January 15

First quarter — January 23

Full moon — January 30



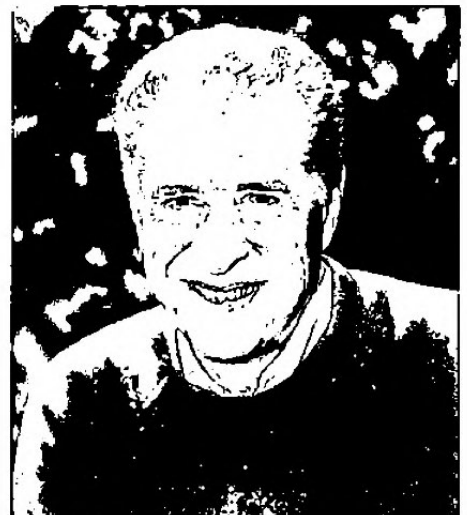
The Stars:

That great sky symbol of winter, Orion the Hunter, is nearing the celestial meridian at 9 p.m. His trio of belt stars in a row is prominent as is the reddish star Betelgeuse, marking his right shoulder, and blue-white Rigel, his left leg: Look closely at the hazy middle "star" in Orion's sword, which is suspended below the belt. The object actually is the Orion Nebula, a gas and dust cloud

glowing from the ultraviolet light of hot young stars buried in the center of the cloud. Binoculars or a telescope provide even more spectacular views of this region.

Betelgeuse not only is a cool red supergiant nearing the end of its life, but also it is a variable star, dimming and brightening by nearly a magnitude. One of the huge luminary's two giant companion stars regularly orbits through an envelope of dust and gas surrounding Betelgeuse. The big star's dimming coincides with the companion's closest approaches. Perhaps the intruding companion pulls material out of the dusty envelope which then blocks some of the light of Betelgeuse, causing the star to dim. Before now, the probable reason for the supergiant's variability was unknown.

Encircling Orion are the stars and constellations of the Winter Circle, plus the planets Jupiter and Mars. The brightest of the stars — indeed of all nighttime stars — can be seen to the warrior's right. It is Sirius the Dog Star. Don't be fooled when it is near the horizon; the star undergoing refraction effects has accounted for its share of IFO/UFO reports. In January Sirius rises south of east about the time twilight ends — around 6 p.m.



Robert J. Gribble
Western Regional Director

Calendar of UFO Conferences for 1991

- April 5, 6 & 7 - Ozark UFO Conference - Inn of the Ozarks, Eureka Springs, Arkansas.
- May 17, 18 & 19 — Exploring Unexplained Phenomena III - University of Nebraska Center, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- July 5, 6 & 7 — MUFON 1991 International UFO Symposium - Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel at O'Hare International Airport near Chicago, Illinois.
- August 16, 17 & 18 — Sixth International UFO Congress - Central Library Theater, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England.

MESSAGE, Continued

Fawcett III (Lincolnton). Robert H. Hair will be promoted from Asst. State Director to North Carolina State Director effective January 1, 1991, as will George E. Lund III. There will be other State Section Director assignments made concurrently.

WORDS, Continued

detailing the 3400 aircrew cases which Haines has collected should be available in the near future. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 880 - Los Altos, CA 94023-0880. Pilots with UFO sightings may also report them to Haines at this address.

W.D. (Bill) Clendenon's book, **MERCURY: UFO MESSENGER OF THE GODS**, is now available from Owl Press - P.O. Box 81 - Rosholt, WI 54473 (\$10.95 + \$1.50 postage and handling). Clendenon covers a wide range of topics, including the legends of ancient "vimanas" with mercury engines, the Adamski "scout ship" photos, theories of UFO propulsion, etc., along with an account of his own experiences with individuals whom he believes to be occupants of UFOs. There is a lot of interesting material in this 220-page book and only a few hundred copies have been printed, so I'd suggest you act fast if you want one.

For those wanting more information on the Billy Meier contact case from Switzerland, a second volume of the "Contact Notes" material, **MESSAGES FROM THE PLEIADES**, is in preparation and should be available soon. Further details in future columns.

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(signed) Walter H. Andrus, Jr.
 Publisher

MUFON Amateur Radio Net

80 meters — 3.990 MHz
 Saturday, 10 p.m.

40 meters — 7.237 MHz
 Saturday, 8 a.m.

10 meters — 28.460 MHz
 Thursday, 8 p.m.

10 meters — 28.470 MHz
 Sunday, 3 p.m.

All times Eastern Standard or Daylight

Director's Message

Walt Andrus

It is a pleasure to announce that **Robert J. Gribble** of Seattle, Washington was elected to the position of Western Regional Director on the MUFON Board of Directors by his colleagues in the western states, replacing **Paul C. Cerny** whose term had expired. We thank **Virgil C. Staff**, State Director for Northern California, and **Judy Tuberg**, residing in Kirkland, Washington for placing their names in nomination to this prestigious post. Mr. Staff has some great plans for his constituents in organizing the northern California team which may now forge ahead. We hope that Judy Tuberg will volunteer for a leadership position in Washington State. In the near future, Mr. Gribble will be recommending a qualified person to fill the position of Washington State Director, which he will be vacating.

Virgil C. Staff has appointed **Allen** and **Darleen Dunkin** (Riverbank, CA) as Assistant State Section Directors to **Dan P. Sharver** for Stanislaus, Merced and San Joaquin Counties. **Jean Waller**, Oklahoma State Director, has made **James D. Rosebery** (Boise City, OK) the Co-State Section Director with **Stanley E. Manske** for Cimarron, Beaver and Texas Counties. **Lance B. Payette**, J.D. (Kingman, AZ) has been reassigned by **Hal Starr** to State Section Director for Mohave County. **Granville Angel**, M.Ed., Ed. S. (Vale, NC) is a new Research Specialist in Transpersonal and Addictions Counseling and Psychology.

Three new Consultants in Law have joined MUFON and become a part of **Kenneth A. Wong's** Legal Staff. They are **Robert S. Herman**, J.D. (Leawood, KS); **Charles E. Tokar**, J.D. (Chicago Ridge, IL); and **Brad A. Burback**, J.D. (New Carrollton, MD).

Pensacola Symposium Tapes

Speakers presentations at the

MUFON 1990 International UFO Symposium are now available on VHS videotape and audiocassette from Bill Richards Productions. You may purchase your choice of two speakers on video for \$27.50, or a single speaker for \$15.00. Audiocassettes are \$8 a presentation. The speakers on tape are **Ed and Frances Walters**, **Rev. Barry H. Downing**, Ph.D., **John E. Brandenburg**, Ph.D., **Brian T. O'Leary**, Ph.D., **Carey H. Baker**, **Robert L. Hall**, Ph.D., **John L. Spencer** (England), **Budd Hopkins**, **David A. Gotlib**, M.D., **Donald R. Schmitt**, **Antonio Huneus** and **Stanton T. Friedman**.

There is a \$3 per tape shipping and handling charge in the U.S.A. Florida and Alabama residents add a 6% sales tax. Please specify the speaker you desire and mail your check to: Bill Richards Productions, 120 E. Sunset, Pensacola, FL 32507. Please allow four to six weeks for delivery. Bill Richards' telephone is (904) 456-5018.

State Maps

Each State Director is invited to secure and mail the latest state map published by your state government or highway department to MUFON in Seguin, Texas to help us locate cities for assignment of UFO cases and to identify members by counties. In addition, since one of our goals is to have every county in the U.S.A. assigned to a State Section Director, we need a map of each state wherein the counties are outlined and identified by name. The State Directors also need such maps to designate and assign responsibilities. A few state directors have already initiated this program for their personal use. The conventional Rand McNally maps presently being used by MUFON headquarters are not adequate for our purposes. If there is a charge for these

maps, please enclose a statement and the state director will be reimbursed. Your help is appreciated.

Christmas Greetings

Since the December 1990 issue of the *MUFON UFO Journal* is a special issue on Crop Circles, it is not apropos to have a traditional holiday greeting on the cover. Having passed the twenty-first anniversary of the founding of MUFON, we will have 3000 members or more as we enter the new year. This is an ideal time for the MUFON Board of Directors to thank and congratulate the people who have volunteered their services in state leadership positions, field investigators, Consultants and Research Specialists in helping to make MUFON not only the world's leading UFO organization but the largest. As we enter the holiday season, the Board of Directors and the Journal Staff convey and express our gratitude for a job well done to all of our members worldwide. Wherever you may be, we want to wish you a very Merry Christmas and joyous New Year during the holiday season to you and your families.

MUFON - North Carolina

At their first anniversary meeting in Charlotte, on November 4, 1990, MUFON-NC elected the following officers for 1991: State Director - **Robert H. Hair** (Eden); Asst. State Director and Program Chairman - **George E. Lund III** (Charlotte); Secretary - **William Kent Senter** (Durham); Asst. Secretary - **Natalie "Ginger" Richardson** (Charlotte); Treasurer - **Granville Angel** (Vale); Historian - **Jayne Ware** (Winston-Salem); and Public Relations Director - **George D.**

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