

# The Mystery of Crop Circles

A talk by Andy Thomas

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Despite being slightly delayed by the curse of the M25, Andy arrived and gave us a hugely interesting, enthusiastic and thought-provoking talk on the mystery of crop circles. Andy has more than an interest in the subject: he is a true researcher, an analyst who looks at the science, the fact, the fiction and the folklore and, as he states there is more to crop circles than “meets the eye” and I think after his speech one could not disagree.

The first known recording of a circle in the crops – the simple illustration from the time showed it was more of an oval in the crops – was in 1678 when a farmer in Hertfordshire woke up to find his crop of wheat had been mown into a strange shape. Those were the days of scythe and sickle and the crop could not have been cut overnight in the dark. The illustration depicted the Devil doing the harvesting!

In the late 1600s a renowned naturalist, Sir Robert Plot, took on the investigation of crop circles. Until this time it was thought that the patterns were made when fairies danced or that elves, sprites, witches and pixies were responsible. Sir Robert took a far more scientific approach, hypothesising that the wind, weather or lightning could be the cause of the phenomenon.

The 1930s noted photos of crop circles being taken for the first time and the early pictures appear to show very simple formations but, by the 1980s the patterns were becoming more complex and today the patterns being recorded are highly complicated. One crop pattern in 2001 consisted of 409 circles!

In 1996 in a field opposite Stonehenge – right next to the busy A303 road – a massive spectacle appeared in the crop. A pattern of 115 circles which was described as a ‘fractor’ (had to look this up) which is *a never-ending pattern, a complicated pattern in mathematics built from repeated shapes that become smaller and smaller or larger and larger each time they are repeated.* (Google). According to camera footage at the time this pattern appeared in daylight between 5 and 6 (not sure morning or evening) taking just under the hour. Nothing.....and then 45 mins later a complex pattern appeared.

These mathematical patterns are perfect in design, 100% accurate when measured; to my mind they looked like giant Spirograph designs with faultless perspective and geometry. In 1995 a crop circle appeared that depicted – accurately – our solar system, further research showed that this pattern related to an astrological event that would occur in 2004 when Venus would pass the sun. (This does not happen very often.) The circle correlated exactly with the tracking of the path of Venus. Accident or design? Interestingly the planet Earth was missing!!

Many have said that crop circles are manmade hoaxes and, in 1991, two chaps named Doug and Dave claimed they had made the crop circles using wood and string. When challenged

however they could not evidence their claim and when asked to produce a circle they just made a mess. It is acknowledged that some of the circles are manmade but the stems of green corn bruise and mark very easily and patterns made by human hand show this damage. Imagine trying to make a circle, clomping about in the dark with a head torch, wielding a hammer and stake and measuring out lengths of string and battens of wood: the damage to the corn would be considerable. Crop circles that appear 'naturally' do not seem to show this destruction, no mud, no footprints and no centre point.

There are many theories that abound about the cause or meaning of crop circles, are they alien, ancient, religious or a portent of change? A scatter map showing the incidences of the circles indicate that they do tend to appear on chalk areas and over aquifers –rocks that contain water. Many have been recorded near ley lines, some near the Avebury stone circle, Wiltshire is a well-known site for the circles. One theory relates to magnetic fields or solar activity, indeed it has been noted that electronic instruments can often behave erratically when near a circle.

In 1991 rumours of aliens, UFOs and flying saucers began to be muttered. Witnesses in Devizes saw white lights hovering over a field, in less than a minute crop circles appeared. This instance has never been proven as a hoax. And, in 1993 Andy watched as three balls of light floated over the grass, he could find no explanation for this!

Andy led us on a time journey, showing photos up to the present day. Most were breath taking in their complexity. One demonstrated Pi in a different way (I never got to grips with Pi in the 'normal 'way). Other patterns appeared to relate to codes, calendars and symbols one of which was a binary code. This was all getting a bit 'mathsy' for me to follow but when this code was translated it included the following "*beware the bearers of false gifts and broken promises,*" and "*believe*".

So what to conclude? Who, what, how and why? As yet there is no definitive explanation but one cannot deny that the crop circles are mysterious, graceful complex and beautiful. Perhaps there is more to their story that will never be told and Andy told their story in a highly knowledgeable and interesting way.

**Judi Embling**