

# Crop Circles of 2018

A continuing inspiration

*Andy Bull*  
CROP CIRCLE CONNECTOR

**Global crop circle activity may have diminished in recent years, but areas of mystical England continue to produce remarkable patterns in the fields, which continue to baffle and inspire in equal measure.**

All the photographs used in this article are sourced from Crop Circle Connector © 2018.

by Andy Thomas © 2018

### Golden Ages

Crop circles are resilient and chameleon-like. Having seamlessly morphed from being seen first as occasional countryside oddities and then New Age flowerings of the post-1987 Harmonic Convergence period, pre-millennial signs of the times and eventually heralds of the "new era" prophesied to occur from 2012, the predicted demise of the circles in the wake of each chapter has steadfastly refused to occur. Now they seem simply to have become an ongoing rock-steady feature in the landscape, mainly in England but with a few highlights elsewhere, seemingly untethered to any particular zeitgeist. Whatever their origin and purpose, they march on in the face of media indifference and scepticism, continuing to attract new seekers and raising questions about the very nature of reality. For if even a handful of crop formations can be shown to lie beyond the boundaries of human-made art, as many observers believe has already been demonstrated, then the world is clearly not as it has been sold to us by narrow scientism.

Strange, then, in the face of such a persistent wonder, that an oft-heard view

is that the phenomenon has passed its artistic peak and that the "golden age" of crop circles is over. This opinion is deeply subjective; when a fresh wave of researchers arrived following the advent of the large pictogram formations of 1990, the same cry was heard even at that early stage, usually from enthusiasts who had until then literally had the field to themselves. "Halcyon days" are generally illusion; a simple glance at the crop patterns of the early 1990s—the traditionally held golden age—demonstrates that what we are receiving today, in terms of quality and artistic impact, is plainly superior. Numbers may have gone down in recent years (although not as much as some imply), but the honest truth is that the crop formations of 2018 have shown once again that what we are dealing with today remains as extraordinary, and as controversial, as ever. Thus it could be argued that the golden age of circles is still with us today.

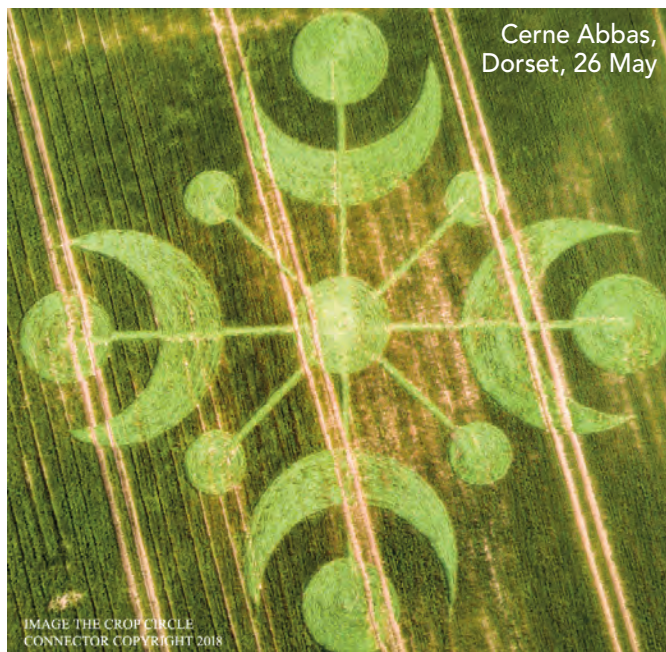
## Early Season

England is the traditional hub of the mystery for reasons much-discussed and never satisfactorily settled, so we will deal with this first and discuss global events later. April is often the first month to see activity here, but this year, perhaps because of a notably late spring where crops were slow to mature, it took until 8 May for the first arrival, at Mere in Wiltshire. At first sight a six-armed flower within a ring, closer inspection revealed a striking resemblance to a "pond skater" insect (common in the UK), complete with insectoid body and head. This was perhaps an apt metaphor for a circular season that would effortlessly skim across the next few months. Unusually, this was the only design of the year to appear in the yellow rapeseed (canola), the remainder being in grain crops.

May gave just one more crop formation on the 26th, this time a crisp eightfold motif comprising thin arms culminating in either small circles or crescents and larger circles. It lay not far from the famous Cerne Abbas giant hill carving in Dorset, and, as with many crop formations over the years by chance or otherwise, it was very close to a tall transmission tower, this one belonging to the BBC.

After the quiet start, the season picked up substantially in June. A triple-ringed circle not unlike a car wheel appeared at Baunton in Gloucestershire on 2 June, made more intriguing by the use of the criss-crossing "basket weave" effect in the lay of the central circle; textures have been used to fascinating effect in recent years. A curiously slender crescent-like ridge of crop had been left in one part of the thicker outer ring, not quite a definite feature yet seemingly more than just a "missed" area. A more straightforward triple-ringed circle of the classic variety, notably wide and thin in its construction yet somehow elegant in its simplicity, arrived the next day at Beckhampton, Wiltshire.

The formation which appeared on 4 June at Sixpenny



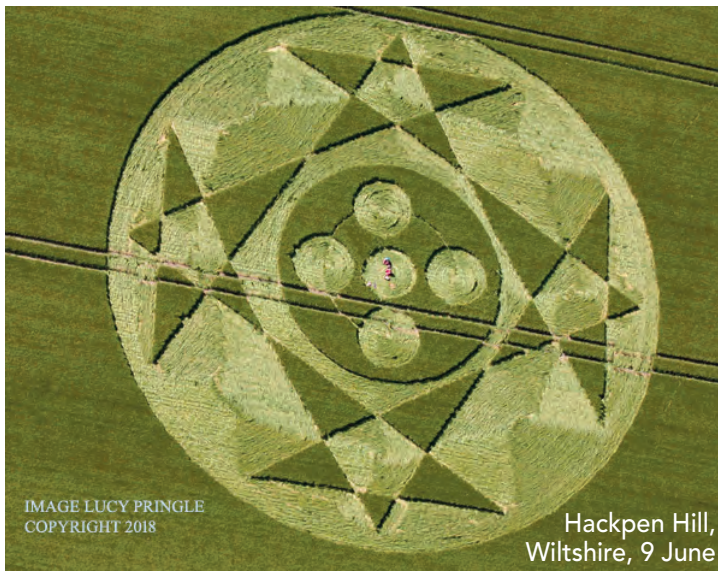
Handley in Dorset was a step towards deeper complexity. A seven-pointed star embedded in a ring of Mayan-like rectangular curlicues, orbited by seven small outer circles, the design was enhanced further by the ring of radially laid crop around its otherwise swirled centre, a flourish now becoming common. Very striking, this was the first design of the year to really draw the breath at first sight.

## Ancient Connections

A busy circle hotspot reactivated on 9 June at Hackpen Hill, Wiltshire, below one of the white horse carvings that populate the area. The new pattern revisited two recurring features of previous years; a small central Celtic cross design, it was surrounded by four standing pentagrams within a flattened circle, visually stretched as







if seen in perspective around a sphere. The following day, 10 June, a beautifully textured motif was found at Chicklade, Wiltshire, of three blades superimposed over three thin spokes ending in circles. The formation was aligned perfectly next to two ancient round barrows in the same field, perfectly echoing the threefold nature of the overall design.

Having played with threes, fours, sevens and eights in the circular themes of the year so far, the phenomenon finally offered fivefold geometry at Winterbourne Stoke near Stonehenge on 17 June. An attractive five-petalled flower or windmill design with standing notched wedge shapes between the petals, five circles on long arms extended around the outside, making for a pleasing effect. As with the previous formation, an ancient barrow lay just metres away. Yet another archaeological site found itself accompanied by a mandala on 20 June, close to the famous stone quoit of Devil's Den at Clatford, Wiltshire. A sevenfold star within a ring, with thin paths around a small central circle, the lays of its triangular points exhibited multiple textured swirls and centres almost at random.

As an archaeological footnote, England's extended heatwave this summer saw the landscape revealing many ancient features long hidden, as the sites of stone circles, structures and paths unexpectedly made themselves known as highlighted shapes in the very bleached-out grass and fields. Some observers drew comparisons with the crop circles, but fascinating though these phantoms from the past were, their essential nature was very different, being a discolouration occurring due to unequal moisture content in the ground and not involving any laid plants.



### Unusual Layouts

One of the season's most striking designs arrived at Hackpen Hill, Wiltshire, on 23 June. Although essentially a five-pointed star within two wide outer rings, both the rings and the positioning of the central star in a circle were offset from one another, each feature touching at the edges, creating a disorientating but very pleasing effect. Five standing tufts of crop punctuated the central area of the star. The farmer at

Hackpen Hill, with this and the earlier June formation, was one of the few who opened his fields to visitors this year, working with local circle researchers to raise money





for charity, a welcome development for those who wish to see the shapes at close quarters.

Ancient sites returned to the equation on 24 June, when one of the more unusual patterns of the year was found opposite the remains of the old hillfort Yarnbury Castle, near Steeple Langford in Wiltshire. A hexagon with six small circles extending from each corner, a peculiarity lay in the large petals at its centre; plainly there had been six petals left standing during the process of its creation, but seemingly at the last stage two of them had been swept down (symmetrically) so that these petals were merely implied in the lay. A second oddball formation was found much further east, near Rochford in Essex (an area which has seen intense activity in the last few years) on 30 June; in essence a ringed circle, the standing area in the middle was divided into unequal and seemingly random blocks, like a child's play shapes.

Although, like a number of recent Essex formations, it was eccentric rather than beautiful, its construction was nonetheless neat and interesting. A tail of small circles and other shapes trailed nearby across the field.

## July Highlights

Among two more double-ringed circles (near Alton in Hampshire on 1 July, and then at East Worldham, Hampshire on 27 July), and a few small and sometimes rather scrappy minor entries in Wiltshire, the most generally active circular month of the year produced some remarkable highlights.

An astonishingly complex mandala at Wooton Rivers, Wiltshire, on 7 July impressed many with its sheer detail. The pentagon-based mosaic of multiple smaller pentagons and five-pointed stars created by the standing elements in its central area played tricks with the eyes. Although perhaps too busy to be as immediate as some patterns, it was certainly one of the most ambitious layouts of the year. As a design that wouldn't look out of place in the oft-praised late 1990s, it served as a reminder that this phenomenon has lost none of its power to impress.

A dark but very topical note was sounded in the next formation, near Stonehenge, Wiltshire on 8 July—the threefold design within a ring was clearly the international symbol for chemical weapons. This year saw a huge scandal erupt in Britain, with Russia accused of

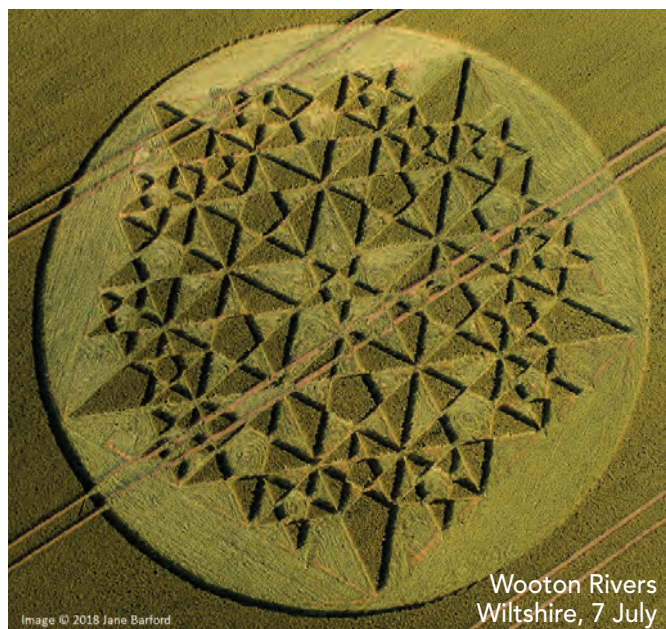


Yarnbury Castle,  
Wiltshire, 24 June



Rochford,  
Essex, 30 June

sponsoring a nerve gas attack in the Wiltshire city of Salisbury, poisoning the Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, and later resulting in the death of a local woman in Amesbury (very close to Stonehenge). Arguments as to who was really behind this lie beyond this article's remit, although many truthseekers suspect a false flag event designed to accelerate a new Cold War, especially given the close proximity of the



Wooton Rivers  
Wiltshire, 7 July





British defence establishment Porton Down—which deals with these very kinds of substances. The formation itself was crisp and well-laid, but let down by some uneven central pathways, leading some to treat it as a wry human comment on the whole unfortunate business.

Nine was the next geometrical number to be played with, in the form of a ninefold wheel at the enduring circle site of Longwood Warren in Hampshire on 10 July. Clear-cut and well-made, narrow outer petals surrounded a wide area of laid crop with a central saw-blade motif, throwing out curious narrow paths within the lay itself, radiating to the outer edges. Although different in design, the pattern at Winterbourne Bassett, Wiltshire, on 14 July, seemed to have something in common in terms of its striking visual effect, this time with a threefold central element radiating thin standing crescents, like ripples in a pond. A rare Welsh formation, which appeared the same day near Cardiff, incorporated a nested circle, triangle, square and smaller circle constructed with thin paths, but its resemblance to the logo of a new local restaurant which was opening the next week cast understandable doubt on its provenance.

Another very "busy" formation appeared at Kingweston in Somerset the same day, a riot of 24 circles and thin paths radiating from a complex twelvefold flower of petals and diamonds. What it sometimes lacked in accuracy it made up for with its general stunning effect, but the lay was neat and tidy. Those who thought it resembled a stylised sun motif had their view bolstered by the presence of a solar farm in the next field.



Twelfefold elements returned in the next formation, at Allington, Wiltshire on 21 July. A wheel of twelve standing scimitar-like spokes within a large ringed circle, its precision and presence in the landscape was stark and beautiful, its relative austerity almost a relief after the overwhelming intricacies of the previous design. Essex then produced another oddity next day back at Rochford; the sixfold flower of thin petals within a circle was conventional enough, but the long tail of haphazard circles, rings, arcs and paths trailing from it stamped on it the now recurring chaotic Essex theme. One more day on, and yet another strange formation arrived at Fovant in Wiltshire on 23 July, but strange for different reasons. Rather than odd complexity, it displayed odd simplicity; superimposed onto a large circle with a small central ring was a parallelogram, or a large standing rectangle seen as if in perspective, giving the impactful impression of





some kind of opening doorway. But opening to what..? Even now, the phenomenon continues to produce surprises.

An elaborate sixfold snowflake design at Harbury, Warwickshire on 26 July, was more traditional in its approach, if somewhat naive in places, but was made more interesting by varied textures in each of its circular components. Basket weave "notches" were very apparent back at Hackpen Hill on 29 July. This new eightfold flower of standing petals very strikingly incorporated three bands of "cogwheels" in the lay of its central area, making for an impressive close to the month.

## August Endings

The last of the truly stunning English formations of the year manifested at Etchilhampton, Wiltshire, on 10 August in the form of a unique and almost indescribably complex motif of rings, circles and semicircles, resembling perhaps a cartoon of a cratered planet. Huge, impeccably laid and very accurately devised, this was a favourite of the season for many observers. After this, anything less than amazing would be seen as an also-ran, and sure enough the final entries in the English summer canon struggled to match it, although they were not without interest.



An odd complex of uneven standing blocks around an uneven cluster of four circles and paths at Fonthill Bishop, Wiltshire, on 13 August was largely remarkable for having appeared very close to a farmer's spray test grid in the same field. A curio of two linked ringed circles and paths either side of a circle at Warminster, Wiltshire, on 14 August was notable for having been lightly brushed into a low-standing crop, with a thin standing ring at its centre and a radial band in its lay. The last English arrival at the time of writing (late August), at Alton, Hampshire on 19



August, was more intricate, comprising a ringed pentacle around a ringed circle. Aerial shots displayed a novel effect where a small central circle was implied by what looked like slightly blacker crop in that area (whether by design or an accident of someone having damaged the lay while visiting). Counter-rotating bands of laid crop in the circle and outer ring produced other textures. Not quite a grand finale, then, but no one could really complain after such a succession of fascinating developments across the summer.

## Global Events

While UK activity holds out with aplomb, the past few years have seen an unexplained decline in global crop circle numbers—and yet not a cessation. The first recorded event of the year was a single grass circle at Bosschenhoofd, Noord Brabant, in The Netherlands on 29 April, followed by the now annual succession of modest and slightly rough clusters of circles or old-style pictograms in the months after, generally around the same area, which many researchers these days regard with suspicion, fairly or not. Definite human-made designs were a feature in The Netherlands in the Oudebildtdijk area in Friesland, which saw a series of geometric patterns created in the fields there as an art project. Another such project in Italy, at Cascina Geronimo, Piemonte, saw the latest annual design by land artist Francesco Grassi (all that would appear in Italy this year, once such a busy place for formations), while, less successfully, a Belgium venture attempted a flower of life mandala which was wobbly in the extreme.

Of the unexplained designs to appear, Switzerland produced an atypical pictogram at Uster, near Zurich on 4 June, comprising a thin arc attached to a crisp, if odd, circular design. That country then excelled itself with a truly beautiful twelvefold wheel of very precise arcs at Frienisberg, Bern, on 17 June. On a par with its English cousins, it was one of the highlights of the entire season. Other countries to host two formations apiece were Brazil, which saw a double-ringed circle, superimposed with a cross of thin paths and small circles, at

Prudentópolis, Paraná, on 3 August, and what appeared to be a Wi-Fi symbol of three arcs radiating from a circle at the same location on 14 August. Russia, meanwhile, saw a thin and sprawling but clear pictogram of paths, rings and circles at Tolyatti, Samara Oblast, on 13 June followed by a more ambitious if less precise emblem of curves, circles and spirals at Sokolovskaya, Krasnodar, on 19



Sokolovskaya,  
Krasnodar, 19 June

with recent years and it is clear that the phenomenon continues to stir hearts and minds with its best entries, which remain stunning to see.

Media coverage was muted this year, with the current marvels in the fields largely ignored with the exception of, inevitably, the anti-Trump formation and the chemical weapons symbol near Stonehenge. Curiously, a story missed by the mainstream was the

passing of an era with the death of Doug Bower in July, aged an impressive 94. Together with his compatriot Dave Chorley (who died in 1997), in the "golden age" of 1991 Doug and Dave gained huge media attention by claiming to have invented the entire circle phenomenon in the late 1970s, with nothing but planks of wood and pieces of wire on hats. But their productions were unimpressive. It is astounding how many sceptics, who did report Bower's death with glowing tributes, still insist that this was the sole origin of it all, when there is widespread and substantial evidence of many crop circles going back decades, and indeed centuries, before that. That the formations failed to go away, and indeed flourished, after Doug and Dave retired from circlemaking in 1991 says much.

Other countries to receive less insulting crop glyphs this season included the Czech Republic, which saw the appearance of an extraordinarily complex and quite stunning mass of superimposed ringed circles and arcs at Bohdánkov, Liberec, on 7 July. Precise and visually striking, it was probably the most original formation of the season. France came up with its own unusual entry at Sarraltroff, Moselle, on 11 June, seemingly a play on an elaborate and extended yin-yang symbol, while Quebec in Canada had a single event at an unrevealed location on 31 July. A single circle with four small attached circles, the lay was neat and nicely swirled; aerial lights were reported over the field on the night of its appearance.

## A Continuing Mystery

The final tally for crop formations in 2018 (not including art projects) was, at the time of writing, 49, of which the majority were in England. Thus, while the geographical spread has notably thinned, numbers-wise it was on a par



Bohdánkov,  
Liberec, 7 July

However many crop circles the two pranksters and those they might have influenced in the years after may have created, the fact is that the extraordinary patterns continue on to this day and the mystery surrounding them has never dissipated, for all the arguments. There are too many anomalies, unique qualities, sightings and peculiar circumstances for this to be the whole answer. This leaves us with something which remains very special and will doubtless continue to inspire and perplex people, rather wonderfully, for a long while to come.

## About the Author

Andy Thomas is one of the world's leading mysteries researchers and is the author of the acclaimed *The Truth Agenda* (Vital Signs Publishing 2009–2013/Adventures Unlimited 2015), and also *Conspiracies: The Facts—The Theories—The Evidence* (Watkins Publishing 2013). Andy is also author of five books on the crop circle phenomenon, including *Vital Signs* and *An Introduction to Crop Circles*, considered by many to be definitive guides. Andy widely lectures around Britain and the world and has made numerous TV and radio appearances.

Websites:

<http://www.truthagenda.org>

<http://www.vitalsignspublishing.co.uk>

Andy Thomas can be contacted at:

[info@vitalsignspublishing.co.uk](mailto:info@vitalsignspublishing.co.uk)