

# Crop circles are man-made

## Interview with Rod Dickinson, crop circle artist

On October 27 I spoke face to face for some three hours with Rod Dickinson, an Englishman known to belong to a tight fraternity of circle "artists," persons who deliberately create large formations in the grain fields in the dead of night, preferring anonymity yet laying claim to a large number of impressive crop glyphs found in England over the past ten or more years.

Despite the acknowledged activities of these "circle hoaxers" or "crop artists," there remains a widespread and fervent belief that the "real" crop circle phenomenon is somehow paranormal. Attempts to identify tell-tale signs of anomalous energies in the formations, tests which would separate fakes from truly paranormal events, have produced dubious results. The unanswered question remains: are ANY of the crop formations NOT made by humans? I wanted Rod Dickinson's answer to that question; and, particularly with respect to the famous Julia Sets, he responded with absolute confidence.



Fig. (i) A "Julia Set" crop circle

RD: "They were made by people. Definitely."

ML: "Do you know who?" I asked.

RD: "Yes."

ML: "Do you think they could be, um, enticed to identify themselves, perhaps to demonstrate to the press how they could do such a thing?"

RD: "I really doubt they'd be willing to come forward," Rod said, and he explained why. But let's return to that point later.

I pointed out that the Stonehenge Julia Set had evidently appeared in broad daylight, in a span of perhaps 45 minutes.



Fig (ii) The Stonehenge Julia Set.

Notice the work line left by the artists' feet and passing through the centre of each circle.

RD: "That isn't true," Rod insisted. "It was made the previous night, by three people, in about two and three-quarters hours, starting around 2:45 am (on Sunday morning, July 7). It was there all that day. When that doctor flew over, he just didn't see it the first time. That happens a lot. His report was wrong. He just didn't see it."

ML: "You mean, it sat there next to that highway all day, and no one saw it? Are you kidding?"

RD: "If you went there, you'd see how the field slopes down and away from the road. The formation was in a kind of bowl, below the level of the road. Going by in a car, you couldn't see it. You would

have to get out and walk toward it and look down into that bowl-shaped area to see it."

ML: "But there is a lot of air traffic in that area. Planes must have flown over it many times that day."

RD: "Sure, but lots of them just didn't see it, and the rest didn't think to report it, until that doctor reported it in the evening. I know this can happen, because I've made quite a few big formations and then waited for a day, even several days, before they're discovered."

ML: "OK, so you say that the Stonehenge Julia Set was created in less than three hours, in pitch darkness, by three people, and you know who they are..."

RD: "Yes"

ML: "Can you tell me how this was done? This wasn't a free-hand glyph. They must have had a diagram or something..."

RD: "Yes, they had a diagram."

ML: "It has a very precise geometry, following a Fibonacci series..."

RD: "Well, for the first three-quarters of its arc, it does follow a Fibonacci series,\* but the last quarter doesn't. It just becomes a circular arc."

That stopped me for a moment, because it was such a precise bit of information, so confidently delivered. Sensing my interest, he asked for a piece of paper from my note pad and drew a rough sketch.

RD: "Even if I didn't know who did this, I would have guessed it was made by people because of how they did it," he explained. "You start with the large central circle, which is placed right next to a tram line. People asked why it had the large central circle, which is a little out of place in a Julia Set. Simple. To avoid damaging surrounding crop, you have to have a large central area already layed down, from which you can measure out diameters to other parts of the formation. After making the first circle, they measured out a work line for the rest of the formation. This is how the spiral was made, drawing portions of the arc from different center points inside that first circle, using a tape measure." He continued making his sketch as he spoke. "You keep moving the center point around that first circle, and lengthen the tape for each new part of the arc. You make the work line by just stepping down the grain with your feet, just a thin line. All the centers of all the main circles in the formation are along that line."

I began to realize that he was describing a perfectly feasible way to create such a complex formation. Looking at a good photo of the Stonehenge Julia Set after our discussion, I could clearly see what appeared to be the work line along the spine of the formation. Why would a paranormal force -- or an alien -- need such a line? Still, even for seasoned circle makers, the Julia Sets would be a major challenge (if they're really man-made). But Rod assured me that he and the others had had plenty of practice.

RD: "I can definitely account for most of the major pictograms [in England] from 1991 on," he said.

"I myself made several dozen of them, although only a handful this year."

ML: "Do you think any of the large pictograms are anomalous?" I asked him.

RD: "I don't think so. Not since 1989, anyway, which is when I started observing the makers. I think all the big pictograms were made by people."

ML: "Crop circle researchers often observe that the crops are layered and laid down in alternating directions and so forth," I said. "How does that happen?"

RD: "These are just artifacts of the process," Rod answered. "If we're working from the center of a circle outward, for example, the crop splays out and tends to form spiral layers. It just happens that way."

ML: "What tools do you prefer? Rollers? Boards?"

RD: "We tried rollers for a while, but they're really a pain. Actually, the best circle making tool is a board about three feet long, with rope handles. Depending on how you angle it -- straight ahead or turned left or right, you can get the crop to go down in different ways. That impresses the researchers a lot."

ML: "Did the group that made the Stonehenge Julia Set also make the Triple Julia?"

RD: "Yes, same group."

ML: "What evidence could they show for that?" I asked.

RD: "Well, there is a diagram of the formation, which I've seen. That's about all."

I returned to the question of getting the "artists" who created the Julia Sets to come forward and demonstrate how they did it. After all, people like Colin Andrews have devoted years to studying crop formations, at great personal expense, in the belief that the formations represent something truly momentous. If these researchers are laboring under a false supposition -- if there is nothing anomalous here at all -- isn't it time to settle the matter?

ML: "If they came forward and made another one just like the Stonehenge Julia Set, what would it really prove?" Rod asked me. "Would it convince the believers that there are no real circles?"

ML: "All it would really prove," I said, "is that people CAN make even these extraordinary formations. That does not eliminate the possibility of something paranormal someplace else, but it would suggest that we have to be much more careful and rigorous before we label any of these formations anomalous."

RD: "There have been contests in England before. There have been prizes offered. It really doesn't do any good. It only leads to negativity," Rod argued. "Once you identify the artist, all the mystery and magic is gone. Before, you had something beautiful that inspires people; afterward you've just got disillusioned believers and artists in trouble. Nobody wins. Why should the artists come forward?"



Though Rod and I talked about this at length, he remained insistent that anonymity was not only in the interests of the circle makers but also served the public, who enjoyed the mystery as well as the beauty of the crop formations.

ML: "Do you really think the public is served when they are deceived?" I asked. "Many people would consider what you do just plain fraud."

RD: "No, it's not fraud at all," Rod insisted. "We aren't the ones who say, 'Look, these formations must be made by UFOs,' or whatever. We just make them, as pure art. Then other people, researchers and 'experts,' make up all kinds of stories and explanations. It's interesting to watch this happen, but we aren't doing it. None of the circle makers ever try to convince anyone that these formations are made by some unusual force. And when we actually tell people that we are making these formations, most people don't believe us anyway."

There was one more thing I wanted to know. "What about reports of strange energies and paranormal events in the crop formations. Have you ever seen lights or felt anything strange while you're out there?"

RD: "Yes, I have," Rod said. "And so have most of the other circle makers. On several occasions I've seen sudden flashes of light -- like a flashgun going off in your face. There's no apparent source or direction -- just a brilliant flash. I have no idea what it is."

Rod suggested that I visit the 'circlemakers' web site for further detail on the "art" and "artists" behind crop formations. I recommend the same to all interested readers.

As Rod himself said, even if he's telling the truth (and I think he is), this doesn't prove that all crop formations are human made. In fact, Rod mentioned that the two most (in)famous circle makers, Doug Bower and Dave Chorley, are both avid UFO enthusiasts. One of them (Rod couldn't remember which one) had visited Australia years ago and seen a "UFO nest," an apparently authentic UFO landing site in tall reeds that had left a mysterious bowl-shaped impression. Rod Dickinson says this experience was the original inspiration for Doug and Dave's nocturnal artwork in the fields of England.

RD: "Some of the simple circles could be the real thing," Rod said. "I really don't know."

A final caveat: CNI News takes no position on whether or not some of the large pictograms are authentically anomalous. However, we are deeply impressed by the apparent ingenuity of the circle makers. According to "The Circle Makers" web site, these "artists" sometimes even dows the fields they work in to make sure their formations are aligned with dowsable earth energies (dowsing rods are listed among the recommended equipment for circle making). "With a little practice," the web site declares, anyone can "produce genuine, dowsable, scientifically proven un-hoaxable circle patterns."

See <http://www.circlemakers.org>