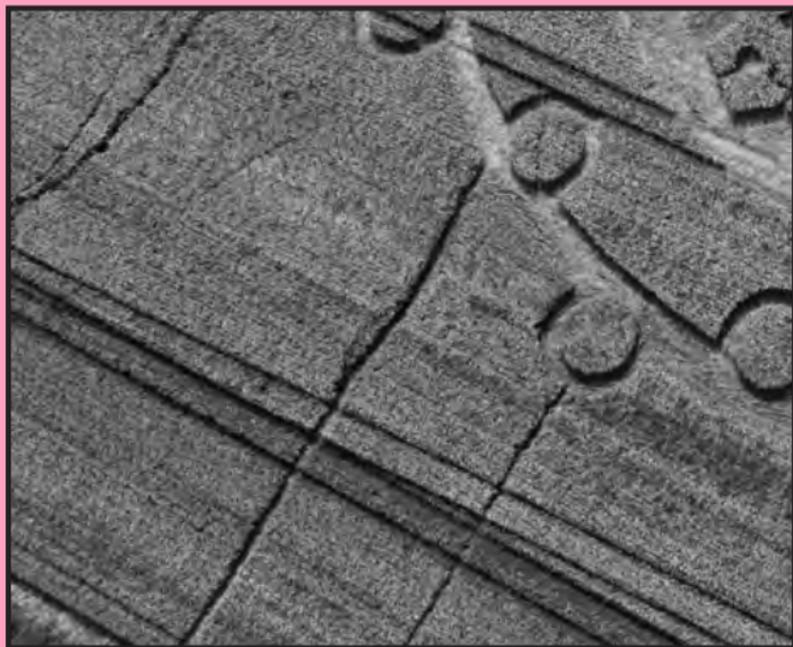


CROP CIRCLE ETIQUETTE



Guidelines for visiting formations

THE PINK BOOK

CROP CIRCLE ETIQUETTE

Guidelines for visiting formations

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INTRODUCTION

The crop circles have returned year on year in Southern England for over 25 years. For many, they are a beautiful and enigmatic mystery and, as a result, large numbers of people visit the English countryside each summer to see and experience the phenomenon at first-hand.

There has been a steady growth of visitors each season but in recent years the fields have been substantially busier. This increase in numbers is causing some alarm because it has become clear that many who do visit the fields have no idea of basic protocol. As a result, farmers' crops and the circles themselves are damaged and -

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inevitably – this has increased the farmers' anger towards the phenomenon.

This anger has resulted, over the last few seasons, in the impulsive destruction by farmers of some lovely crop circles. Some farmers faced with having their fields invaded with unthinking visitors, would rather cut the circles out. Of course we bemoan this but it is the result of the farmer's understandable frustration.

In response to all this, we are producing this little booklet to outline ways in which crop

CROP CIRCLE FACTOID

It has been suggested that crop circle tourism brings an annual revenue of about six million pounds into the area.

circle visitors might conduct themselves with consideration: for the farmers, for other visitors, for the crop circle phenomenon and - ultimately - for everyone.

These are astonishing events in unusual times. We might never completely calm the fears of the agricultural community but it can do no harm to make every effort.

CROP CIRCLE FACTOID

The largest single area of laid wheat in a crop circle was in the East Field, Alton Barnes seven-fold fractal of 9th July 1998. It was about 70,000 square feet or 6,503 square metres.

FIND THE FARMER & PAY THE FARMER

Every crop circle season farmers become furious. What we need to recognise is that it is not so much the formations in their fields that so irritate them, it is the inconsiderate visitors. It is us.

Put yourself for a moment in a farmer's shoes. The fields are his career and his livelihood. Often he is working the fields that his father and perhaps his grandfather worked before him. Sometimes he will have developed a profound affection for the piece of land which is his living and which carries so many layers of meaning for him.

Then suddenly, as the crop ripens, he

finds a crowd of people in his field. Of course he is angry. Of course he is resentful. How would you feel to find an uninvited crowd marching through your property?

We must pause and consider this fully.

We cannot expect the farmer to be as enchanted with the formations as we are. Most farmers are convinced that crop circles are entirely the result of vandalism and they have little time or inclination to ponder alternative possibilities.

While the crop circles are a gift for us, they are a curse for them. We have no automatic right to enter their fields and, if we do so without permission, we are trespassing. If there is an honesty box at the entrance to the field this is a sign of an implicit permission

on receipt of payment. The customary donation is £2 or £3 per person, but larger amounts will of course be welcomed.

If we are asked to leave by the farmer or his representative we must do so immediately and without question, discussion or argument.

CROP CIRCLE FACTOID

Some first-time visitors are surprised to discover that the crop is not cut out to make the shape. In fact, the individual plants are not damaged but are gently laid or swirled down horizontal to the ground. They will continue to ripen in this position. Phototropism, the tendency of the growing plant to seek light, causes some crop circles and particularly those in barley to grow out. Many barley formations will be virtually indistinguishable some weeks after their arrival.

CROP CIRCLE FACTOID

Several people claim to have witnessed a crop circle being formed but the most impressive documentation is a video taken at dawn on 11th August 1996 at Oliver's Castle. The video shows that, as two pairs of luminous spheres loop low over the field, the wheat appears to collapse into a star formation. Though many embraced this footage as an illuminating gift, others saw it as a blatant fraud. This was perhaps the most controversial episode in crop circle history and it has never been satisfactorily resolved.

CROWDING

There have been occasions in recent years where formations were so horribly crowded that it was obviously impossible for visitors to see or experience anything. They could only look outwards.

Once again, if you arrive to find that a formation is mobbed, we suggest that you go away and come back another time. These mindless gatherings damage crop circles and destroy the experience for future visitors.

Please have the patience and forbearance not to participate. Your experience of the circle will be greatly enhanced if you are able to visit it in relative calm and peace.

PARKING

Roads in crop circle land are neither freeways nor city thoroughfares. They tend to be narrow country roads which are often used by bulky agricultural vehicles.

It does not require much imagination to understand that there are no car parks here and that inconsiderate parking of vehicles can cause real disruption. Be sure your vehicle never blocks an access way, however unused it might seem at the moment.

If, when you arrive at a formation, you see a large group of vehicles, PLEASE contain your excitement, drive a few minutes away to a quieter spot and walk back. Your consideration is helpful and a

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walk in the countryside will be enjoyable. Better still, go away and come back another time when you will be more likely to enjoy the formation in a degree of peace.

Never take a vehicle into a field.

Do not leave valuables in your car, or leave anything on show in the interior. Thieves have deliberately targeted cars parked near crop circles.

CROP CIRCLE FACTOID

The number of territories where crop circles have appeared can never be definitively known but the best estimate is 56 countries.

TRAMLINES

You have found your circle, parked your car, put money in the honesty box and you are now about to enter. The tramline - the farmer's tractor line - is the only pathway ever to be used to walk through growing crop. Under any circumstances.

A field of growing crop is like rice paper. The Japanese calligrapher understood that his lightest brush stroke would be permanent and ineradicable - even if a mistake had been made. Likewise with the fields. Any track we make will stay, any stems we break will remain broken, any crop we crush down will bear the mark until the field is harvested.

Even if you walk into a field and find

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you have used the wrong tramline, do not cut across the standing crop. Please retrace your steps and select another tramline.

Above all, remember that the damage we bring to a crop formation will be our legacy to all subsequent visitors and photographers. It becomes both an unpleasant gift to those who follow us and a permanent reminder of our lack of respect for the formation and the farmer.

Unless you have explicit permission from the farmer, never remove any crop from a field. People have been known to take large scissors into formations, cut out central swirls or birds-nests and remove them as souvenirs. This is as inexcusable as using a razor in an art gallery to remove a particularly delightful piece of a painting. It is also theft.

We are privileged to receive the circles and even more so to be allowed access to them. Please leave them undamaged by your visit.

LITTER

Remember that, for many people, visiting a crop formation is an important and very personal experience. Please leave the formation as unspoiled as you would hope to find it.

Little will detract more from the quality of a visit than an empty can or bottle or a discarded food wrapper. Do not take any rubbish in with you. Above all, whether it was yours or not, please take out whatever litter you find when you leave.

DOGS

Animals are unpredictable. And there are many instances of dogs becoming ill in crop circles. Often, when they are taken in, they become over-excited and charge around causing damage.

It is best not take your dog, or any other animal, into a crop circle.

CROP CIRCLE FACTOID

Generally considered the longest formation ever, the Gypsy Patch, Etchilhampton event of 29th July 1996 was never measured but a car driven carefully along a track parallel to the formation registered 0.8 miles (4224 feet) on the mileometer.

SMOKING

There is a real and very serious risk of fire in a field of dry crop. To smoke in the field is selfish, inconsiderate and, above all, dangerous.

If your need for tobacco (or any other smokable) is truly overwhelming and uncontrollable, go back to the road outside the field. Matches, lighters and even cigarettes have no place in a crop circle and must be left outside. Please do not litter the countryside with cigarette butts; they are a hazard to wildlife.

CROP CIRCLE FACTOID

The gigantic Stonehenge formation appeared in the field opposite the monument during the hours of daylight on 7th July 1996. Stonehenge itself is elevated and offers clear views down to the field below but none of the guards who patrol the monument saw the crop circle until the late afternoon. Farm workers are sure that it had not been there in the morning. Most impressive of all, a pilot who regularly uses Stonehenge as a landmark for his approach to a nearby airfield stated that there was no formation there when he landed at about 4:00pm. It was there when he drove by in his car less than an hour later.

PRACTICALITIES

The majority of crop circle visitors are from urban areas. These might be the first fields you have ever visited. Some tips:

Gates. Always close gates after you if you have opened them to pass through. An open gate might have been left open by the farmer. This is a dilemma! Best to leave as you find them.

Camera Equipment. Cameras and video-cameras are a great way to record your crop circle experiences. However, you will have to carry your equipment both in and out. Bear in mind that you should be able to carry whatever you bring comfortably.

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Physical Fitness. Getting into the crop circles can often involve a lengthy and sustained walk, often on uneven ground - up hill and down dale! So, please consider this carefully if you are not in tip-top health.

Clothing. You really must use your wits here! You should be prepared for the British weather. A light waterproof jacket would be useful in case of rain. Conversely, if the weather is set hot and fair bring a sun hat and sun lotion. You will find no shade in the middle of a crop field! A good (and comfortable) pair of walking shoes is useful.

Toilets. It is obvious, but it needs to be stated: there are no public conveniences in a wheat field! Be prepared for this.

THANK THE FARMER

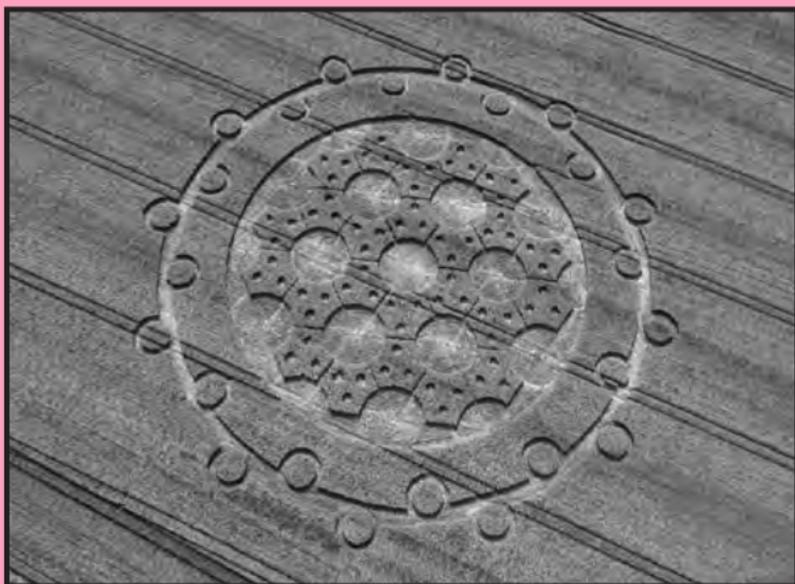
If you should meet the farmer, or a member of his staff, thank him. Remember we are there only with his permission. A little politeness and gratitude goes a long way.

CROP CIRCLE FACTOID

Many people insist that all crop circles are man-made. If this is true, we have witnessed, over the last quarter century, a spectacular crime wave which occurs predictably within a specific time period and in a known and limited area. This is the most observed and photographed area of agricultural land in the history of the world and yet only one individual has ever been charged.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Our overriding thoughts when visiting the fields should be respect for the land, the farmer's property and for the circles we are visiting. Please make every attempt to leave each formation as you find them and to be mindful of those who will come after you.



We have relied entirely on voluntary contributions for the printing and publication of this booklet. It is our intention to continue to distribute it without charge in the future.

Any support you can offer to this enterprise would be greatly appreciated. Please send contributions, however small, to:

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