

LITTER AND SOUVENIERS

Little will detract more from the quality of a visit to a circle than an empty can, a bottle or a discarded food wrapper. Please remove all rubbish from a circle before you leave.

While some may feel the urge to take away a souvenir from their visit, unless you have explicit permission from the farmer, never remove any crop from a field. Some people have taken scissors to nested centre swirls and other stems of crop. This is inexcusable; it is also theft.

Please do not leave any other items in the field or the circle. Do not bury items in the soil or leave stones, crystals, or any other objects in the formation. They can cause thousands of pounds worth of damage to farm machinery, during harvest or ploughing.

PETS

It is not recommended that you take your family pet into a crop circle. They can cause damage to the crop if allowed to run around and can quickly become overheated and dehydrated on a hot day. The crops are also often sprayed with pesticides that can be particularly harmful to pets.

SMOKING

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



GENERAL ADVICE

A good map of the areas you are visiting will be invaluable, preferably one with rights of way and public footpaths marked. You will also need a good pair of comfortable walking shoes. You may also need to be prepared for wet weather - a light waterproof jacket could be useful. Conversely, if the weather is set hot and fair consider bringing a sun hat and sun lotion, there is no shade in the middle of a crop field! An umbrella for rain protection, or to be used as a sunshade might be handy. We would also recommend carrying a bottle of drinking water. Please be aware that crop fields are often sprayed with pesticides several times a year. Please wash your hands after your visit and before handling anything else. Also make note of where the local public WCs are! Finally, please leave gates and property as you find them.

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A GUIDE TO VISITING CROP CIRCLES

Essential Crop Circle Etiquette



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 first-hand.

However, visitors are a concern for the farming community because it has become clear that many who do visit the fields have no idea of basic protocol. Inevitably this has led to some tension between the farmers and those who wish to visit the circles.

In response to this, members of the crop circle community have come together to produce this leaflet to outline the ways in which crop circle visitors can be mindful of the farming community and the countryside, whilst enjoying the crop circle phenomenon.



CONSIDER FARMERS

The crop fields, simply put, are a farmer's career and livelihood. Many will have been working the same land for several generations. Farming is a demanding profession with many challenges and the crop circles are often seen as an unwelcome disruption to agricultural life. Sometimes, the first a farmer knows he has a crop circle in his field is when he drives by and sees a large group of uninvited people in his field – so, of course, he's going to be angry. While the circles are a gift to us, they can be a curse for them. Crop circles damage the crop; it has been estimated that each crop circle costs the farmer between £500-£1000. We rely entirely on the goodwill of the farming community to access the crop circles so we need to do what we can to foster a respectful understanding with farmers if access is to continue.



ACCESSING THE CIRCLES

You will need the permission of the farmer to enter his field. Do not assume that permission is given when arriving at a circle. If there is a sign asking that you do not enter, as frustrating as that is, please respect it. There could be many reasons for farmers to deny access – your safety could be one.

If there is an Honesty Box at the entrance to the field this is a sign of implicit permission on receipt of payment. The customary donation is £5 per person, but larger amounts will of course be welcome as donations seldom compensate the farmer fully. Some farmers may ask family, friends or employees to collect donations in the field on their behalf. In 2013 there will be a new system in place for compensating farmers – the Crop Circle Access Pass. You can find out more about this online at www.cropcircleaccess.com

If you are unsure about whether the farmer is allowing access, do not enter until you are sure. If you are asked to leave a field by the farmer or his representatives please do so immediately and without question, discussion or argument.

CROWDING

There have been a number of occasions in recent years where formations got so horribly crowded it was impossible to enjoy the formation at all, for anyone. If you arrive at a crop circle to find it crowded, we suggest you come back later. Larger tour groups sometimes visit circles and trying to enjoy a circle with a group of 20-30 visitors already inside is far from ideal.

Mindless overcrowding in formations often leads to the circles being damaged by too many trampling feet, which spoils the experience for all who come after and causes the farmer further unnecessary losses. Your patience and forbearance will be much appreciated by subsequent visitors and your experience of the circle will be greatly enhanced if you are able to visit in relative calm and peace.

PARKING

Roads in rural England are neither freeways nor city thoroughfares. They tend to be narrow country roads that 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 and considerable danger to other motorists and pedestrians.

Be sure your vehicle never blocks an access way, or gate, however unused it may seem at the moment. If, when you arrive at a formation, you see a large group of vehicles, please drive to a quieter spot and walk back. Your consideration is helpful and a walk in the countryside will be enjoyable. Never take a vehicle into a field, even if it seems unplanted. Strips of land and whole fields can be set-aside for the promotion and protection of wildlife.

Do not leave any valuables in your car, or leave anything on show in the interior. Lock away belongings in your trunk, or better still take with you only that which you can carry. Thieves have deliberately targeted cars parked near to crop circles.

ACCESS & TRACTOR LINES

The tractor-line (often called a tramline) is the only pathway that should be used to walk through the field. Never walk through growing crop under any circumstances. Try to remember that any track or area of flattened crop we make while accessing or visiting the circles is completely indelible – you cannot return crop to its standing position once it has been flattened. Even if you walk into a field and find you have used the wrong tractor line, 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 is our legacy to all future visitors and those who wish to enjoy them from the air. It becomes both an unpleasant gift to those who follow us and is a permanent reminder of our lack of respect for the crop circle and the farmer.

