



# Newsletter July 2021

[www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk](http://www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk)

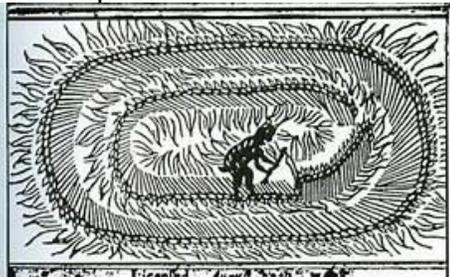


## 'The Crop Circle Mystery' talk by Andy Thomas

This talk was one of those that often boggled the mind! Andy is an author and lecturer on 'mysteries and histories' and his interest in crop circles goes back to the early 1990s.

He started by laying out some of the facts, history, theories and mysteries around this phenomenon and his points were very well illustrated with sometimes breath-taking photos of complex crop circle examples.

The first known recorded event was as far back as 1678 which was depicted in a woodcut showing a crop field with a flattened oval shape, in the process of being created by the devil. Of course, this was the way strange events were explained at the time.



In 1681, an explanation of an atmospheric event was the first known attempt at giving a scientific cause. Scattered reports of odd patterns appearing in crops continued over the following centuries.

In 1932, photos of crop circles started to appear in the press, although the term 'crop circle' was not created until the 1980s. Over the following decades, more of them appeared in the press and the early ones were all circles.

In the 1970s, crop circles began to appear regularly in the fields of southern England. They were made at night and over the years became more complex and bigger in scale. Research began with an unknown natural phenomenon or extra-terrestrials given as the explanation.



Some were convinced that their intricacy and the fact that the plants seemed to be bent but not broken, meant that a human could not have done it during one night, undetected.

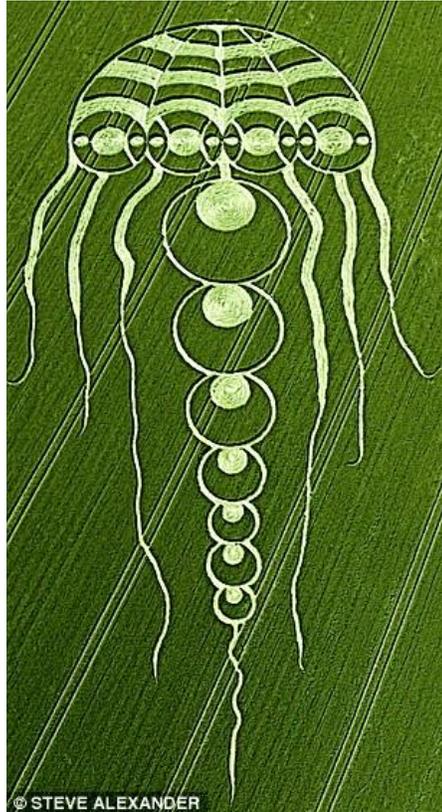
In 1991, two friends Doug Bower and Dave Chorley confessed to starting the modern phenomenon in the mid 1970s, using ropes and planks of wood. In the presence of reporters, they re-created one of their designs, aiming to prove it was all a hoax. They claimed to have created about 2000 circles and patterns over Wiltshire, Hampshire and Kent, during a 13-year period. Their revelation created a media sensation and Andy said that the media now show little interest.

## Things to note

1. Our next meeting is on the 5<sup>th</sup> July. A talk **about "Crop Circles" by Andy Thomas**. This will be held over Zoom.
2. **Trading Hut** – Now open Sundays from 11-12 noon. However watch out for the weekly emails confirming times.
3. **Member's articles**. See in newsletter for more details.
4. July photo competition will **???????????????** I will remind you all a week before.
5. July photo competition results are on the web and enclosed in this newsletter.

Crop circles did not cease to appear after this, however.

Over the years, they have evolved to become even more complex, involving fractals, complicated mathematical formulae, astronomical maps and even space code! They appear in all sorts of crops and even wild areas, in many countries of the world.



Andy showed a distribution map which linked the bulk of crop circles in the UK to the underlying chalk and aquifer belts in the south of the UK. Some people believe that there is something in the ground having an effect. Of course, Wiltshire is the home of Stonehenge and Avebury stone circles and the rolling downs of the south are dotted with burial mounds and single standing stones. Many believe that these ancient sites are connected by a network of 'leys' or paths of energy.

This 'Julia set' (right) appeared opposite Stonehenge in 1996, apparently in front of eye-witnesses.

It was during the 90s that Andy joined a research team but even after all these years, crop circles are still a mystery to him. He accepts that some are human made but not all because they are too complex to be created in one night, without detection. The stalks are bent, not broken which a human would do. Also some of them display intricate patterning caused by the differing directions of the lay of the stalks.



Surely not due to human intervention? He is open to theories and explained some of the ideas that are out there to explain them:

- Unusual meteorological events such as vortices, tornadoes, ball lightning, an electromagnetic burst
- Microwave energy
- Extra-terrestrials in UFOs: strange lights are sometimes seen flying over areas where crop circles appear. Andy has seen them and showed us a very short video clip. Some people think that the lights are a form of ball lightning. Are aliens acclimatising us to the idea that other life forms exist. Are they sending us messages?
- A cult
- An omen
- Satellites: who? why? the military? Does that make sense?
- Magnetic changes in the earth due to solar activity
- Something in the ground having an effect (aquifers/ leys?)
- They are portents of climatic or natural change
- Some say that it is possible for humans to interact with crop circles by using the mind. Are we part of the chain?
- Are they there to challenge us, to make us think?
- Divine intervention
- Drones: crop circles predate them! They are, however, great for recording them.

- Hedgehogs!!

More scientific research is needed.

You can find out more on his website: [www.truthagenda.org](http://www.truthagenda.org)

For a photographic catalogue of crop circles: [www.cropcircleconnector.com](http://www.cropcircleconnector.com)

I do recommend a look at this website for some stunning examples from recent years.

Photos and alien image courtesy of the Crop Connector.

How about you? What do you believe? For me, human creation has been the only proven method and I am sticking with that. However, thinking back to Andy's talk, maybe, just maybe .....

Julia Goodall Publicity Secretary

### **Fuchsia Gall Mite**

With their profusion of colour, they bring a tropical touch to our borders, but a pest from their native South America is threatening Britain's fuchsias.

The fuchsia gall mite, which disfigures the distinctive red and pink blooms, is now widespread in the South of England and, amid climate change, is being blown around the country by winds as far north as York.

The Royal Horticultural Society is so concerned by the pest's progress that it has banned specialist fuchsia nurseries from exhibiting at events in its gardens, such as Wisley near Woking in Surrey.

Fuchsia gall was first spotted here in a garden in Fareham, Hampshire, in 2007. Its arrival has been attributed to an enthusiast illegally importing cuttings. They cannot be controlled by pesticides.

The 0.25mm-long, sap-sucking mite, which causes leaves and shoot tips to swell and distort.



John Nicholass, secretary of the British Fuchsia Society said 'The natural movement of the mites is when the adults are ready to breed or laying eggs. They climb up to the top of the plant and they get carried off by the wind. The prevailing winds in this country are from the south and southwest, so it is naturally tending to blow up the country all the time.'

He added: 'Fuchsias are so popular as hardy plants to grow in the garden that a lot of people are unaware of the gall mite and do not recognise it.'

If you leave it without cutting out an affected area, it will infest the whole plant and it becomes a breeding centre for mites to grow in neighbouring gardens.'

It is hoped that the pests, which overwinter between the scales of buds, cannot survive temperatures as low as 5C (41F) but this is not yet proven. Cold winters in the North may kill them on hardy garden fuchsias but climate change is causing milder temperatures.

Once confirmed as fuchsia gall mite, gardeners should remove the infested material, which should be burnt.

## **Topical Tip –July 2021**

The mainly warm weather at the beginning of June encouraged the migration of the black bean aphid (*Aphis fabae*). A number of soft-leaved herbaceous crops have been affected in addition to the particularly susceptible broad bean.



Pinching the tops out of the broad bean plant can sometimes discourage the spread of the pest but in severe infestations, more drastic action is required, especially when the aphid attacks the developing stems of plants such as dahlias. (I know to my cost!)

If you prefer not to use inorganic synthetic pesticides, there are a couple of alternatives. If you catch the infestation quite early, a spray of SB Invigorator should do the trick. For a more severe infestation, try using a product based on pyrethrum. Pyrethrum is based on the extraction from a particular chrysanthemum and as such is a truly organic product. Products containing pyrethrum can be found in most Garden Centres.

One final tip. If using any pyrethrum-based spray, make sure you spray at dusk to achieve the best results. Pyrethrum is broken down rapidly in strong sunlight and is, therefore, much less effective.

Ian Gillott

## **July Photo Competition**



First

Stuart Slocombe (28 points)



Second  
Roland Cundy (27 points)



Third  
John Kerr (17 points)

### **Club Facebook Group**

Don't forget our Facebook group! It is a private group which means that only club members can join and post. You can join it at: [www.facebook.com/groups/207934410581605/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/207934410581605/)

You will need to first read and agree to the group guidelines. We really would like more members in this group to make it a lively forum. We are looking for gardening related posts and club news.

Julia Goodall Publicity Officer

## RHS card

Our club has a RHS Card.

It enables two people to gain entry to all RHS gardens throughout the country (this includes RHS Bridgewater from Sept).

Presentation of this card will give you and your friend a 30% discount on the entry fee.

From March, as a member of our club, you will be able to borrow it by contacting Chris Spinks (number at the end of newsletter) and arranging to pick it up.

## Free membership this year

**Big thank you** to all those members who decided to pay their £5 membership fee this year even though it is a free year. We, the committee, appreciate this demonstration of your support. I must also go further and say thank you to a few who have made voluntary donations on top of their subs. Very kind of you. If you would like to pay your voluntary subs at the Trading Hut then Stuart will be willing to take your details etc.

The clubs bank details are: Sort Code: 40-47-09, Account number: 71301608 (don't forget to give your name as the reference).

## Member's email



What a difference a day makes.  
Don't think this plant is going to like the British summer. Obviously does not like rain!!!!  
Not exactly "hardy"

From Mags Carver

## Member's email



### Abbotsbury Sub- Tropical Gardens

For those lucky enough to be holidaying in Dorset this summer, a visit to Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Gardens is a must.

Situated along the Jurassic coast and twenty minutes drive from Bridport, this garden is an absolute joy. Containing a wide variety of interesting, exotic and unusual plants, the gardens were described by Alan Titchmarsh as 'One of the best gardens he had ever visited.'

This was the second time my wife and I had visited the garden. Since our last visit a couple of years ago an addition to the garden has been a selection of wonderful sculptures, placed at strategic locations around the garden.

The sculptures have been created locally by five-star Chelsea winners Robert and James Workshop (website details below) and are based on the stories of Beatrix Potter and Lewis Carroll and are an absolute delight.

Cost of entry is £10. There is a restaurant (don't have the coffee – it is fiendishly expensive and not very nice!). There is an excellent plant centre

with high-quality plants which have been grown in the Abbotsbury garden - unlike so many Garden Centres who rely on plants delivered in a truck from Holland! [www.robertjamesworkshop.com](http://www.robertjamesworkshop.com)

Jill and Ian Gillott

## Monthly talks

**This is a call to all members:**

If you have any ideas/requests for the subjects of the monthly talks, please let us know. Either reply to this email or give Hermione a ring (number below).

## Member's email



Lynn Potts

Chairman: Dick Hawes 0118 979 3730	Hon. Treasurer: Peter Radband 07976 640989	Programmes: Hermione Lewis 0118 989 1671	Committee Member:
Deputy Chairman: Ian Gillott 0118 9892649	Trading Hut: Stuart Slocombe 0118 9734531	Membership: Jayne Male 07967639808	Co-opted Member: Marise Radband 01344 774310
Hon. Secretary: Chris Spinks 0118 978 1432	Show Secretaries: Daryl & Katie Phillips 07980 160169	Publicity: Julia Goodall	