

The Beginning



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Pat Delgado *photographing the second pictogram.*

A RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

In May 1990, Doug and Dave decided to create a crop pattern that no plasma vortex could ever make. The addition of straight lines would demonstrate that crop circles are not made by weather. The first linear “pictogram” duly appeared in a field of young wheat at Chilcomb, south of Cheesefoot Head. It consisted of two circles – one 40 ft in diameter, the other 10 ft – linked by an avenue of flattened crop. This was separated from

* THE WORD “PICTOGRAM” WAS ASSIGNED BY DELGADO, UNDER ADVICE FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM.
“AGRIGLYPH” WAS ALSO POPULAR.

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the smaller circle by a thin wall of standing wheat. Running parallel to the avenue, midway there were four narrow rectangles, or “boxes” – two on each side, neatly equidistant. These were each approximately four feet wide, about the length of the wooden planks the pair used – now one each – instead of the metal security bar they once shared. Halfway down the avenue it suddenly narrowed by half, at an imaginary intersection marking one end of the four boxes. The idea for this revolutionary advance in design had come to the pair as they leafed through one of Doug’s art books, a chapter on Russian Constructivism featuring the likes of Malevich, Lissitsky and Rodchenko, and specifically a work entitled “Young Woman” by George Ribemont-Dessaignes.

Doug and Dave followed this up with another, similar in design except that the larger of the two circles was surrounded by a ring, four feet wide. A few miles away, on another night they made a large ring surrounding a circle. Between the circle and the ring were four concentric arcs, symmetrically offset. It looked like a logo for an audio equipment manufacturer, or some kind of Chinese symbol – that was the thing about the pictograms; it was hard to tell what they were supposed to mean, if anything.

By now it was obvious to Doug and Dave that they were not the only ones making circles. Whilst their favoured stomping ground of Hampshire and the Wiltshire borders remained otherwise relatively untouched, for the past few years their patterns had been mirrored in the vast cereal fields surrounding Avebury and Silbury Hill, about 30 miles northwest of Cheesefoot Head. Their invention had taken on a life of its own.

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