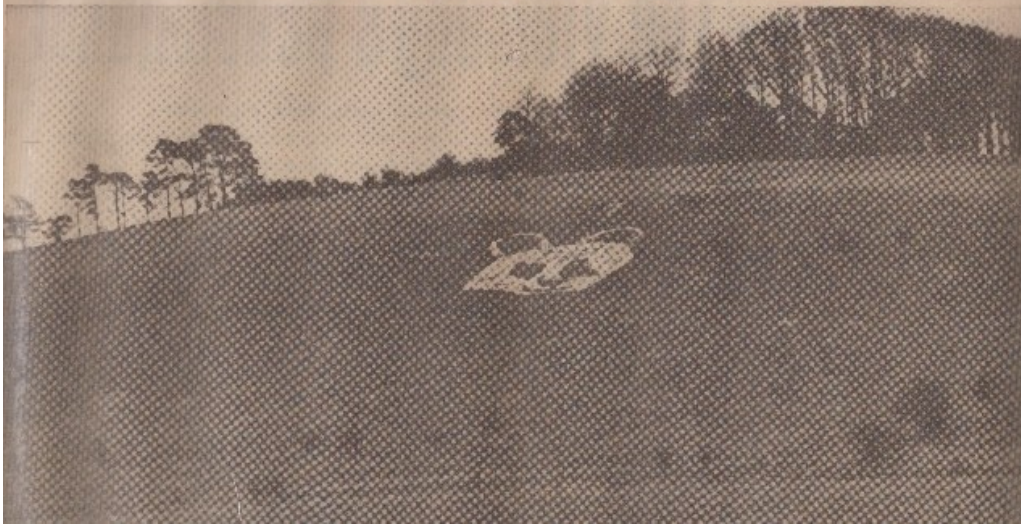


A new face on the Wiltshire Downs



The Mystery of the Laverstock Panda

In 1969 a group of Bangor students made the national headlines as part of RAG week.

The giant Panda was the RAG symbol "Pandemonium" of Bangor University. It was the idea of three friends David McCreddie, Bob Lord and John Coppock. John who knew the area near Salisbury suggested making a Panda in the chalk downs. The chosen spot was north of Laverstock on a 1 in 3 hill in near the A30 by St Thomas Bridge.

They had another 26 student volunteers and on Sunday 26th January at 6.30 pm they started marking out the shape with a ball of string, with the map of the image from Bob's computer.

A 55 foot outline was cut and the turf stripped away to expose the underlying chalk, all work being done in the dark. The pupils of the Panda's eyes were 6 feet in diameter. Also marked on the ground were the letters UCNW. (University College of North Wales) By 6.30 am it was all finished.

The team headed back to Bangor covered in chalk and mud. But arrived back to find the University swarming with police. They had found a wallet near the scene with a UCNW student card in it.

They were now worried when they found out they had dug the field that belonged to Sir Richard Hunt.

The news that night proclaimed that they were terrible students and were trespassing with intent. But that was not the opinion of Sir Richard, he thought it was marvellous, saying that if only he could find farm labourers that could work that hard overnight on a 1 in 3 hill he would be a richer man!

Extracts from an article in the Times published here with permission from Bangor University.