

SOIL REPORT ON DARK COLOURED "BRICKEARTH" AT SIPSON LANE,HARLINGTON, MIDDLESEX

During 1979 excavations have been carried out at Sipson Lane by the West London Archaeological Field Group (Field Officer, J. Cotton), where Roman field systems can be traced in the "brickearth" subsoil. In many cases, the reddish brown (5YR4/4) colours of the soil tend to mask ditch infills, which are often only recognisable by having less well formed prismatic structures, but more manganese staining than in the "natural".

A dark area within the "brickearth" was unconnected with either the present day topsoil or, seemingly, with any pit feature as such. In fact, the very dark grey (5YR3/1) soil has similar structure and porosity as the rest of the "brickearth", and almost appears as a "stain" diffusing into the surrounding soil. The analysis of alkali soluble humus showed far more humic material in the "fill" compared with the surrounding soil (see below). The soil itself has an organic matter content common to lower B or C horizons. An explanation suggested by the excavator is that perhaps organic matter from an overlying manure heap has seeped down and stained the soil.

<u>Data</u>	<u>Milligrammes alk. sol. humus/100 gms. dry soil</u>
Soil	14.5
"Fill"	172.0

Richard Macphail

30th January 1980