

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 239/87

SOIL REPORT ON EATON CAMP, EATON
BISHOP, HEREFORDSHIRE.

R I Macphail BSc MSc PhD

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Summary

The buried Iron Age soil at Eaton Bishop is probably a typical argillic brown earth. Location of samples from the site are shown, and their long term stability is stated.

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In April 1985 a section through the rampart of the Iron Age Camp at Eaton Bishop was excavated (Central Excavation Unit) exposing a small area of buried soil. The site is a promontory camp on the edge of an incised meander of the river Wye, another side being protected by the valley of a small tributary of the river Wye. Local parent materials are reddish silty shales, siltstones and sandstones - local soils being mapped as typical Argillic Brown Earths (Bromyard Association; Raggs et al 1983).

The soil profile (see description) seemed to be that of a moderately truncated typical argillic Brown Earth, possibly occupation (charcoal rich) "top soil" being used in rampart construction.

The excavation was very limited in area and, in view of the small amount of associated environmental information and the present lack of relevant research questions into the environment of the Devonian area, it was decided not to undertake analysis in the immediate future. However, bulk soil samples were taken from the bEb, bBtg and bBtg horizons and these should remain moderately stable, whereas the undisturbed samples from charcoal soil dump (context 37) in the rampart, and the buried soil (see sketch) which have been impregnated should be stable indefinitely. This report represents the results of observations on site.

Ref.

Raggs, J M, Beard G R, Hollis J M, Jones J A, Palmer R C, Reeve M J and Whitfield W A D 1983. Soils of England and Wales; Sheet 3, Midlands and Western England. Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

Soil Profile Description : Eaton Bishop

Profile 1. Slope 5-20° North, on incised river meander. Site mainly shedding. Parent Material Devonian reddish silty shale, siltstone and sandstone. Soil Type Typical argillic brown earth (Bromyard Association; Ragg et al 1983).

Horizon, depth cm.

Rampart 0-166	Includes at 143-147cm a red (10R 4/8) clay dump with weak red (10R 4/4) clay containing much charcoal, mixed soil to 155cm, and stoney dump to 166cm. Gleyed weak red (10R 4/2) areas; charcoal bands, burned bone present.
bEbg(?) 166-182	Reddish brown (5 YR 5/3) moderately weak sandy clay with weak, soft yellowish red (5 YR 5/6) iron pan at c.169-170cm, many weak medium mottles; coarse blocky becoming prismatic; few medium stones; very low porosity; very poorly humose; minor mixing with B horizon; few clay coatings, charcoal present; clear, irregular boundary.
bBtg 182-193	Red (2.5 YR 4/6) moderately weak clay loam with common diffuse medium mottles; coarse prisms; few medium and coarse stones; very low porosity; very poorly humose; few clay coatings and charcoal; gradual irregular boundary.
bBtg2 193-215+	Dark reddish brown (2.5 YR 3/4) moderately weak clay loam with common diffuse medium mottles; coarse prisms; frequent very small, medium and large stones; few clay coatings.

SOIL SAMPLE LOCATION: EATON CAMP

soil, charcoal and bone dump (37)		1	
Rampart			

Buried		2	164cm
Soil	bEb		172cm
			x
	bBtg	3	180cm
			189cm
			x