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AMR Report
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SHAUGH MOOR, DARTMOOR.

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The problem concerned the interpretation of a dark soil horizon found within a soil profile at Shaugh Moor. From the viewpoint of environmental archaeology, it is important to ascertain whether the horizon represents a buried Ah horizon or the Bh horizon of a podzolic soil. A thin section was taken of the sample and it was examined at the Institute of Archaeology and Kingston Polytechnic.

OBSERVATIONS.

- a). The sample consists almost entirely of amorphous organic matter with few mineral grains. This suggests a buried Ah horizon. A Bh horizon would contain substantial amounts of mineral matter which was present prior to any illuviation.
- b). The thin section shows a pale to dark brown pelley structure. These pellets are finer, less dense and paler than those typical of a Bh horizon.
- c). The mineral grains appear bleached and there is no evidence of illuviation (i.e. clay skins or mineral coatings). The bleaching indicates eluviation, that is, downward removal of fine material from the horizon.

SUMMARY.

The presence of bleached mineral grains in an organic rich matrix indicates that the sample represents an Ah horizon. The form of the

pellets would support this.

The sample thus represents a buried Ah horizon of a former ground-surface.