Soil Survey is one of the most individual of the sciences. Even when mapping to the same legend and in comparable terrain two surveyors may use surprisingly different procedures (which are not always conscious) to decide where to examine the soil by spade or auger, and to locate the boundaries between mapping units. This is one of the attractions of the job, that it still remains an art—admittedly tempered by science—where personal flair and experience are obviously important and are valued as such.

Having said this, it is then remarkable how uniform the work of an individual surveyor is.

Recently we have been cooperating with a soil surveyor mapping the Vale of the White Horse in Berkshire—notable as the birthplace of the King Alfred who first tried to make English literate in English (and thus has a lot to answer for) and the site of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell and the cherry orchards on the Harwell series. The area contains scarp and cuesta country, and lowlands covered by a nasty mixture of in situ clay and alluvium, and solifluction sludges and gravels, all rather difficult.

What struck us—perhaps more strongly than it would have hit more experienced surveyors—was the way in which the surveyor, without thinking about it, adjusted his rate of working and the frequency of his soil observations to the local intricacy of the soil pattern, which itself varied considerably from point to point. The amount of ground he covered and the number of soil observations each day, varied considerably from one day to another: the length of boundary which he mapped