

# FARMING ON THE EDGE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE CLAY UPLANDS WEST OF CAMBRIDGE

BY JOE ABRAMS AND DAVID INGHAM

ISBN 978 0 9556546 0 2; 130pp; 86 illustrations; specialist reports on CD

## SUMMARY

A series of excavations along the A428 west of Cambridge has provided an insight into the changing use of this ridgeway. Its exposed location on heavy clay soils has made it unfavourable for settlement, except during the Iron Age and Roman period, when a number of farmsteads were established. At this time, a network of drove-ways criss-crossed the area, linking the farmsteads and a number of livestock enclosures.

Four farmsteads were identified, all likely to have followed a mixed pastoral/arable regime, although little ecofactual evidence for arable cultivation was recovered. However, an extensive area of early Roman fields, probably used for arable farming, was identified between Ermine Street and Childerley Gate. These fields systems are notable for their alignment with Ermine Street, contrary to the predominantly NE/SW alignment of the main topographic features in this area. They may indicate that, in the Roman period, the landscape was being structured at more than a purely local level.

The largest of the farmsteads, at Childerley Gate, may have belonged to an imperial estate, with the regularity of its initial layout suggesting that it was planned. Substantially reorganised at the beginning of the 4th century, it may have changed hands, perhaps becoming a veteran settlement. Occupation possibly continued into the 5th century.

- RRP £25; available from:

East Anglian Archaeology  
<http://www.eaareports.demon.co.uk/>

Amazon  
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/>

Waterstones  
<http://www.waterstones.com/>

Blackwells  
<http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk/>

Countrybookshop  
<http://www.countrybookshop.co.uk/>

And from all other good bookshops.

Search for title, author or ISBN  
**9780955654602**

