



farthings. This suggests that the issuer assumed that his customers would recognise the token as a farthing from its size. Additional evidence to support this contention is supplied by several halfpenny size tokens which describe themselves as "double tokens";

HIS DOUBLE TOKEN FOR A $\frac{1}{2}$ d
—EDWARD BELITHA GROCER

AT ST KATHERN STAIRES
—(two sugar loaves 1669)

(This is the conventional method of describing seventeenth century tokens. Each line indicates the inscription on one side, the first part appearing around the edge of the piece and the second part the inscription or design in the
(Continued on page 22)

ROMAN ROAD RESEARCH - 1

By GEOFFREY R. GILLAM

The Roman road known as Ermine Street emerged from London by Bishopsgate and, passing to the west of Curcinate (Braughing), the next Roman town 28 miles away, provided a direct route to Lincoln and the northern part of the country. From London, the course of the road was almost due-north along the high ground on the western side of the Lea Valley¹. It crossed the river at Ware and after a few miles a series of short alignments brought the road down a shallow valley to the site of Curcinate².

Details of the construction of the road were first noted in 1952 when a trench was dug across the line at Ware³. It was a large agger 65ft. wide and about 2ft. high between shallow ditches and consisted of two mounds of gravel each about 20ft. wide, representing side-tracks with a hard central roadway about 24ft. wide. The road had to cross very soft ground on the flood plain of the Lea at this point and the raft-like construction was necessary to prevent it foundering in the underlying peat.

Road 24ft. wide

A further opportunity to examine the road came in 1956 during redevelopment work at Snells Park, Edmonton⁴. A drainage trench revealed a cambered gravel road about 20ft. wide and 3 ft. thick bounded by small ditches each about 2ft. wide. The section was not long enough to establish if side-tracks had existed beyond the ditches.

Following this discovery, the alignment through Edmonton and Enfield was examined when sections were dug at several points in unsuccessful attempts to locate further traces of the road⁵: the suspected agger on the eastern side of Pymmes Park, Edmonton⁶ was found to be a medieval boundary bank.

In 1960 and again in 1961, the roads near Braughing were investigated during the course

The London-Braughing section of Ermine Street

of which a section was dug through Ermine Street about 400 yards south of the Roman town⁷. Two small ditches 40 feet apart were found with a thin layer of pebbles covered with black silt between them. This pebble road was buried beneath an agger 40ft. wide and 3ft. thick which had been resurfaced at least three times, on the first of these was found a brooch of pre-Flavian, or even earlier, date. There were no side tracks in this section.

The latest examination of this part of the road has been at Cheshunt, a few yards north-west of the site of Cheshunt Great House, where excavations were carried out in 1966⁸. Although the road had been considerably eroded, enough remained to show that it was originally 24ft. wide and 3ft. thick with a cambered surface and

bounded by at least one ditch. Again, there were no traces of side-tracks.

Sites producing evidence of occupation throughout the Romano-British period equidistant between London and Braughing, at Ware and at Enfield, indicate the positions of posting stations for use by the Imperial Post⁹.

The initial construction of Ermine Street can, on the grounds of general probability and supported by the evidence from the Braughing excavation, be assigned to the early years of the occupation. It has been established that the road was of gravel, a suitable and local material, and was 20-25ft. wide.

Specially constructed side-tracks are only known at Ware, but the nature of the subsoil here demanded a different method of construction and cannot, therefore, be taken as typical of the road in the area under review. In open country, with a firm subsoil, the verges of the road would have served as tracks for pedestrians and horses.

REFERENCES

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4. G. R. Gillam, *Bulletin No. 3*, December 1959, Enfield Archaeologist Society. *The Archaeologist in Essex, Hertfordshire, London and Middlesex* (1959) Issued by Regional Group 10 of the Council for British Archaeology.
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