Many people would have watched archaeological programmes such as Time Team and wondered what it would be like to dig up the past. And now a lucky group of residents in a Broadland village can help unearth their community's rich and varied past by opening up their gardens to a top archaeologist.

Carenza Lewis, who has appeared in Channel Four's Time Team, is asking for at least a dozen householders in Acle to allow their backyards to be excavated this summer.

It is hoped the Cambridge University-run history project will find further evidence of Acle's past life, from Bronze Age man to Roman settlers.

And Ms Lewis's appearance in the village will not be the only high profile visit this summer by an eminent relic hunter, as archaeologist Julian Richards, of Meet the Ancestors fame, will be inspecting Roman remains dug up by Acle High School pupils.

Last year, a dig at Springfield unearthed primitive arrowheads and 242 shards of Roman pottery.

Most of the finds date from 200AD to 300AD.

It is hoped that even more ancient artefacts can be found in people's gardens to support the growing theory that Acle was the site of a prominent Roman farm on the long vanished Garijenis estuary.

In June, volunteers from local schools and the village will spend two days digging one-metre pits in gardens and will then analyse any finds under the watchful eye of Ms Lewis. She will be helped by local historian Brian Grint who has already identified some prime sites for exploration - if people are willing to let their gardens be dug up.

He said: "The Brighton Road area would be really good. It is an open field area and the houses have been there less than 100 years.

"I think the gardens there would be quite revealing. There is no telling what we might find."

Anyone who wants to take part in the Cambridge University Higher Education Field Academies project should call Mr Grint on 01493 750039. Julian Richards will be giving a talk at Acle High school on July 9 before he joins pupils on the Springfield dig the next day.