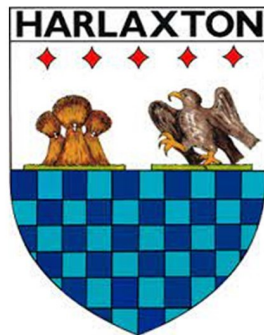




# Finding the Lost Manors of Harlaxton

**A National Lottery Heritage Fund project**

**Project Report  
Prepared by**



*History Society*

**April 2026**

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## Executive summary

In early 2024 the Committee of Harlaxton History Society decided to initiate a research project to explore the history of the old manorial site on the South of the village which can still be clearly made out, both from aerial photographs or maps and on the ground.

In 2025 the Harlaxton History Society applied for and were granted support from the National Lottery Heritage fund to continue the project with a thorough geophysical survey of the whole site followed in September by a month of targeted excavation and non-intrusive survey work to document evidence of the Lost Manor Houses across the site.

This Community led archaeology project under the auspices of the Harlaxton History Society successfully recruited more than 50 volunteers and pulled together a number of experts offering pro bono services whilst maximising the outcomes by stretching the Lottery Heritage Fund grant as far as possible through judicious purchasing of goods and services.

The main research aims of this project were fourfold.

1. To produce a comprehensive record of human activity in relation to the old Manors of Harlaxton to preserve and interpret an important aspect of Harlaxton's history for the benefit of people in the village.
2. To establish if the Jacobean Manor house was remodelled from the Tudor manor house or a new build and the same for the Tudor manor house.
3. Identify and record physical evidence of the medieval manor house and associated buildings and earthworks (including the moat and worked stone on the site)
4. To understand how the old manors relate to the wider landscape around them including ridge and furrow in fields, the church, etc etc.

Through excavation and non-intrusive survey work, evidence was collected supporting all four of these aims along with hard evidence confirming the historical record of manorial occupation of the site.

The remains of three previous phases of manorial buildings were identified and further examination of the stonework uncovered is expected to allow more precise dating of the many features recorded by the project for the first time.

In addition to revealing artifacts from over 600 years of manorial occupation of the site, the project also shared its findings with the local community helping it develop a sense of place and heritage.

Two local schools were able to visit the dig whilst it was in progress and use it as a learning opportunity with the help of teaching materials developed by the project. Furthermore a lasting record of the project in the form of an interpretive panel outside the site now stands as testimony to the work undertaken.

There were eight approved purposes attached to the grant.

1. Evaluate the project in line with national Lottery Heritage Fund guidance
2. Record Site finds as appropriate and produce a written report on the dig and findings
3. Undertake an archaeological excavation of the site involving 20 volunteers, including college and school students
4. Develop and deliver interpretive materials and public lectures
5. Conduct a geophysical survey of the manorial complex in Harlaxton using ground penetrating radar
6. Develop and distribute teaching support materials for local schools
7. Provide high visibility acknowledgement of the National Lottery heritage Fund on site, on line and in all activities as well as using your project to acknowledge and thank National Lottery players
8. Take proactive measures to be inclusive, remove barriers to access and reach new and diverse audiences through the delivery of the project.

All eight were achieved and where numerical metrics were applied were surpassed.

Over the course of the excavation 55 “external” volunteers aged between seven and 90 were involved (i.e. not including the 11 members of the HHS Committee who add another 102 days). This equates to 161 volunteer days over the course of the excavation worth £27,202.56 at min wage. A further 714 hours were invested in the project by Harlaxton History Society Committee members during the dig phase alone this was worth an additional £15,079.68 at min wage. Over the course of the whole project however they have volunteered many more hours.

Of the 55 “external” volunteers, 14 were local to Harlaxton or surrounding villages, three volunteers came from the USA, one volunteer travelled down twice from Scotland, with the remainder drawn from the Lincs/Notts area (though even within this cohort there was a French volunteer a Spanish national and someone from Poland). To our great delight many of these volunteers returned in early 2026 to assist with the cleaning of finds. Overall 72% of the volunteers were totally new to archaeology.

On the financial aspect of the project it can be reported that the funding led to a far greater level of monetary leverage than had been anticipated and overall the project came in £1,977 under budget.

Two of the suppliers of services (the educationalist who developed the schools pack, and the geophysics supplier) invoiced for less than the quoted price, citing a desire to contribute to a Community organisation. Cumulatively this led to a saving of £2,684 on the expected spend.

A further significant unaccounted aspect of the budget overall was the contribution of pro-bono support in terms of equipment loan and the pro-bono support supplied by the project’s experts. This is estimated to have been worth £16,650.

Overall the project has been a great success with lasting and transformative effects on the Harlaxton History Society. Volunteer members have acquired new skills and knowledge and this is already being turned to possible new projects and it proved to be a matter of great interest in the village with 77 visitors viewing the work over its duration, almost 10% of the village population.

In the aftermath there is still much to follow up in the search for the Lost manors of Harlaxton. Whilst there are some clear informational gains there is a great deal of detailed finds conservation and recording to be undertaken and, as is the way with most archaeological projects, the discoveries of 2025 have raised as many questions as they have answered.

The Harlaxton History Society plans to continue with its community focussed activities sharing both the workload and outcomes with the immediate community of the village, whose heritage this is, and the wider community of Lincolnshire interested in the history of the County.



*The Volunteers involved in the last day of the excavation in September 2025*

## Some key project statistics

**8** Days of community archaeology facilitated

**4** Archaeological trenches dug, plus a further **5** surface surveys completed

**500 +** Finds cleaned, photographed and catalogued

**200 +** Pieces of decorative stonework identified, photographed and recorded

**65** Volunteers involved in excavation and survey work of whom **40** were totally new to archaeology

**£42,282** Total equivalent value of volunteer time at min national wage

**£16,650** Value of goods, services and expert archaeological support provided at no cost

**53** Number of school children on two local school site visits

**32,814** Cumulative reach of **56** social media posts during the excavation

**77** Local people engaged with their heritage through visits to the excavations

**£1,977** Total budget underspend at end of Lottery Funding period

## Acknowledgements

The Members of Harlaxton History society are indebted to the following for generous support.



### The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Harlaxton History Society is indebted to The national Lottery Heritage Fund and everyone who plays the National Lottery for the generous grant of £12,100 which made this project possible.

The History society could not have afforded the essential geophysical survey which allowed subsequent excavation and survey work from its own meagre funds and the involvement of so many volunteers in September was entirely made possible by this financial support.

### Harlaxton parish Council

Throughout the project the Parish Council were most supportive. In particular they freely loaned the group a hidden cable detector to check the areas to be excavated and a plate whacker used in refilling the trenches. The Chair of the Parish Council also generously generated some drone footage of the excavations and assisted in applying for planning permission for the information panel.

### Individuals we wish to express our heartfelt thanks to:

**Professor Abi Hunt** PhD PFHEA AMA, Professor of Practice and Director of MSc Programmes at Nottingham University Business School/Faculty of Social Sciences for site management, guidance and training throughout.

**Richard Tyndall** a geologist with a passion for archaeology who runs a significant Roman excavation in Ancaster for site management and support including the free loan of equipment.

**Kymerly Jones**—Archaeological finds expert who gave her time freely to the project to help sort and identify significant finds.

**Dr James Wright FSA**—Buildings Archaeologist Triskele Heritage for analysis of the stonework associated with the site.

**Chris and Claire Casswell of Reclaim Heritage** for the initial pro rata Geophysical survey in 2024 and for the GPR survey in 2025

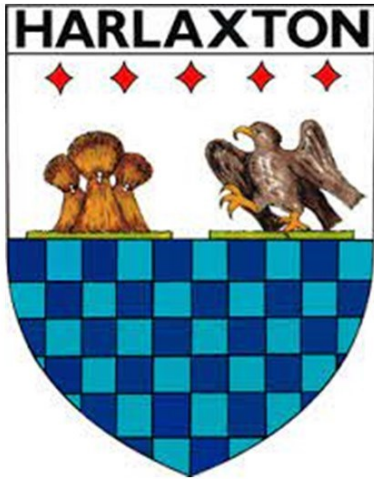
**Dr. Derwin Gregory** of Bishop Grosseteste University for the free loan of the ground penetrating Radar equipment in 2024.

We are also indebted to the many **volunteers** who joined us through September 2025 helping with the excavation of the site, researching surface features such as cut stone and generally offering support and assistance.

We would also like to thank **Harlaxton Church** for giving permission for the use of the Church Car Park for volunteers and as a site for our comfort facilities.

Finally, and most importantly, a huge thank you goes out to all of the **property owners especially Ken and Wendy Whitton at No1 Rectory Lane and Cherry and Mike Moskalik at No3**, who have patiently allowed us to walk around digging up and measuring their beautiful gardens. Without their patience and forbearance none of this could have happened.

## Introduction and Background



### History Society

Harlaxton History Society was formed in 2022 by a group of villagers interested in finding out more about the history of their community, the area in which it sits and to share what they found more widely.

It was established with the following four aims:

- To promote interest in and understanding of the History of Harlaxton Parish and it's surrounding area.
- To facilitate the collection, preservation and research of historical information or items relating to the History of Harlaxton Parish and it's surrounding area.
- To hold open events to encourage community engagement and discussion about the History of Harlaxton Parish and its surrounding area amongst the village community.
- To raise funds in pursuance of the aims set out above.

The Society has around 40 members and connects with the wider community through its commitment to sharing the historical material it finds through its various projects. Previously this has included displays at village events and undertaking research on behalf of parishioners or people with family connections to Harlaxton and production of documents such as the "Monarchs of England and Harlaxton" leaflet to mark the King's Coronation.

The Society is run on a purely voluntary basis, with a committee of eight to ten members taking responsibility for day to day decision making and coordinating activity on behalf of the group.

It meets on a monthly basis, usually on the second Wednesday of the month in the village hall in Harlaxton. These meetings usually take the form of a presentation or demonstration by an expert in an aspect of history associated with the village or Lincolnshire.

In it's first year speakers have given presentations on topics as diverse as The Roman "salt road", which runs through the parish, Neolithic flint napping, The Machine Gun Corps in the First World War and Women in rural societies. Members also go on visits and undertake first hand research which is then shared back.

Projects undertaken since it's inception have included the "*Streets through Time*" project, an ongoing social history focussed on the village's oldest properties, an in-depth study to record the men lost from the village in WW1 and an ongoing project recording the ancient village boundary.

From an archaeological perspective , the Society has been fortunate to have Harlaxton College, the study abroad centre for the University of Evansville in the US within the community. In 2022 they conducted a course involving an archaeological dig just outside the village which found evidence of prehistoric settlement.

The "*Lost Manors of Harlaxton*" project was the first integrated historical and archaeological project to be undertaken by the Society on its own.

All of this work is featured on the Society's Facebook Page which has just under 650 members (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/www.harlaxtonhistory.co.uk>) and an extensive web site ([www.harlaxtonhistory.co.uk](http://www.harlaxtonhistory.co.uk)) , which was awarded the Library Services Trust's Alan Ball Award for best Local History E-publication 2023.

## Historical background and Harlaxton village

**Harlaxton is a small village located five Kilometres West of Grantham in South West Lincolnshire close to its borders with Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire.**

Early development archaeological evidence indicates that there is a long history of settlement around the village with the remains of Neolithic axes, arrow heads and sherds of Bronze Age pottery and blades having been found along with traces of a prehistoric ritual landscape to the east of the village on the north side of the road into Grantham.



There is evidence in the area of Roman settlement outside the village, with a villa having been discovered in the mid 20th century as well as a farmstead and there are faint remains of a Roman defensive or boundary ditch in the heart of the village and a Roman urn containing burnt bones and coins was found in 1740.

But it is thought that the village mainly grew from an Anglo Saxon settlement that was taken over and partially renamed by the Danes. The name Harlaxton is a derivation of the Old Norse personal name “Hiorleifr” and the Old English “tun” meaning farmstead or village – so, Hioreifr’s Farmstead.

The Domesday Book after the Norman Conquest shows how the village had grown, recording it as “Herlavestune”.

At the time of that first census the village is recorded as belonging to the King and is recorded as having a population of “10 villeins who were free peasants, 2 bordars and 58 sokemen who were serfs tied to the land, together with 2 mills, 60 acres of meadow and 60 acres of thicket”. It was at the time in the top 20% of settlements by size in England.

There are the remains of a market cross in the middle of the village and ridge and furrow earthworks to the north of the parish church all of which bear testament to a thriving agricultural community in the middle ages and Tudor period.

As with all English villages the Church has played an important role historically. The parish church of St Peter and St Paul was founded in 1187 and is late Norman to Perpendicular in style. Remnants of late 12th century masonry survive in the north arcade of the nave. The church has 13th and 15th century additions, including the 14th century tower. Like many Medieval churches it was extensively restored by the Victorians.

As a former estate village, its historical development is intrinsically linked with Harlaxton Manor. Which itself dates back to the Norman conquest of 1066

A 14th century Tudor manor house and moated manorial complex is recorded as having stood on the south side of Rectory Lane and was reputedly used by John O Gaunt, son of King Edward III, as a hunting lodge. This medieval manorial complex is thought to have been later made into a Tudor manor House with gardens by the Bluet Family who, in 1619 sold the title and manorial estate to a Flemish Cloth Merchant escaping the religious wars in Europe, Daniel de Ligne.

It is likely it was a member of this family who built a new Jacobean style manor house on the site. This manor remained in their ownership until 1738 when the title and land passed to the Gregory family.

In 1822 Gregory Gregory inherited the title and manorial estate. Between 1832 and 1848 he had a new, palatial, manor house constructed on a “greenfield site” to the east of the village. This last Harlaxton Manor now sits as a significant feature in the landscape.

The Jacobean manor house was unoccupied from the 1700s and fell into disrepair and was eventually demolished

around 1857 by the Lord of the manor John Sherwin Gregory . Little remains, but there are clues as to the houses that originally sat at the centre of village life. The late 16th century gateway, 150 yards south-south-east of the church, remains as does part of the original moat. The Ordnance Survey 1824 map shows the moat complete except for a building, presumably the manor house, occupying the north-east corner at SK 8834 3241.

In 1937 the remains of the ruins were cleared and a new house built on or near the foundations using the old stone. The rest of the foundations were incorporated into garden landscaping or used as footings for outbuildings except for one stretch of old wall (containing an original window) which remains and blocks off the north end of the moat. The surviving gateway and boundary wall of the old manor house are listed as a single listed building (PRN37969).

The buildings within Harlaxton village more widely have an idiosyncratic quality with a considerable contribution made by the various Lords of the manor . Their treatment of the settlement as a “model village” is probably why , other than the Church and village cross, there is little evidence of any earlier buildings. These Lords of the Manor, George de Ligne Gregory between 1738 and 1790, his son, George de Ligne Gregory between 1790 and 1820, Gregory Gregory (1822-1854) , John Sherwin Gregory (1860 – 1869) and his wife Catherine Gregory 1869-1892 gave a distinctive character to the village which is now a designated conservation area.

The Victorian era saw the industrialisation of much of the landscape around the village with extensive opencast iron ore extraction taking place until the 1970s. This mining activity was accompanied by an extensive narrow gauge railway system and The Grantham to Nottingham canal which played an important role in the village’s economy from the late 18th to the early 19th century for the transportation of coal and bulk goods such as stone and lime.

The history of the village in the 20th Century matches that of so many rural communities. The First World War not only had a tragic impact on a number of village families who lost husbands and sons to the conflict, but also brought about significant changes to the manor and the way the land around the village was owned and managed. A significant development was the creation of Harlaxton airfield on the ridge above the village, created as a base for a flying school for the Royal flying Corps. Elsewhere in the grounds of the Manor a Trench Warfare School, complete with a dummy trench system was established for the nearby Machine Gun Corps, based at Belton House.

The “new” Manor house built by Gregory Gregory was bought by it’s last private owner, Mrs Violet Van der Elst, a businesswoman and inventor, in 1937 when the entire estate was sold off by the last hereditary Lord of the Manor, Philip Pearson Gregory.

During the Second World War, the manor was again requisitioned by the War Office and used as the officers’ mess for RAF Harlaxton nearby before housing the 1st British Airborne Division playing a significant part in housing troops before and after Operation Market Garden.

Harlaxton Manor was sold after the war by Mrs Van Der Elst to The Society of Jesus (The Jesuits), who from 1948 used it as a centre for training novice priests.

In 1965, the Jesuits leased the manor to the American Stanford University, based in California, making it the first American university campus in Great Britain. In 1970, it became the home to Harlaxton College, part of the University of Evansville in Indiana, USA who bought the Manor House and grounds in 1978.

It continues in this role, operating as an overseas study centre giving American students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn about British life and culture in a historic setting. Under the care of the University the Manor and its walled garden are now being restored to their former glory.

Today the village is a mix of traditional estate housing built in the most part by the Gregory family in the 18th and 19th Centuries augmented by more modern housing in small developments on the edges of the older village core.

Harlaxton is now a thriving community with a population of just over 700 residents augmented by up to 180 American students studying at the College in the New Manor House. The village has a number of social facilities and a degree of out commuting to the neighbouring towns. There is a post office, church, primary school, doctor's surgery, village store, pub and village hall. There is also a sports and social club and a bowls club.

## CURRENT SITE DESCRIPTION AND KEY FEATURES

The wider site, just off Rectory Lane in Harlaxton is in total around 1.35 ha (3.4 acres) which is split between four land owners each with a property and outhouses.

Within this is the core site believed to contain the location of the old manors, now occupied by No1 Rectory lane. This section of land covers approximately .82Ha (2.03 acres) and is bounded on two sides by the remains of the moat, which stretch along the South and East boundaries for around 156m.

No1 Rectory lane is a stone built cottage dating from 1937. Its builder is said to have been an early reclaimer, using interior elements of buildings demolished in Grantham around the time the cottage was built. This approach appears to have been taken to the outside structure of the property, as it incorporates numerous elements which have been recycled from other older buildings. Furthermore, the stone itself appears to have been reused from previous buildings.

Whether these elements are from the Old Manors which previously sat on the site cannot be proven, however there was a large rubble pile of dressed and carved stone left after the demolition of the last Manor in the 1850s which would have made a ready and cost effective source of building material and decorative elements, so on the balance of probability it would be fair to assume the cottage is built predominantly from materials already on site linking back to the old manors.

The cottage measures almost 16.5m by 8m plus, on the Southern face, the oriel window which is 4m wide and projects 3m out from the line of the side of the cottage.

Something that supports the theory that the cottage incorporates elements picked up from the remains of the old manor on site in 1937, is that the gardens of all four properties of the wider site contain numerous pieces of high quality cared stone, including window mullions and tracery, pillar sections, cornices and other ornamental stonework.

Certainly, as far as the structure of No 1 Rectory Lane is concerned, one element in particular has a confirmed direct lineage back to the old manors. The "Oriel window" or pillared doorway at the centre rear of the property, is known to have been part of the Jacobean house having featured in contemporary sketches (shown previously), a photograph of the demolished building and the model of the old Manor made by the first occupant of the cottage. Inspection of the feature suggests it is still in it's original location and that the 1937 cottage was built around it, incorporating it as a feature.

The three arches and four stone columns clearly have age to them and on some of the columns there is graffiti from the 1880's after the manor had been abandoned and partly demolished.

The upper part of this oriel doorway is now a balcony from the owner's bedroom. It would appear that the remaining window frames and ledges on this first floor, shown in the photograph from the turn of the 19-20th century, were removed during the build in 1937. There is a date plaque on the edge of the balcony stating "DD 1692".

Elsewhere, the core site is bounded by and contains a number of mature trees and, for the most part, is covered by formal and informal garden space. This is all broadly on two levels, the West side of the gardens being raised by a metre or so from the large cut lawn and informal grassed areas to the immediate rear of the cottage.

Two features stand out as direct links with the old manorial site. First the moat which now runs along two sides of the site and second the sunken room to the east of the cottage abutting the to present property boundary and moat line.

The moat stretches for around 131m along the Southern and Eastern boundaries of the property of No1 Rectory Lane. It is approx. 5m wide at its widest point and 4m at its narrowest. When full it is approximately 75cm Deep. It is fed by a pond in the field outside the South West corner of the garden which is in turn fed from field run off and springs. These run into a feeder pond which flows into the moat through a sluice in a low stone wall.



Research of maps of the site consistently show the existing two sides of the property being bounded by the moat. However some of the older sources hint at there being a third stretch of moat along the Western Boundary. Whilst there is no evidence of this inside the property of No1 Rectory Lane, an examination of the boundary from the field side has revealed a significant ditch stretching from close to the corner where the moat is fed by the field pond.

This ditch is very overgrown and difficult to see, however it is approximately around 4m wide and 1.5m deep at the deepest point and stretches around 15m. This may be the remains of the moat on the western edge of the site. Further research will be required to confirm this.

The second feature associated with the past manors is a sunken room thought to be a remaining part of one of the old manor houses (most likely the Tudor or Jacobean) though whilst it is in general alignment with what we might expect the old manor's footprint to be (based on the alignment of the new cottage with the oriel window) and is approximately at the correct distance from the centre point of the old manor (the oriel window) there are questions to be answered as to its exact relationship to the old manor and use.

This area, with a floor level approximately 2m below the surrounding ground level is reputed to have been a kitchen area, but it is also known from archival records that there were cellars (including an Oyster store) associated with the last manor house (and, of course possibly those on the site before 1619).

Measuring 5.5m by 12.84m the room is currently reached by a set of steps running past the entrance to a modern workshop, the base of the steps stopping where the door to the modern workshop is situated. This workshop is 4m square and lies at the same base level as the rest of the sunken room, but is separated from it by a rough wall, consisting of rubble. It is not clear if this wall is original. It does not seem to tie in to the rear wall of the sunken room, but does have a dressed face on the sunken room side.



The floor of the sunken room appears to be stone floor tiles and the stonework of the walls is clean and well structured. The highest wall, to the south side, has at some point more recently been topped with red pot pantiles, presumably to stop the ingress of water to the wall. As these pantiles are similar to those used on the cottage it may be that this work dates to the late 1930s as garden improvements along the cottage development.

Elsewhere in the garden lies a well situated to the north west of the cottage but still within the boundary of the property. Approx 5m deep with a stone top, this still has water in it.

There are a number of worked stone features and blocks on site, regrettably these are all out of context, although it is a reasonable assumption that they are present as the result of demolition of the Jacobean manor. One of these has been provisionally identified as being of medieval origin.

The current resident of the Number 1 Rectory Lane reports finding a pair of cannonballs on site whilst using a metal detector – it is believed these are in the region of 6lb balls. We are still trying to trace these – the supposition is that these are of a civil war vintage.

## Scope of Project

**Primary aim: To research the site of previous manor Houses in Harlaxton village Lincolnshire.**

### Site location

OS Grid Ref:SK 88309 32412

Latitude:52°52'55"N

Longitude:0°41'21"W

**The project was initiated in line with the strategic aims of the Harlaxton History Society,**

- To promote interest in and understanding of the History of Harlaxton Parish and it's surrounding area.
- To facilitate the collection, preservation and research of historical information or items relating to the History of Harlaxton Parish and it's surrounding area.
- To hold open events to encourage community engagement and discussion about the History of Harlaxton Parish and its surrounding area amongst the village community.

**The specific research aims of this project were fourfold.**

1. To produce a comprehensive record of human activity in relation to the old Manors of Harlaxton to preserve and interpret an important aspect of Harlaxton's history for the benefit of people in the village.
2. To establish if the Jacobean Manor house was remodelled from the Tudor manor house or a new build and the same for the Tudor manor house.
3. Identify and record physical evidence of the medieval manor house and associated buildings and earthworks (including the moat and worked stone on the site)
4. To understand how the old manors relate to the wider landscape around them including ridge and furrow in fields, the church, etc etc.

In doing this we hoped to establish whether they were separate buildings on the site or whether they were built as a succession of extensions and improvements on the same footprint.

Following our initial desk research and site exploration in 2024 we added the following specific questions for our geophysical survey and archaeological activities in September 2025;

- i. What exactly was the manor house footprint?
- ii. Can evidence be found of the Tudor or medieval Manor Houses and were they on the same footprint as the Jacobean house?
- iii. To ascertain whether the moat extended up the Western boundary of the site?
- iv. Can a crossing and track be identified on the Southern stretch of moat?
- v. To define the Northern Boundary of the site. Is it the extent of the current garden of the cottage at No1 Rectory Lane, or did it extend to rectory Lane itself?
- vi. To locate whether there are any service or agricultural buildings in the grounds?
- vii. To clarify what the relationship was to the area where Pond House now sits. Was this the main entry route?
- viii. Can we identify the use of the sunken room?

### Outputs

#### ***Talks at Harlaxton History Society***

- We will schedule in progress talks as well as talks as and when we find information

#### ***Web site***

- A specific section on the project has been built

#### ***Social media***

- We should promote volunteer involvement through regular posts when there is activity

#### ***Public Events***

- The project will feature in displays at local events and speakers will be offered to other local groups.
- We will approach the site owners to explore the possibility of an open site day for the public.

#### ***Interpretive materials***

- The Society has funding for the creation of an information board to sit on Rectory Lane explaining the manorial history.

#### **Outcomes (Benefits of the project)**

We see the benefits as;

- Developing community cohesion through an understanding of the history of Harlaxton village
- To offer volunteering opportunities to people both in and outside the village that help reduce social isolation and encourage physical and mental exercise
- To establish whether there is any historical evidence that needs protecting for future generations
- To grow the membership and engagement with the Harlaxton History Society

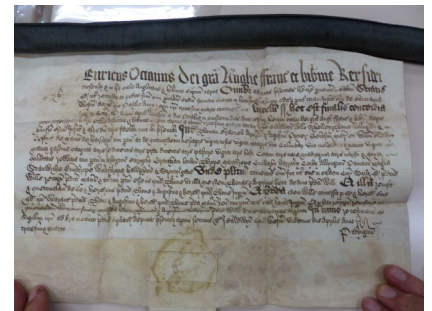


## Methodology

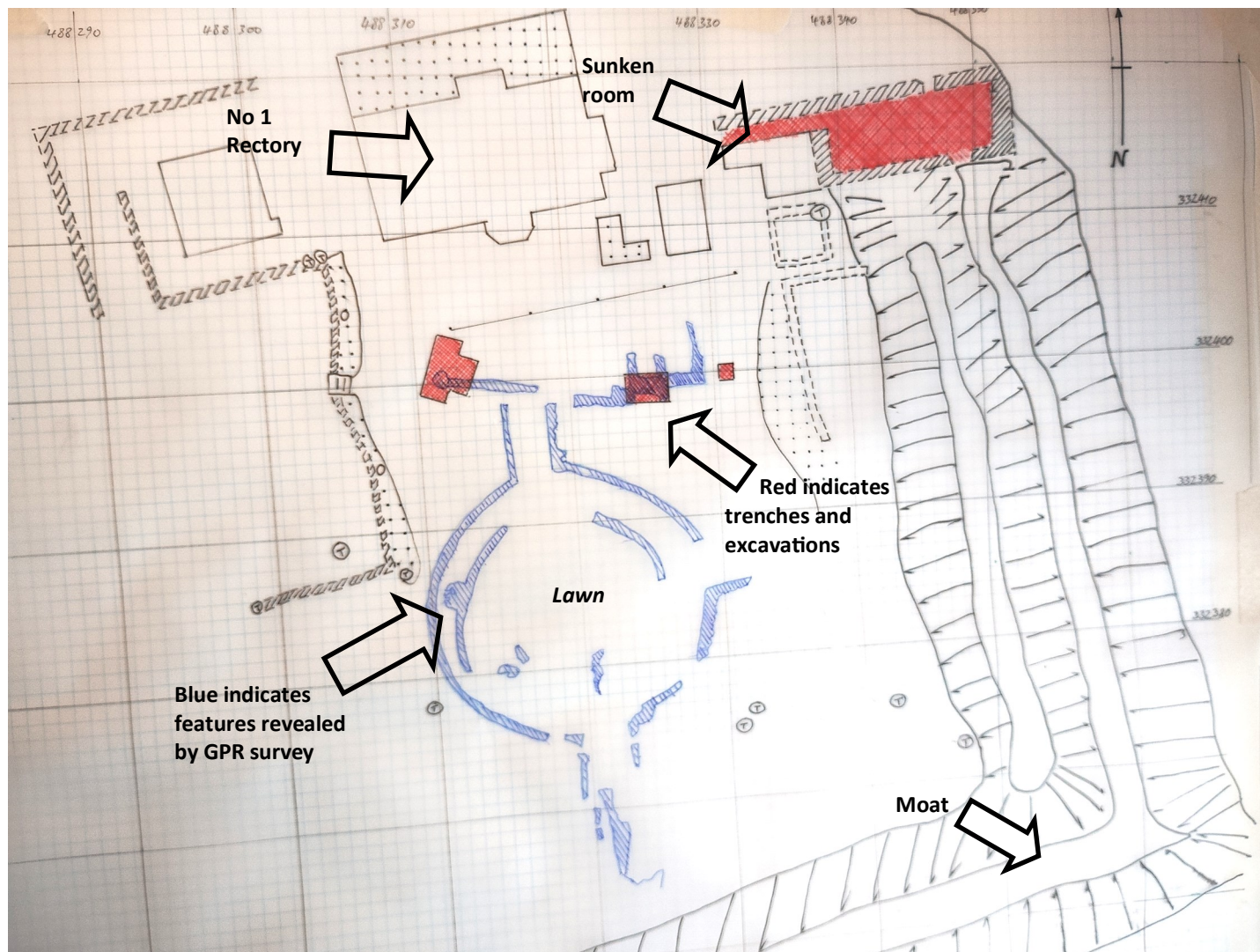
The approach taken to the project was guided by advice on best practice from the experts engaged with Harlaxton History Society.

Broadly the project methodology overall, in chronological order, was as follows:

1. Extensive desk research in 2024 including archival study
2. General surface survey of the site in 2024 to identify key features
3. An initial geophysical survey September 2024—a pro-bono half day survey to confirm there are features un the site
4. Application for Lottery funding Feb 2025
5. Funding received May 2025
6. Geophysical survey utilising ground penetrating Radar May 2025
7. Identification of sites for excavation May-August 2025
8. Surveying in of the data onto the ground Sept 2025
9. Eight days of public archaeology incorporating 3 x trenches, clearance of sunken room and surveying and recording of others site features (6/7 Sept, 12,13,14 sept and 19,20 21 September)
10. Closure of site and restoration of gardens to previous state Sept 2025
11. Find cataloguing and initial analysis October 2025
12. Writing of project report and establishment of archive for material



Plan of site showing the extent of the project 2025.



## Summary of archaeological excavation and survey work undertaken September 2025

The Desk Based Assessment, GPR survey, and accurate mapping of the garden were used to inform how the excavation would be carried out. The first stage of the work was to measure and set out an Ordnance Survey base line and to measure from this to an area that covered the linear feature identified as a possible wall.



Two trenches were set out over the feature (Trench 1; 200cm x 300cm, oriented 90°-270°, Trench 2; T shape 350cm x 400cm overall, oriented 150°-330°). A test pit (100cm x 100cm, oriented 90°-270°) was set out over a possible return of the wall.

Volunteers carefully removed the turf and ensured it was stored so it would be watered if needed over the duration of the excavation and the homeowner's garden could be restored at the end of the project.

Excavation then took place over the month following best practice guidelines for UK archaeology and under the supervision of two trained archaeologists. Context sheets were completed by one individual to ensure consistency and quality of recording and will be digitised as part of the report writing phase.

The approach taken at first was to progress slowly until there was a sense of the archaeological contents of the trench and to work methodically going down at 10 – 20cm levels across the whole trench.

Once it was established that below a 25cm context of sub soil there was a significant disturbed layer with mixed content measuring 15 - 30cm deep we were able to progress more quickly. The context was a silty clay with a significant percentage of limestone rubble fragments and included charcoal pits, some prehistoric worked flint, limited medieval pottery, and a significant amount of early modern and modern pottery, bone from domesticated animals, fragments of glass, and clay pipes ranging in date from the early modern to Victorian period.

This was not unexpected as the area has been a garden since 1937 and functioned as allotments during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. This context was consistent across the two trenches and the test pit, although it did appear to gradually thicken to the East.

Directly below this context was a layer sandy silt and clay that contained a concentration of medieval pottery spanning the Early, High, and Late Medieval periods (9th to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century), limited Ceramic Building Material in the form of possible tiles, and a significant amount of building fabric in the form of lime mortar, and Collyweston limestone roof tiles, all of which are likely to be indicative of materials used in the Medieval period. Pottery has been initially identified as including Torksey Type Ware, Stamford Ware, East Midlands Purple Ware early black coarse ware and Nottingham ware.



Within the same contexts the features identified as possible walls were uncovered in both the trenches, but not the test pit. The wall in trench 1 was 60cm in thickness and was excavated to a depth of 75cm. However, time constraints meant that the base of the wall could not be reached. The masonry consisted of 11 courses of well dressed limestone with a limestone rubble infill and was substantial in nature.



In trench 2 the masonry was less substantial. Although the wall was again 60cm in thickness, the stones were not as well dressed and there was no rubble infill. The feature was generally only a single course although the remains of second course could be seen at a couple of points. At first the feature appeared to aligned across the two trenches, but on later inspection it was identified that this might not be the case.

Both the nature and orientation of the walls would indicate they represented separate phases of building. This will be further investigated and discussed in the detailed excavation report which will emerge after further examination and analysis is carried out over the coming months. All features were recorded using photography and detailed drawing which will be included in the eventual excavation report.

Finds were initially processed in the field. They were collected and processed in line with UK archaeology good practice guidelines.

A finds expert joined us on the last weekend of the excavation to sort and further identify finds, ensuring that appropriate samples of material were kept, materials were correctly identified, there was more detail in the identification, and that the accompanying finds sheets were accurate.

The finds have now been cleaned, catalogued and photographed at a series of events in the early spring of 2026 involving the community and the finds sheets have been digitised to allow for further analysis during the find reporting phases of the project.

### Summary of initial finds analysis from Trenches , Sunken room and metal detecting

|                        | Pottery | Metal<br>(of which Lead) | Clay Pipe | Glass | Bone | CBM | Mortar | Plaster | Shells | Stone (of which<br>Collyweston tiles) | Other |
|------------------------|---------|--------------------------|-----------|-------|------|-----|--------|---------|--------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Trench 1</b>        | 67      | 13 (6)                   | 14        | 5     | 82   | 8   | 4      | 14      | 5      | 41 (19)                               | 11    |
| <b>Trench 2</b>        | 65      | 11 (6)                   | 8         | 7     | 48   | 2   | 3      | 4       | 5      | 22 (2)                                | 2     |
| <b>Trench 3</b>        | 15      | 2 (0)                    | 10        | 2     | 13   | 2   | 4      | 4       | 4      | 17 (2)                                | 4     |
| <b>Sunken Room</b>     | 62      | 18 (1)                   | 4         | 19    | 23   | 14  | 6      | 1       | 5      | 14 (2)                                | 2     |
| <b>Metal Detectors</b> | 5       | 30 (5)                   | 1         | 0     | 0    | 1   | 0      | 0       | 0      | 2 (0)                                 | 20    |
| <b>Total</b>           | 214     | 74 (18)                  | 37        | 33    | 166  | 24  | 17     | 24      | 19     | 92 (26)                               | 39    |

## Trench One

**Key features:** Substantial mediaeval wall, showing plaster on interior face under layers of garden material. Finds in this trench suggested that it may once have been associated with food storage or cooking.



## Key Finds:



### Ceramic Building Material

Possible medieval floor tile with evidence of green glaze  
14-16th Century.



### Humber type pottery shard.

Late medieval 13/14th Century



### Late medieval yellow copper glaze.

Possible Leicester ware jug or jar

## Trench Two

**Key Features:** Lots of Victorian and Edwardian material in the top layers which fit with history of site being used as a village allotment after the Manor demolition. Under this was evidence of a substantial wall. Initially thought to be concurrent with the wall found in Trench One, but subsequently it was identified that it ran along a slightly different line and through different contexts, suggesting it might be earlier. Finds such as bone with butchery marks suggest this area was once used for food preparation



## Key Finds:



### Pottery Shard.

Early black coarse ware Late 16/17th Century Tudor



### Pottery shard

Possible Bourne ware. Glazed interior and partial glaze on exterior with pitting. 13/14th century



### Pottery shard.

Torksey type ware. Possibly from a bowl or jar. Dating to the 9-12th Century, this piece suggests the site may have been in use before the Norman invasion and imposition of the manorial system of Land management.



**Piece of bone**  
showing cut marks indicating butchery

### Trench three

**Key Features:** The small trench contained little in the top strata but lower down layers of Burnt material, pieces of Coal and Charcoal were found along with Bones showing signs of butchery suggesting a relationship to the activity thought to be carried out on the sites of the two larger trenches..



### Key Finds:



**Piece of bone**  
showing cut marks indicating butchery

## Excavation and survey of sunken room

Access to the room is down a brick/stone built set of steps and along a fairly narrow passageway. The northern side consisted of a recent-looking dry-stone wall with a workshop on the southern side, butting up to a rubble-filled wall, which was insecure and covered with ivy where it met the main area of the open floor area.



The most striking feature of the sunken room, which had attracted attention early on in the project, was a window on the South wall. This appeared to be of some age, potentially from the Jacobean period but possibly from Tudor period (or even earlier). On the first day of the excavation however closer inspection by one of the volunteers with knowledge of stonework identified it wasn't 'right'.

They identified that the window frame was set back from the interior of the room with a deep sill but the stonework of the wall in which it was set was mortared with modern cement.

Also, several of the larger stones forming the frame to the opening appeared to be from different walls and periods -one had an angle cut in one face and could have been a way of diverting water running down a wall away from the foundations and another had a groove cut into it for holding glass.

The surfaces were relatively smooth and there was little wear on any of the corners. These were mixed with worn and slightly smaller stone blocks to form a frame for the opening. This leaves a question as to the originality of the window and its date, the likelihood being that it is a later feature. The room was cleared of the ivy, which was covering the Southern wall, revealing a clearer picture of the structure and also the 'window'.

The floor was covered in a layer of soil with some rather large stone blocks around the outer edges, the north-east corner was covered with fallen debris from a wall and there was a similar situation on the western wall.



As the excavation progressed the volunteers removed the soil from the floor, both to reveal the surface and also provide a safer surface to walk on. Many of the large stones had been worked and the windowsill had large,



decorated stones and stone roofing tiles placed on it. As the area was being cleaned back, all the loose stonework was removed and placed flat on an area of grass close by (allowing for future inspection and recording—see section on stones recovered).

The soil covering on the floor was removed up to the base of the rubble tumble of the western wall, which was 'secured' by a bank of larger worked stone blocks and tumbled rubble infill.

The floor mainly consisted of stone flags, approximately 25cms square and 3-4cms thick. Running in a N-S direction across the floor from the southern wall were two possible drains – one was some 5metres from the eastern wall,

made from bricks, butted up to the wall and sloped gradually towards the centre of the room.

This indicated that there was no apparent drain to the moat and there may be a sump in the centre of the room.

The second was about a metre further west and was made with similar but slightly smaller slabs than the rest of the floor.

Where it joined the wall, the stonework was different and suggested that there could have been an opening through the wall to allow drainage into the moat. (A very thick -5cms- ivy root came through on side of the aperture, dividing into smaller roots as it followed the line of the drain into the room and could only have come from the outside, suggesting that the idea of the feature going through the wall was correct.)

The next part of the excavation plan for this area was to remove the ivy growing over the rubble fill of the western wall. It is possible that this wall could be part of the eastern wing of the buildings. A brief inspection showed that there is a well-constructed outer skin of dressed stone blocks on the western side and the interior fill is rubble and possibly clay. It was decided that no further work would be taken to remove any of the fallen rubble as it was too insecure.

This feature currently is some 1.5metres wide and stands to a height of over 2 metres. There is no current evidence of an inner stone wall skin – however any evidence may be hidden by the tumble of the fill. The ivy covering of this wall was trimmed back but not removed entirely, as the roots were holding the fill in place.

Most of the ivy covering the interior of the walls was removed revealing that not all the stonework forming the walls is contemporary. A survey of the stonework of the walls was subsequently commissioned to examine more of the buildings history.

Preliminary measurements show a large difference in the width of the eastern wall. On the outside (over the moat) the southern wall is over 4 metres from the 'window' to the existing corner but the inner room measurement shows only 1.5 metres from the 'window' to the present corner of eastern wall of the room, making the eastern wall over 3 metres thick.

The northern wall of the room (a continuation of the passageway to the room) has been constructed sometime before the current owners bought the property in the mid-1930's, and was used as a retaining wall for other rubble and stonework from when the old manor house was demolished in the latter decades of the 19th century. It is not clear when the stone steps were constructed but the workshop butting onto the western wall of the room was built by the present owner. The rubble tumble in the north-east corner has only accumulated over the last two winters and any stonework around it again is not original. There appears to be another opening inserted into this wall but the stonework is unstable and not mortared in.

In the course of the clearance and surveying of the sunken room a large number of small finds were uncovered. Because of the mixed nature of the material filling the space dating could not be achieved through normal stratification method as material had been moved in and out of the space over many years. However some individual finds dating the site as a whole were significant.



Foremost amongst these was a an applied glass seal (also referred to as Blob or Prunt seals). Up until the 17th century bottles would have been made of pottery or leather but by the middle of the century a 'new' black/dark green glass wine bottle came into general use.

Early glass bottles were squat, broad and rounded sometimes referred to as "onion bottles".

Around 1636 English law prohibited the sale of wine by the 'bottle' in England. Instead, individuals were encouraged to have private bottles made carrying their own seals which they then took to a wine merchant who filled them with wine from a cask using a liquid measure.

In this case the seal shown is thought to relate to the De Ligne family , owners of Harlaxton Manor between 1619 and 1730.

## Survey of stone from the sunken room

During the clearance of the Sunken room a large amount of soil and vegetation was excavated. It was clear that the space had been cleared and refilled with material over time and it contained a considerable amount of carved stone pieces.



Some of the 80+ pieces of carved masonry from the Sunken room.



Many of these pieces showed high quality workmanship showing they had come from a well built building of relatively high status.



## Survey of stone in gardens of No 1 and No3 Rectory Lane

The survey of remnants of architectural carved stone in the gardens of No1 rectory Lane and it's neighbour No3 was undertaken by teams of volunteers.

This task required the teams to survey the garden spaces, seeking out any stone that appeared to have been worked . The resultant finds were then individually numbered, photographed and registered with a What Three words location so they can be identified on the ground at a later date.

E.G.

| No         | What Three Words Coordinates | Description   |
|------------|------------------------------|---|
| HAR25N1021 | Shelved.factories.fishnet    | Large section of column with long straight groove 30cm height, 60cm wide, 40cm deep   |
| HAR25N1022 | Glassware.craziest.coherent  | Large section of column with long straight groove 30cm height, 60cm wide, 40cm deep   |
| HAR25N1023 | Possible.owned.ambitions     | Large section of column with long straight groove showing mason markings of centre line on top 43cm height 55cm wide, 40cm deep |

In all 76 pieces of stone were found in the garden of no3 Rectory lane and a further 37 in the garden of No 1



The next step was for the photographs to be passed by an expert in stone work who will identify the most interesting pieces for dating which will be inspected in person later in 2026.

## Survey of stone recycled into fabric of No1 Rectory lane

The Cottage that now stands on the site, constructed in 1937, was almost entirely built from stone taken from the demolition field left in 1857 when the Old manors were demolished. To record this recycling of material a team of volunteers spent two days identifying and individually numbering every stone showing signs of having been re-used.



Some were simply well prepared building pieces, others were ornamental elements that have been incorporated into the modern building. In particular the builders had sifted the rubble of the old manor for pieces of window which they rearranged to create the windows on the 1937 cottage. The volunteers measured each piece and photographed them for further analysis also plotting each piece onto photographs of the house.



The most obvious example of stonework from the original manor being incorporated into the 1937 cottage is the stone portico on the South face of the building.

After the demolition in 1857 this was the only section of the original manor to remain standing, as shown in the late Victorian photograph of the site.

Consisting of four columns and roof, this feature has been examined and is not thought to have been moved. If this is the case and it is in its original position from earlier drawings of the manor from the 1830s drawn by one of the team of architects for the new manor by over laying images we were able to make an assessment of the original size of the house.



However there are many more stones incorporated into the fabric of the current cottage which would seem to have been recycled during the 1937 build. The survey of the building identified 185 stones (excluding the stone portico) which appear to be of an earlier date plus all of the window elements of the cottage, which have been constructed from old elements of the manor.



## Survey of moat

In total the current stretch of moat comprises the Eastern and Southern boundaries of the garden of No1 rectory Lane. The Southern stretch of moat is 85m long and the Eastern stretch 47m.

It varies in width from four to almost seven metres and whilst it dries in Summer it always fills with water in winter.



*Photo of the moat taken during the dig September 2025*



*Photograph of the moat when full of water . November 2024*



A survey using an auger showed the bed of the moat has been considerably filled by vegetation over the years. Whilst it now has an average water depth when full of around a metre the material from the auger suggests it's original depth would have been at least a metre and a half deeper.

Given this depth and width the fact that the original permission to moat the manorial area was given by the King in 1340 and the presence inside the moat on the Eastern edge of the garden of a long mound parallel with the ditch it would seem that it was originally constructed as a defensive structure.

During the survey the site of a bridge over the channel was identified on the southern stretch of moat. This is aligned with the pleasure garden identifies by the geophysical survey and the stone portico which would have been half way along the Southern aspect of the Tudor and Jacobean houses. This suggests that when the garden was created the moat was transformed from its original defensive purpose into a garden water feature.

During the project a potential third stretch of moat just outside the western boundary of the gardens of No 1 rectory lane. This takes the form of a ditch in the field running parallel to the current boundary line for 29m which is approx. 6.7 meters at its widest and 1m deep.



Unfortunately the ditch is deeply filled with undergrowth making access impossible and furthermore access permission was not forthcoming and as such full survey was not possible. This and evidence from old maps offers strong evidence that the moat stretched around three sides of the site but also leaves the tantalizing suggestion that the whole site might have been surrounded by a moat on all four sides.

## Conclusions of excavation and survey work 2025 and recommendations for future work.

After the detailed geophysical survey in May 2025 and the subsequent eight days of community led archaeological excavation in September, we can make the following key conclusions:

1. There has been a great deal of material recycling across the site with evidence of repeated movement of materials and disturbance of natural strata making dating problematic.
2. There is clear evidence of Victorian use as allotments and of extensive recycling of materials in the 20th Century.
3. Trenches One and Two offered evidence of substantial mediaeval walls on the site with the oldest finds dating from 9th – 11th Century, far earlier than desk research had dated the manorial site.
4. The alignment of the walls found in trenches one and two suggests there were significant mediaeval buildings on the site. Whether these were the original manor house on a different alignment to later buildings or outbuildings separate to the later range is as yet unclear.
5. The alignment the Sunken Room and finds from it offer evidence of the Jacobean and possibly Tudor manors sitting on the broad footprint of the 1937 cottage
6. With the bridge over the moat we have proof of a connection with surrounding medieval landscape.
7. We have confirmation the moat originally spanned at least three sides and was originally a defensive structure later altered to form a garden feature in the Tudor period

The likely progression on the site therefore was that the medieval manorial complex was probably replaced by a Tudor mansion, either by extending existing buildings or as a total new build on a slightly different alignment.

The Tudor period would seem to have seen a transition from defended manor site to comfortable and aspirational home with formal pleasure gardens. It is possible that the creation of these Tudor gardens was responsible for the destruction of the medieval buildings found in Trenches One and Two and transformation of the moat from defensive structure to garden feature.

The Jacobean Mansion was most likely built as an extension to the existing Tudor manor House incorporating much of the Tudor structure. The remains of these two phases of the manor were demolished in 1857 and eventually replaced in 1937 by the current cottage which, along with other surrounding gardens incorporated stonework left from the 1857 demolition.

## Recommendations for future work

### Short term (next 12 months)

1. Continue to analyse 500+ finds and apply to further dating of the site
2. Undertake detailed analyse of stonework and use to date original buildings
3. Deliver remaining public talks and continue to seek further opportunities.
4. Publish all data and findings on the Harlaxton History web site

### Long Term

1. Seek, through further excavation, more evidence of the medieval manorial complex across the wider site and explore further its relationship to the surrounding landscape
2. Undertake topographical survey work to record the likely third stretch of moat and fully ascertain the full extent of the moat around the site.
3. Research the relationship between the moat around the site and the wider hydrology of the village.
4. Write and publish academic standard papers on all aspects of the above

## Delivery on Approved Purposes for National Lottery Heritage Fund

The project was focussed on eight approved purposes agreed with The National Lottery Heritage Fund' These were:

1. *Evaluate the project in line with national Lottery Heritage Fund guidance*
2. *Record Site finds as appropriate and produce a written report on the dig and findings*
3. *Undertake an archaeological excavation of the site involving 20 volunteers, including college and school students*
4. *Develop and deliver interpretive materials and public lectures*
5. *Conduct a geophysical survey of the manorial complex in Harlaxton using ground penetrating radar*
6. *Develop and distribute teaching support materials for local schools*
7. *Provide high visibility acknowledgement of the National Lottery heritage Fund on site, on line and in all activities as well as using your project to acknowledge and thank National Lottery players*
8. *Take proactive measures to be inclusive, remove barriers to access and reach new and diverse audiences through the delivery of the project.*

Reporting on delivery on these eight approved purposes follows.

### PURPOSE 1

*Evaluate the project in line with national Lottery Heritage Fund guidance*

#### Activities

In line with the plan originally submitted, the project carried out a preliminary geophysical survey on which a community archaeological project incorporating excavation and surface surveys was based. This addressed key research aims established when the project was first established.

The project drew, in its operation, from two core audiences—people in the community and surrounds of Harlaxton and people from the archaeological community in the East Midlands.

#### Tangible outputs

- 55 volunteers recruited and involved over eight days excavation and survey
- Value of volunteer time at national min wage = £18446
- 40 of the volunteers were new to archaeology
- 77 site visitors during the eight days
- 53 school children from two schools given site visits
- 31 days of expert time given on a pro bono basis worth £12,000
- 1x radio interview
- 8 x print/online media articles
- 56 x Social media posts

#### Outcomes

- 77 local people engaged with their heritage through viewing the excavations and a further 40 actively engaged by taking part as volunteers raising the awareness of the history of the village and Harlaxton History Society.
- 15 people came to Harlaxton from as far as the USA and Scotland to discover the village history.

#### Evaluation of research aims

Our research was intended to achieve four aims and in all four it can be gauged that the project was successful. However further work would be needed to fully address all four aims.

#### Evaluation of the four specific research aims of this project

1. ***To produce a comprehensive record of human activity in relation to the old Manors of Harlaxton to preserve and interpret an important aspect of Harlaxton's history for the benefit of people in the village.***

Through the project we have been able to fill in significant gaps in the understanding of the history of the village providing evidence to support the desk research carried out in 2024. Specifically the project has uncovered finds in the sunken room and the three trenches spanning 600 years which will be archived and shared with the community through an information panel, the society web site and social media as well as

public presentations and talks.

**2. To establish if the Jacobean Manor house was remodelled from the Tudor manor house or a new build and the same for the Tudor manor house.**

The evidence does suggest that the Jacobean frontage was added to the Tudor building with both sitting on the same footprint. Whilst evidence from the sunken room was particularly difficult to analyse due to the later embellishment of the site and re-use of materials making dating difficult, the overall impression from the remaining walls uncovered and finds found in and around them supports the remodelling hypothesis.

**3. Identify and record physical evidence of the medieval manor house and associated buildings and earthworks (including the moat and worked stone on the site) .**

Evidence from Trenches one and two in particular revealed evidence of a mediaeval structure of some size. With plastered wall evidence in trench one there is conjecture that this may have been the original manorial hall, but built on a different alignment and footprint to the later Tudor and Jacobean buildings. However as the original floor level was not reached during the dig, it cannot be confirmed whether this was the original mediaeval manor house, or whether it was part of the wider manorial complex, and merely an “outhouse” or ancillary building of some sort. The presence of charcoal and butchered bone fragments in the small trench three could be evidence the walls found were part of a kitchen building. Work in the moat revealed more detail about the original depth of the feature and measurement of its width along the remaining stretches allowed an assessment of the original size of the feature. From this it was clear that the moat was not a garden feature, but a genuine defensive structure . Site surveys suggest the mound on the inside of the Eastern boundary may have originally extended along the Southern edge, but was cleared in the Tudor period to extend the garden. The remains of a bridge into the fields to the south was discovered.

**4. To understand how the old manors relate to the wider landscape around them including ridge and furrow in fields, the church, etc etc.**

The remains of the footings of a bridge across the moat from the Tudor period offer physical proof for the first time of a connection between the manorial site and the mediaeval field system beyond to the South. This evidence supports desk research in which old maps indicate an entrance way of some sort on the Southern boundary of the property across the moat.

## **Evaluation of audiences**

Our primary audience for the project was and continues to be the members of the Harlaxton community. During the eight days the dig was active it was satisfying to welcome on site 77 people from the local area, most from the village itself. Furthermore the opportunity to interest future generations in the history of the village and engage them in their heritage was achieved through the school visits.

In addition to these 77 visitors, 40 of the 55 volunteers involved on the project (not including the 11 members of the History society Committee active on the project or the two expert archaeologists who provided their time on a pro bono basis) were members of the local community. Closer evaluation of these local volunteers shows only 25% were existing members of the Harlaxton History Society, the remaining volunteers were simply local residents who wished to take part.

Our second audience was the local archaeological community. They were to provide the backbone of skills in the trenches and of the 15 volunteers from beyond the village and its immediate surrounds 14 came to join the project having volunteered on other digs. Verbal feedback from them indicated how satisfied they were with the project and especially the fact that involvement was totally free—many other projects charge volunteers for the opportunity.

All volunteers (excluding 11 Committee members and experts) were required to register and these registration details were used after the dig phase finished to email a link to an online questionnaire using the SurveyWorld platform.

Some 18 of the 55 “external” volunteers responded, which is a 32.3% response rate , this is within the acceptable response rate for an online survey, where 30% is considered a good response.

Six questions were put to them and the responses were overwhelmingly positive. See appendix 2 for the full results.

Key things we wanted to know were

- Had they enjoyed the experience?
- Would they volunteer with the Harlaxton History Society again?
- Could we improve anything if we were to run a similar project again?

By way of illustration, some of the textual comments included in the responses included:

- *“We thoroughly enjoyed looking for the lost manors of Harlaxton! The opportunity gave us a unique insight into the history of this small but significant village, more archaeological experience, and also the chance to enjoy the camaraderie of the other volunteers. Spending time with such a helpful and knowledgeable group was a real pleasure and we are looking forward to seeing some of you again next year. Hats off to Douglas and team for the excellent organisation and welcome. Also, thank you so much for the social gathering at the end. We hardly know what to do with ourselves this weekend but we look back with fondness on our time at Harlaxton.”*
- *“The whole experience was great and I really hope there are more opportunities to volunteer with the group next year.”*
- *“Having never done anything like this before gave me a real insight into the amount of planning and organisation needed to carry out a historical dig from scratch. Really enjoyed the experience and the excellent planning ensured everyone felt a valued member of the team. Would look to volunteer again in the future.”*
- *“The whole atmosphere on site was relaxed and friendly. This group of strangers worked hard, helping and encouraging one another, without pressure or bad humour. Such a positive and fruitful experience in any undertaking is only achieved with the right tone from above, and Douglas was amazing!”*
- *“A real community project which included people of all ages and abilities. It was great to see the walls appearing in the trenches confirming the existence and reality of the manors. We surveyed the moat and that was a useful thing to do. We very much enjoyed the experience and were impressed by the organisation at all levels.”*

**In addition, the following email was received from a seasoned archaeologist who had not responded to the survey:**

*“Dear Douglas,*

*Thank you for letting me take part in your terrific community dig. I thought it was really well organised and run.*

*I did post a comment on my own Facebook page just saying how much I had enjoyed it. (<https://www.facebook.com/paul.dickinson.33>). I received a response from Mark Milligan who is the editor of Heritage Daily asking me to contribute an article on this dig. [www.heritagedaily.com](http://www.heritagedaily.com). I have known Markus for many years, dug with him and I think he is very good at modern media communications. Heritage Daily is an online archaeology newspaper which has quite a substantial following I think and has won a number of awards.*

*I told him that it was not my dig to write upon but that I would pass on his request to you.*

*I understand that you have used some lottery funding for this project and I know from grants that I have obtained in the past that you may have a need to show the funder that you have generated lots of publicity. If so, this may be of interest to you.*

*It was a great dig and I look forward reading the report in due course.*

*Thank you*

## PURPOSE 2

### *Record Site finds as appropriate and produce a written report on the dig and findings*

#### Handling of finds

Throughout the project the Harlaxton History Society endeavoured to follow best practice in terms of cataloguing and conserving finds and data gathered during the excavation phase. In doing this the Society has been guided by the expert archaeologists, particularly Professor Abi Hunt from Nottingham University.



The process began at the point where finds were identified either in the trenches or in the sieved spoil heaps. All finds were first recorded on site by a small team of dedicated volunteers at a finds table. This focal point on the dig site also gave volunteers who had mobility restrictions or mental health limitations (a volunteer with autism found this particularly rewarding) an opportunity to practically contribute.

Every item identified was then given a specific individual reference based on the trench or location in which it was found and the context horizon (depth). Finds from each trench or location on the site were all stored separately in sealable plastic bags.

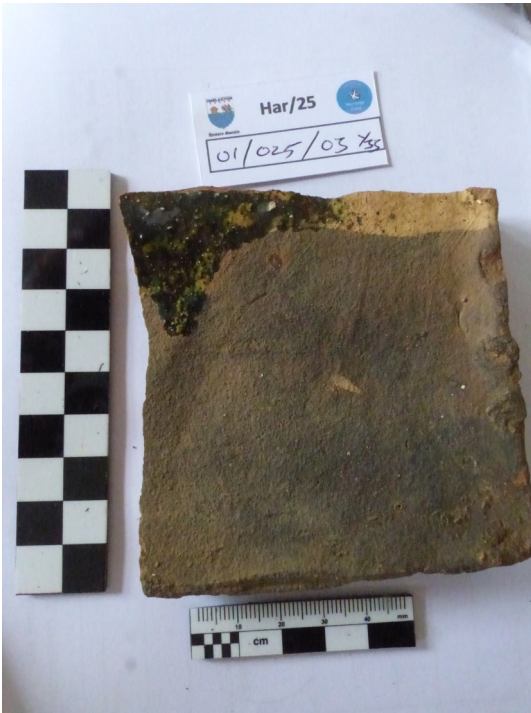
Subsequently, at the end of the excavation we were able to bring in a finds expert, Kymberly Jones, an archaeologist and volunteer at PAS, Swansea Egypt Centre and The National Museum of Wales, to give an initial analysis of all finds. This allowed for pieces of material of no consequence to the project to be separated from that which shed light on the history of the manorial use of the site.

Her Time on site was estimated at a cost of £900, but like many of the experts involved she waived her normal fee and all she charged was travel and subsistence at £150. Our Society Chair provided board and lodging for the weekend at no cost.

This process was completely new to members of the Society and what appeared to be a simple case of labelling items removed from the ground during the excavation turned out to be considerably more complicated and time consuming. In particular the time required was underestimated leading to the request for an extension to the project timeline.

A visit to another History and Archaeology group in Southwell, Nottinghamshire organised by Professor Hunt gave three members of the Society working party an opportunity to see how an established group goes about recording and cataloguing finds. It was also an opportunity to pass some of the pottery across the expertise of one of the East Midlands' primary experts on pottery.

This led to the discovery that some shards found during the excavation dated to before the Norman Conquest.



At this meeting in Southwell the Society also committed to taking each individual Pottery shard and subsequently cleaning, photographing and individually labelling them. This will be a long term task.

It did however allow for further community involvement as a Community cleaning event was organised to invite other members of the village Community to assist with the clean up, recording and interpretation of finds.

Following on from this it was agreed that Prof Hunt would run a series of finds management and report writing training events to enable members of the Society to take on the core of this work themselves.

Through January and February 2026 five half day training events were run for the team involved in the project under the guidance of the expert archaeologist. These covered ;

#### 1) Finds Processing

- What the find processing aspect involves
- Cleaning techniques
- Labelling conventions and techniques

#### 2) Archiving

- What archaeological archiving is, why there is a need to keep one, what the UK standards for Archiving are, what goes in it, and an assessment of what the Harlaxton History Society already has.

#### 3) Report Writing

- The reports the Society needs to write and why the UK standards governing report writing, some examples of good practice, and a session to plan the process. To this end Prof Hunt provided templates and will support our volunteers interested in finds by meeting regularly and setting sections of the report to work on over the coming months



Also in February 2026 the Society organised a public “Finds Cleaning “ event. Held at the village Sport and Social Club this open event allowed attendees to take an active role in the project helping to clean , identify , catalogue and photograph finds.

Whilst many of the people who took part were original volunteers who had assisted with the dig, as this was an indoor event not requiring any physical ability or prior knowledge, this was well suited to attracting attendees who might have felt the dig itself was not for them.

In all some 18 volunteers attended the event which ran from 1000—1500hrs, adding a further 90 hours of volunteer time to the project.

In line with the commitment to correct procedure a system was established which ensured that every single item was individually cleaned, numbered, analysed and photographed. Pieces of pottery the team were unable to identify were referred back to the expert in Southwell.

In all more than 500 individual pieces have been processed, though many are still awaiting a final analysis to establish dating.



## Analysis of stonework

The Stonework across the site was a big feature of the project and every piece found in the sunken room and surrounding garden spaces was photographed and measured and what Three Words to locate it allocated in the field.



This photographic evidence was then passed on to Dr James Wright FS of Triskele Heritage, a buildings archaeologist with undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in Archaeology from the University of Nottingham. He has specialised in the recording and analysis of historic buildings for over twenty-five years. He has operated as a consultant at Triskele Heritage since 2016. He was employed to analyse and write a report at a cost £1500.

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments and bad weather Dr Wright was unable to visit the site at first hand until after this report was written. His initial assessment however, based on the photographs taken during the community dig and surveying is that of the 198 pictures

of stones from across the site, They seem to include significant quantities of mediaeval and post-mediaeval fabric from at least one elite building. The stonework may incorporate fragments of pilasters, window tracery, window jambs, door jambs, architectural mouldings, cornices, and a chimney toppler. Further fieldwork has the potential to refine these observations and present more conclusively definitive opinion on the function and date of the fragments.

The following table includes his initial thoughts on the proposed function and potential date of the stones only. This information is non-definitive and will be refined after field survey, intended to take place during late April 2026.

| Stone Number | Potential Function                | Potential Date |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| HAR/N1/001   | Pilaster?                         | Mediaeval      |
| HAR/N1/002   | Cyma recta moulding               | Post-mediaeval |
| HAR/N1/006   | Ogee & ¼ round moulding           | Mediaeval      |
| HAR/N1/007   | Ovolo and cyma recta moulding     | Post-mediaeval |
| HAR/N1/011   | Door jamb                         | Uncertain      |
| HAR/N1/014   | Moulding                          | Uncertain      |
| HAR/N1/015   | Sunken chamfer moulding           | Mediaeval      |
| HAR/N1/021   | Window jamb                       | Uncertain      |
| HAR/N1/022   | Window jamb                       | Uncertain      |
| HAR/N1/023   | Window jamb                       | Uncertain      |
| HAR/N1/033   | Moulding                          | Uncertain      |
| HAR/N1/034   | Moulding                          | Uncertain      |
| HAR/25/N3/4  | Window tracery                    | Mediaeval      |
| HAR/25/N3/9  | Ovolo moulding on window jamb     | Post-mediaeval |
| HAR/25/N3/10 | Ovolo moulding on window jamb     | Post-mediaeval |
| HAR/25/N3/11 | Ovolo moulding on window jamb     | Post-mediaeval |
| HAR/25/N3/16 | Ovolo moulding on window jamb     | Post-mediaeval |
| HAR/25/N3/17 | Ovolo moulding on window jamb     | Post-mediaeval |
| HAR/25/N3/18 | Complex window or pierced tracery | Mediaeval      |

| <b>Stone Number</b> | <b>Potential Function</b>     | <b>Potential Date</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| HAR/25/N3/20        | Ovolo moulding on window jamb | Post-mediaeval        |
| HAR/25/N3/21        | Window jamb                   | Uncertain             |
| HAR/25/N3/22        | Moulding                      | Uncertain             |
| HAR/25/N3/23        | Moulding                      | Uncertain             |
| HAR/25/N3/28        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR/25/N3/29        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR/25/N3/34        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR/25/N3/40        | Window jamb                   | Uncertain             |
| HAR/25/N3/42        | Moulding                      | Uncertain             |
| HAR/25/N3/46        | Chimney topper                | Uncertain             |
| HAR/25/N3/50        | Ovolo moulding on window jamb | Post-mediaeval        |
| HAR/25/N3/51        | Moulding                      | Uncertain             |
| HAR/25/N3/52        | Moulding                      | Uncertain             |
| HAR/25/N3/60        | Ovolo moulding                | Post-mediaeval        |
| HAR/25/N3/70        | Ogee & ¼ round moulding       | Mediaeval             |
| HAR/25/N3/71        | Roll moulding                 | Mediaeval             |
| HAR/25/N3/75        | Roll moulding                 | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/001        | Window jamb                   | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/002        | Window jamb                   | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/003        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/004        | Ovolo moulding                | Post-mediaeval        |
| HAR25/SR/005        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/007        | Window jamb                   | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/008        | Window jamb                   | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/010        | Window jamb                   | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/011        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/017        | Cornice                       | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/023        | Cornice                       | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/026        | Ovolo moulded jamb            | Post-mediaeval        |
| HAR25/SR/027        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/029        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/038        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/038        | Moulding                      | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/045        | Moulding                      | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/046        | Ovolo moulded jamb            | Post-mediaeval        |
| HAR25/SR/052        | Ovolo moulded jamb            | Post-mediaeval        |
| HAR25/SR/053        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/059        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |
| HAR25/SR/062        | Moulding                      | Uncertain             |
| HAR25/SR/067        | Window tracery                | Mediaeval             |

### PURPOSE 3

#### *Undertake an archaeological excavation of the site involving 20 volunteers, including college and school students*

The detailed account of the excavation itself is recorded previously under the summary of archaeological excavation and survey work undertaken September 2025.

#### **Volunteer statistics for the project are as follows:**

1. We involved 55 vols in total (not including the 11 members of the HHS Committee). Cumulatively they worked 161 volunteer days / 1288 hours, which at the UK min wage of £12.21 would be worth £27,202.56.
2. Of these,
  - 14 were local to Harlaxton or surrounding villages
  - Most of the remainder were from the Lincs/Notts area except;
    - 3 Vols from the USA
    - 1 Vol from Scotland
    - 1 Vol French
    - 2 Vol Polish
2. The age range of the volunteers was as follows:
  - 5 aged <18
  - 11 aged 18-30
  - 6 aged 30-50
  - 33 aged 50+
3. In addition, during the dig phase alone, a further 714 hours were volunteered by the Harlaxton History Society Committee members, worth £15,079.68 at min wage. Considerable time was also invested before and after the dig phase, setting up beforehand and following up afterwards, however this has not been quantified.
4. The project involved three experts who gave pro bono support. The two expert Lead Archaeologists gave approx. 31 days over the full course of the project in 2025, worth in the region of £9300. The Finds Expert added a further three days to this worth £900.
5. 40 of the volunteers (72%) had never previously been involved in archaeology showing the project acted as an effective bridge to introduce people to the discipline.
6. Seven of the volunteers (12.7%) were students . Of these three were study abroad students from Harlaxton College and four were from UK colleges and Universities



In line with the commitment to inclusivity a wide selection of tasks were made available to the volunteers, some involving working in teams some alone, some required a degree of physical ability, others were suitable for volunteers with physical or mental limitations. The tasks ranged from excavation, sieving extracted soil, find management, catering record keeping, meet and greet on site, showing visitors around locating and recording features.

At the end of the project a “Thank you” BBQ was held for all of the volunteers and land owners. At the village Sport and Social Club. Around 40 volunteers attended for a bite to eat and a drink. The sport and Social Club did not charge for the room hire—a saving of £40.

## PURPOSE 4

### Develop and deliver interpretive materials and public lectures

#### Visitors during the excavation



In total 77 visitors viewed work on the site over the 8 days of digging in September 2025 aged from under tens to over 90s. Each visitor was given a brief on the project by a guide and each area being worked on had signage carrying the National Lottery Heritage Fund branding.

In line with the desire for accessibility and inclusivity the Harlaxton History Society was able to facilitate site visits for three elderly residents of the village who required exceptional access due to using walking frames, providing transport to the site and facilitated access across the majority of the excavation area.

#### Interpretive board



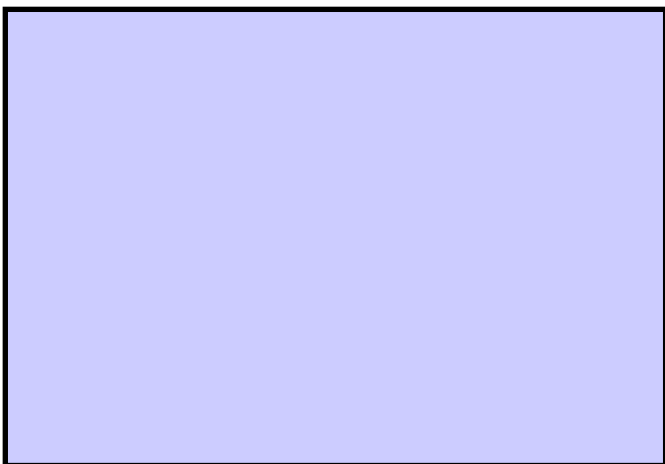
The interpretive board was designed through October and November 2025 and finally commissioned just before Christmas.

In line with the overall ethos of the project and Harlaxton History Society's commitment to sustainability more widely the chosen product consists of recycled plastics in a form of "man made timber".

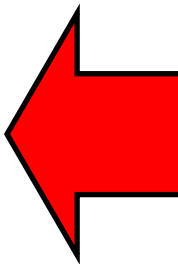
Whilst it had been expected that planning permission might be required with an associated cost the Society was able, with the help of the Parish Council to gain free permission from Lincolnshire County Council Highways. This saved approximately £600.

The society also saved money on this element of the

project by undertaking the installation using it's own volunteers.



The panel was delivered in March and erected the following month in the village as a permanent record of the project.



#### Lectures and presentations

Eight speaking opportunities have been delivered with a further four booked at the time of writing with more opportunities being sought. All lectures have been supported by a PowerPoint presentation prominently showing the National Lottery Heritage Fund branding.

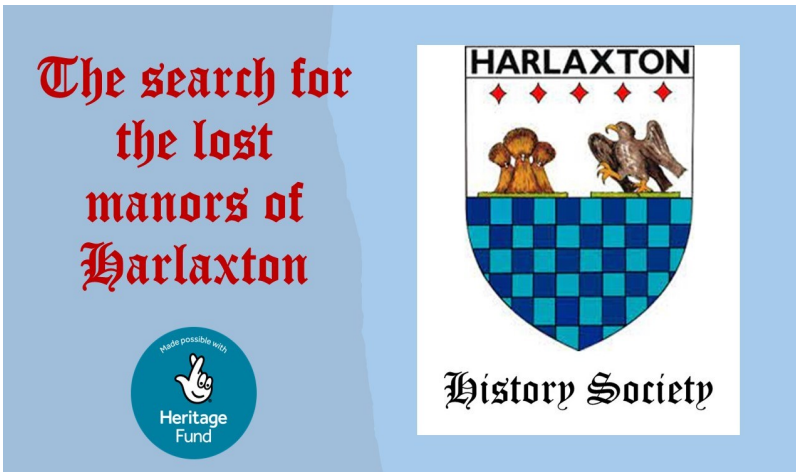
- There have been three presentations delivered to the Harlaxton History Society between May 2025 and January 2026 each attracting in excess of 40 guests.
- In addition the project lead has spoken to a meeting of the Farndon Archaeological Society in June 2025 (30 in audience) , Grantham Civic Society on 20 February 2026 (40 in audience) , Grantham Rotary 4 March (20 in

audience), The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology on 15 April (25 in audience) and Grantham Museum on 16 April (25 in audience)

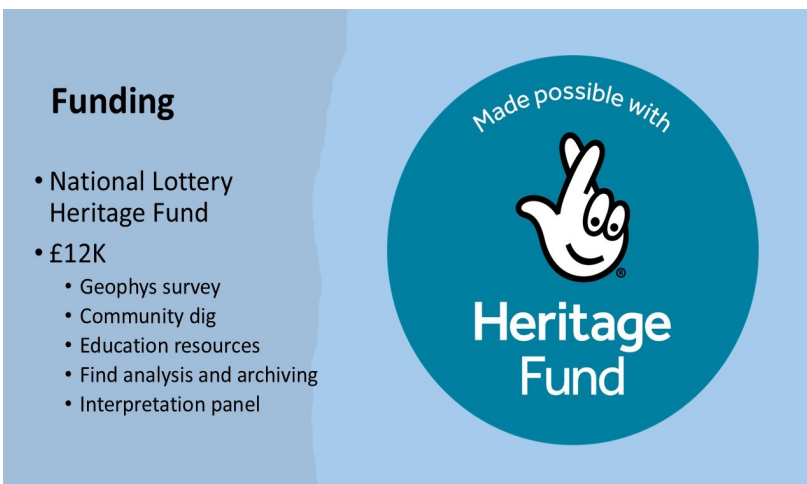
At the time this report has gone to print, there are bookings for further talks about the project;

- Talk to Waddington History Group 22 July 2026
- Village tour including dig site for SLHA 4 July 2026
- Talk to Southwell Community Archaeology Group booked for 13 September 2026

All talks acknowledge the important role of the Heritage Lottery Funding in the project in the accompanying PowerPoint which features the Lottery logo on the introduction slide and on a specific acknowledgement slide.



*Title slide*



*Acknowledgement slide*



*Talk at Grantham Museum to Grantham Civic Society 20 February*

## PURPOSE 5

### *Conduct a geophysical survey of the manorial complex in Harlaxton using ground penetrating radar*

On 9 and 10 October 2024 the Harlaxton History Society was able to undertake a partial geophysical examination of part of the site. The first day was spent undertaking a resistivity survey with Richard Tyndal from Ancaster who both loaned his equipment and gave his time freely to allow us to survey.

The second day involved Chris and Claire Casswell from Reclaim Heritage who used a ground penetrating radar kit supplied free by Dr Derwin Gregory of Bishop Grosseteste University in Lincoln.

The results revealed a circular looking feature covering much of the lawn of the modern 1937 cottage and was interpreted by the expert who undertook the survey to be an Elizabethan or later garden feature (the lines are probably remnants of kerbing either side of garden paths), and then closer to the existing house there appear to be rectangular shapes that could relate to something structural or possibly the base of a paved terrace or similar - this is less clear as our expert suspects there may be an amount of overlying rubble.

This information was central in the development of the Desk Based Assessment prior to the archaeological phase and contributed to the Lottery Heritage Fund application.

After the funding was obtained almost immediately the Society commissioned the same survey company, Reclaim Heritage, to undertake a follow up survey. Whilst this had been quoted for as £7200 in the event the bill submitted was £5130 for the same work, the Company offering a substantial discount in line with their commitment to Community based archaeology projects. Over the course of three days they undertook two surveys across the front and rear of the site, one re-covering the area shown in 2024 as the Tudor garden. This time the work was undertaken using a much more sensitive and precise ground penetrating radar array with better geolocational accuracy.



The specific purpose of the May 2025 survey was to investigate subsurface features across the historic site of the manors and garden landscape, with the aim of identifying potential archaeological remains, understanding historic land use, and assessing the presence of buried structures or anomalies.

The uppermost 0.5 m of ground revealed limited archaeological potential, with results largely shaped by recent landscaping activity, surface alterations, and tree root disturbance. While a few faint linear anomalies were recorded, these mostly corresponded with known services or minor garden modifications and did not suggest significant buried features.

More substantial results were recorded between 0.5–1.5 m below the surface. Within this depth range, the survey detected a range of well-defined linear and curvilinear anomalies interpreted as elements of former garden layouts, drainage systems, and areas of past structural activity.

A key discovery was the concentric outline of a circular garden feature on the south lawn. This has been identified as a simplified knot garden — a formal design typical of the early 17th century and aligned with the central oriel window of the house. Such gardens were often intended to be viewed from above and reflect the Jacobean-era trend toward geometric symmetry and control over nature.

Additional anomalies in this depth range include buried drains, soakaways, and path alignments that correspond to historical land use patterns. Zones of dense rubble and high-value reflections west of the driveway and near the summerhouse may represent remnants of earlier structures, possibly associated with a previous manor house.

Below 1.5 m, the clarity of the data diminished significantly, with most anomalies attributed to noise, deep disturbance, or natural ground conditions. A single circular feature south of the oriel window, however, remains of interest and may represent a drainage sump or well.

In summary, the GPR survey revealed a layered subsurface record of activity, spanning from modern services and landscaping interventions to deeper features of archaeological and historical significance.

The findings provide valuable insights into the site's development—particularly in relation to early garden design—and offer a sound basis for the further investigation carried out by excavation in September 2025. They also informed a decision to avoid digging the historical garden area to avoid destroying the archaeology. Excavation is a destructive process and the project team felt excavating the Tudor Garden was beyond the skill set of the Society and felt that the geophysical evidence would suffice for the present.

#### 0.5–1.0m deep



Figure 5: 0.5–1.0m greyscale time slice

## PURPOSE 6

### *Develop and distribute teaching support materials for local schools*

Initially when the Harlaxton History Society embarked on the project it was envisioned that school materials would be focussed on Key Stage 3 pupils, however canvassing of schools and teachers indicated that the earlier age group of key Stage 2 children might be better suited to the project.

The Committee decided that there ought to be two strands to the delivery on the Approved Purpose, to “develop and distribute teaching support materials for local schools”, first a teaching support pack and secondly access to the dig site when it was in operation in September.

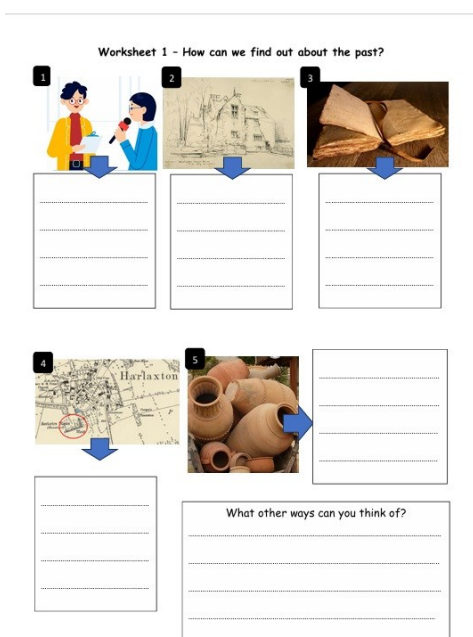
The former head teacher on the Harlaxton History Society Committee chose to focus on organising the site visits, whilst other committee members focussed on the development of teaching support materials which would compliment the visits.

Having researched commercial businesses that produce educational materials it was decided to look closer to home for someone to develop the learning materials. The main reasons for this were;

- To keep costs down
- To ensure local ownership was maintained
- To ensure the materials reflected the history of the site
- Speed and ease of management

In the event a practicing teacher in the area was identified in May who had experience of developing teaching materials and an interest in history who was active in the voluntary sector supporting local community groups. In addition to her skills and knowledge, her husband works as a management consultant and part time as a history guide in Harlaxton, he has extensive experience of producing publications, making the couple ideal candidates.

They produced a pack of materials for key stage 2 children consisting of a set of workbooks, a lesson briefing for teachers in the form of a PowerPoint and a teacher’s information pack. Whilst the budget for this had been set at a commercial rate of £1200 they invoiced just £700 for their time, due in part to their commitment to the project concept and part to their involvement in the voluntary sector.



*Sample page from the teaching workbook*



*Sample page from the teacher's lesson guide*

In mid June five local primary schools were approached by the ex-head teacher on the Committee to see if they would be interested in taking up the offer to visit the dig site in September. No response was received from two,

but the remaining three responded positively. The arrangements were further impeded by the Summer Holidays and the fact that the dig would be taking place at the start of the new school year.

The idea was that the focus of the visits (and supporting materials) would match the key stage 2 requirements that children “understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources”.

This meant that even if the children were studying The Romans at the time of the visits, they would see how an archaeological dig takes place and that the same basic procedure and principles would apply in many different situations and sites.

Despite a considerable amount of time emailing and visiting the three schools the impact of the Summer shut down eventually meant just two of the three schools engaged in the plan and arranged visits on 16 and 18 September. The third withdrew just a week before the planned visits citing transport costs which was a considerable disappointment to the volunteers involved.

Of the two remaining schools one sent a group of 15 “gifted and enthusiastic” children and the other two groups totalling 37 children. In all 52 children were shown the site.

The plan was for groups of up to 15 year five pupils from the participating schools to be given supervised site visits to illustrate the learning points of the materials. Health and Safety considerations played heavily on these arrangements and the number of 15 pupils was dictated by the ratio of teachers and Harlaxton History Society volunteers available. It was decided that this number would ensure the risks associated with an archaeological project – open trenches, tools, ropes and strings and, with the Harlaxton site the presence of water in the form of a moat, could be safely controlled.

To do this within the constraints of the group size and travel arrangements of the schools, it was necessary to split the school visits, half seeing the site and half the village church, then swapping around. This fitted well with the wider aims of the project which were to examine and highlight the wider role of the manors in the community and the links with the church.

The visits on 16 and 18 September went very smoothly and the children were observed to be genuinely interested, enthusiastic and engaged. They were all shown around the site with the dig techniques and methods explained by volunteers involved in the work. These visits lasted approximately 45 minutes with children being given ample opportunity to ask their own questions.

Both schools wrote to the Harlaxton History Society to say how valuable it was , and to provide photographs of the events. The school that dropped out late in the proceedings has been offered the opportunity of an in school talk about the project and access to some of the finds.

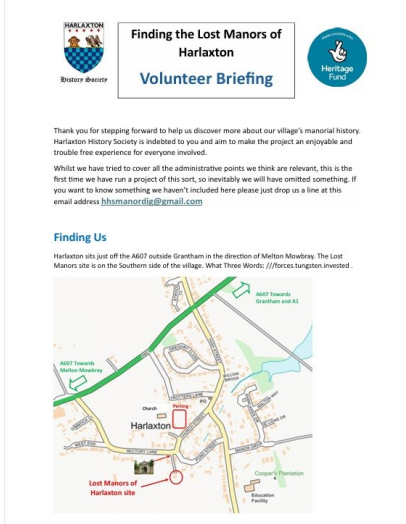


## PURPOSE 7

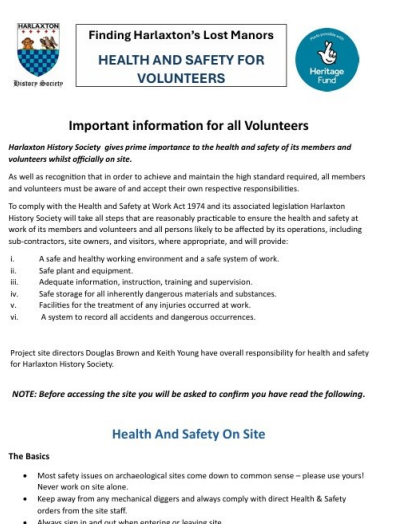
**Provide high visibility acknowledgement of the National Lottery heritage Fund on site, on line and in all activities as well as using your project to acknowledge and thank National Lottery players**

### **Branding of all working materials produced for the project**

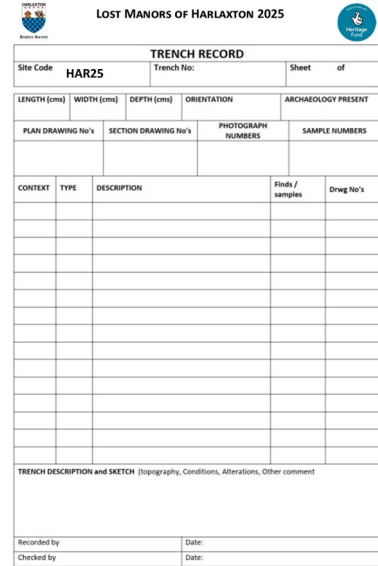
There were scores of administrative materials created to support the smooth running of the project, from Policy documents about health and safety to instruction manuals for volunteers undertaking the non invasive survey tasks, to signage. Even the dig record forms were branded to ensure a clear connection between all aspects of the project and repeated acknowledgement of the funding. Examples below.



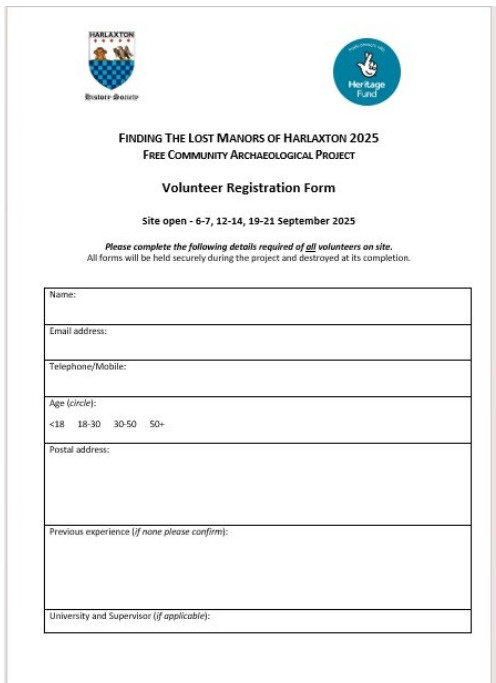
Front page of volunteer briefing



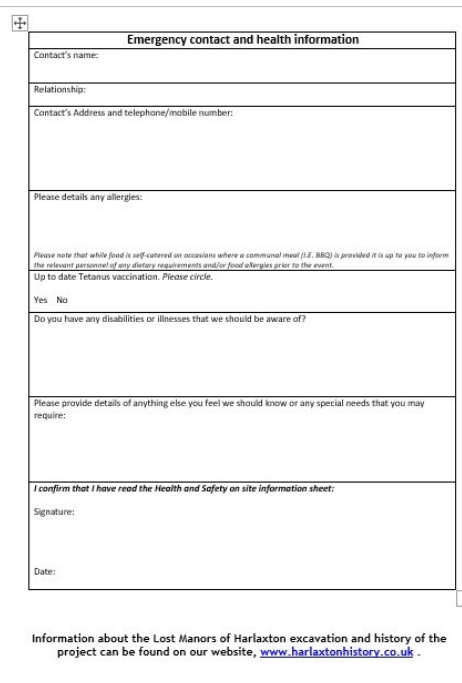
Front page of volunteer Health and Safety Briefing



Trench record



Volunteer registration form



All of these administrative materials were branded with the Harlaxton History society logo and the funding logo of the National Lottery Heritage fund.

### **Site signage**

Signage both on site and around the village directing volunteers and visitors to the excavation all carried clear acknowledgement of the funding in the form of the logo.



### **Mainstream media**

Before and during the excavation phase of the project Harlaxton History Society engaged with local media to promote the project, attract volunteers and recognise the funding. The data below may not be comprehensive as media monitoring is not a routine operational feature of the Society hence the media appearances shown are those picked up through none commercial research means.

Five news releases were issued (see appendix 3)

Together these generated 1 x 7 minute radio piece on BBC radio Lincolnshire

8 x print / online media articles

### **Social media**

Over the course of the eight days of excavation the Society initiated 56 Posts on its Facebook Page. All featured the hashtags #NationalLotteryHeritageFund and #LostManorsOf Harlaxton

- Of these 56 posts 16 consisted of video
- The highest reach for a single post was 2200 unique users, and the culminative reach of the 56 posts was 32,814
- Of the 56 posts 33 were shared by users (58%), the most being 15 shares
- Of the 56 posts 28 received comments (50%) the most being 11 comments

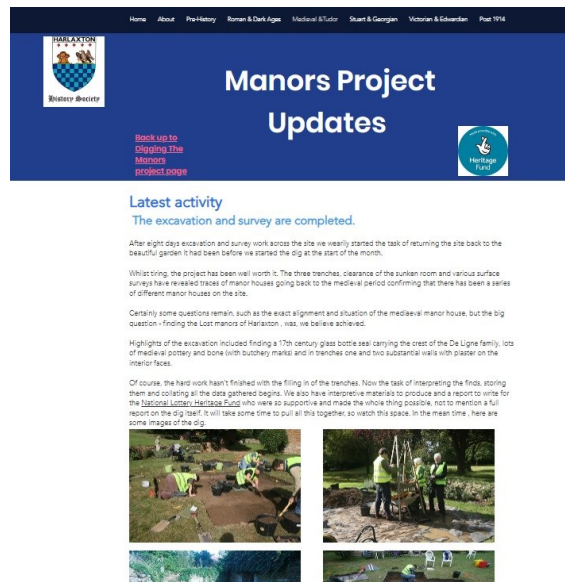
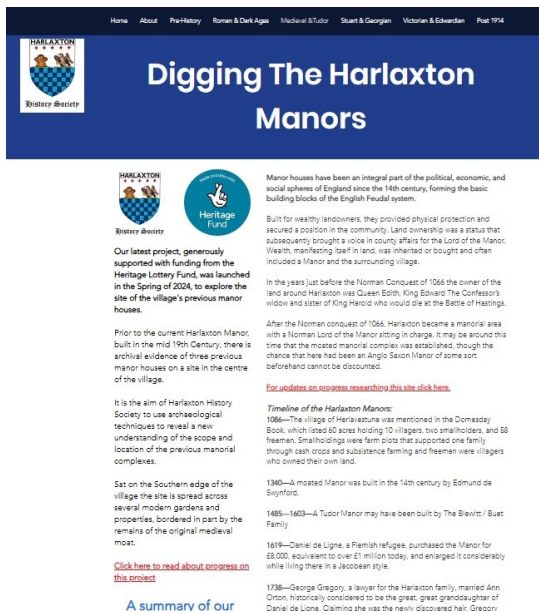


**Sample screen grabs of social media activity associated with the project and social media statistics**

**Web site**

The award winning Harlaxton History Society web site has a section under the Medieval and Tudor tab on the master navigation panel for the project, within which there are three pages each of which carries an acknowledgement panel for the funding. There is also a panel on the Home page with the national Lottery Heritage fund acknowledgement logo.

The page for updates on the Lost Manors Project attracted 288 sessions, this was well above the site average making it the most popular page of the site through September 2025 . Of these 194 were unique visitors.



**Sample screen grabs of the Harlaxton History Society web site**

**Volunteer awareness**

The Volunteer questionnaire sent out at the end of the project showed that 100% of the respondents to stated they were aware of the Lottery funding.

## PURPOSE 8

*Take proactive measures to be inclusive, remove barriers to access and reach new and diverse audiences through the delivery of the project.*

Harlaxton History Society has a small membership of around 40 people, though many are of retirement age and a number have specific access or mobility problems. Hence the project was well accustomed to ensuring its activities are inclusive. Working on site merely added external considerations to our normal approach. Outwith the Lottery funding for instance, the Society has purchased a portable sound system for the village hall to assist those with hearing difficulties hear talks and presentations

When advertising for volunteers we went to great lengths to stress that there were tasks people could volunteer for which did not require experienced of archaeology and which were open to all abilities.

All of the non-intrusive survey tasks were designed for people of mixed abilities working together and our health and safety and safeguarding protocols were the only limiting factors when allocating volunteers to tasks .

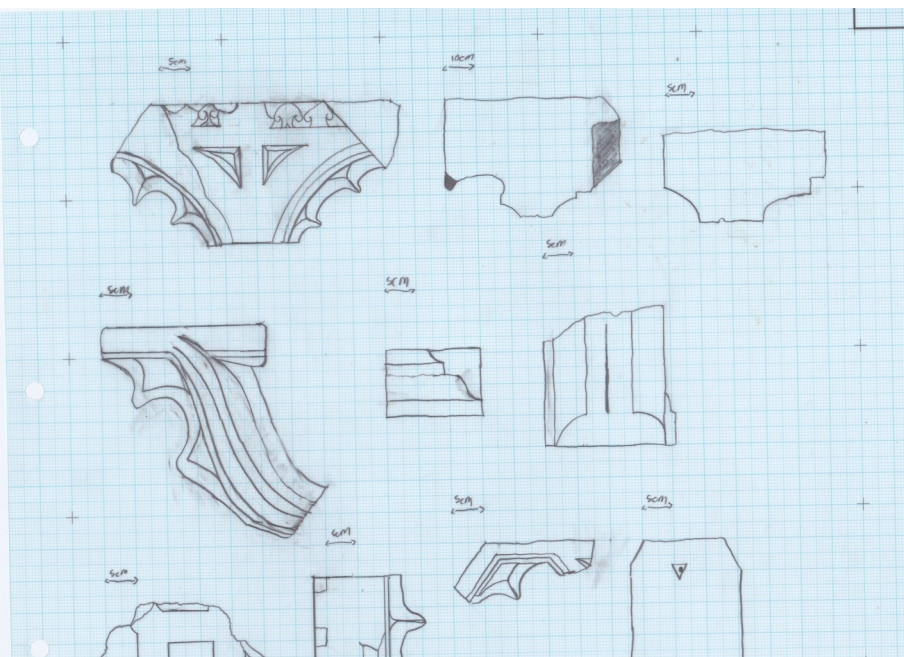
In practice this meant 40 volunteers who had no previous experience , the majority of whom were of retirement age, (that said we did have 3 children under 10 take part as volunteers accompanied by their parents).

Three of the volunteers declared they had autism, and we were careful to ensure they were given latitude in terms of tasks , enabling them to engage in activities that they felt comfortable with. In one case this meant a young person photographing and drawing finds and in the other two cases working in the trenches with the other volunteers.

We also welcomed people with physical limitations. One volunteer with MND , who had previously been an active archaeology volunteer elsewhere before becoming ill attended for a day in their wheelchair . They expressed their gratitude at being able to watch activity in the trenches even though their condition was too limiting to allow them to actively take part.

We also facilitated visits to the site for 3 visitors who required transport and access to the site using walking frames.

As regards wider inclusivity, we did not specifically ask volunteers or visitors about their sexual orientation as it was not deemed relevant, however our finds expert, who is transgender, said how welcomed we had made her feel.



*A sample of the scale drawings of elements of stonework done by one of the young volunteers with autism.*

*His grandmother , who was his responsible adult whilst on site, said she had never seen him interact with others so well and that on the three days he was on site had never seen him so engaged in any activity.*

*In addition to the drawing of stonework, he helped photograph finds and catalogue survey data.*