

from later census returns. At least one of Harris's Adderbury violins was sold locally – a Banbury shoemaker, George Herbert, born in 1814, recalled in his memoirs that as a boy he always wanted a violin. He saved up all his pocket money and bought one, describing it as 'a fairly good one (it was one of Harris's make that used to live at Adderbury)'.²

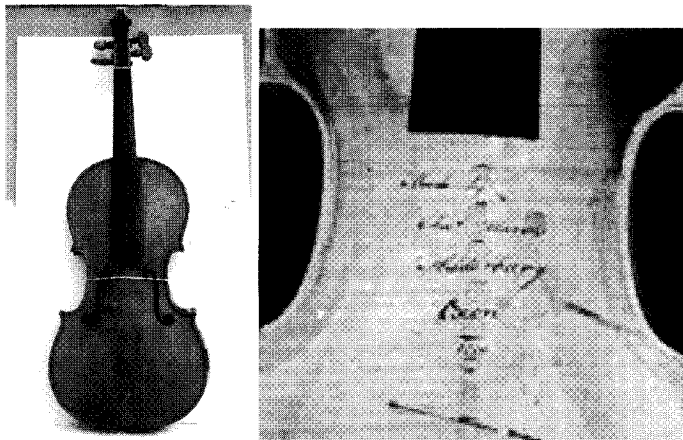


Fig 1: Adderbury violin, made by Charles Harris in 1820.

The Marten-Watson inheritance

John Marten Watson died early the following year, on 20 February 1828, and his will was proved on 28 May. Charles Harris the younger, now in his late 30s, finally moved to Steeple Aston to take on the role of a gentleman-farmer. But what exactly had he inherited? Though quite a lengthy document, Watson's will assumes a good deal of local knowledge, and does not tell us everything we might wish to know. From Harris's point of view it says enough: subject to certain conditions, it states, he is to inherit "all and singular my said Manors Messuages Farms Lands and Hereditaments in the parish of Steeple Aston".

In other words Charles inherited from his mother's cousin not only bricks and mortar, and farmland, but also the dignity, rights and privileges of a lord of the manor. These would have had little practical value, and it's

² The story is cited in *Adderbury: a Thousand Years of History*, by Nicholas Allen and others (BHS 25, Phillimore, 1995), p.85. Either this, or another Adderbury violin dating from 1820, is illustrated in the same book and, with Mr Allen's permission, is reproduced above in Fig. 1. See also George Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window*, 2nd edn., BHS 10, 1971, p.24.