

Watson made several similar bequests, mostly financed by the sale of properties he owned in other places – at Chipping Norton and in Northamptonshire. The residue of his estate was left to yet another cousin – Mary Burge, wife of William Burge, of Launton, with her husband and their children as substitutes if she died too soon.

All this no doubt seemed a fair division of the spoils from Watson’s point of view, but it meant that Charles inherited little in the way of ready money. His income from rentals, as we have seen, was very modest, while the entail on the estate meant that he had nothing apart from his violins that he could easily sell, if he needed cash. Watson evidently expected Harris to support himself and his family from farming, and it is possible he had coached him a little in this over the previous decade. But Harris had been brought up in a very different world and may have run into problems with his farming – unwise choice of crops, poor harvests, bad advice and so on. He seems to have given himself airs – he was known locally as “Lord Harris” – which probably did not help. Whatever difficulties he faced, there can be no doubt that he compounded them by choosing – at a very early stage – to build an imposing new Manor House.

### **The new Mansion goes ahead**

Did Harris really need a new house? His fateful decision to build before he was financially secure as a farmer may have been prompted partly by pride in his new-found position, but there were pressing practical considerations, not least the size of Charles and Elizabeth’s family. Brookes says they had seven children, but eight are recorded and all were living in 1841 at the time of the first census (Elizabeth was absent for some reason but turns up in 1851 living with her brother Richard):

1 John Marten Watson	baptised Woodstock 1816	aged 25 in 1841
2 Mary Ann	baptised Woodstock 1817	aged 23 in 1841
3 Richard	born Woodstock c1819	aged 22 in 1841
4 Sarah	born [Adderbury] c1821	aged 20 in 1841
5 Charles	born [Adderbury] c1822	aged 19 in 1841
6 Elizabeth	born Adderbury c1825	aged 25 in 1851
7 Ruth	baptised Adderbury 1827	aged ‘13’ in 1841
8 Jacob	baptised Steeple Aston 1830	aged 11 in 1841

At some point the family had also been joined by Charles’s mother, Marian. All we have is a bare entry in the burials register, recording that a Marian Harris was buried on 19 March 1833, aged 69. (This tallies