

residence, apart from one daughter, Elizabeth. One must say “appears to show” because the sequence of households in the census is never entirely clear – they were certainly near neighbours of Edward Hall, baker, and Elizabeth Plumb, blacksmith.

### **Bankruptcy and foreclosure**

Less than two years later, with Weston Aplin pursuing Harris and his son John for the repayment of his mortgage, Harris applied to the Court for Relief of Insolvent Debtors. In March 1843 the court appointed Scott, Wickens and Wakelin as assignees of Harris’s estate, and in September Weston Aplin agreed to convey his interest in the properties to them. Soon afterwards they sold the Mansion to a new owner, George Robert Stratton, a currier (leather-finisher) from Bicester. Its subsequent fate is not yet known in detail, but in 1851 it was occupied by an elderly spinster, Charlotte Newcombe, described as a fundholder, from South Weald, Essex. In 1861 and 1871 it was similarly occupied by a Miss Catherine Dandridge, from Beaumaris, Anglesey. By 1881 it had become the premises of the Steeple Aston Co-op. (it is now split into three dwellings).

On 25 April, 1844, the house and bakery next door, with stable and garden, was auctioned at the Red Lion, Steeple Aston, and bought for £200 by John Louch, a Lower Heyford baker born in Fewcott. With the concurrence of Stratton and the assignees, the money was split 2:1 between the mortgager, Mrs Osmond, and a Mr Tredwell, who she said had put up a proportion of her loan to Charles. In 1847 Louch bought the site of the disused blacksmith’s shop from Frederick Plumb, at the same time taking out the first of a series of mortgages. This enabled him to extend his premises over the smithy site, although the details are far from clear.

Meanwhile other buildings were springing up on other former Harris land. A Deed relating to the last period house on the north side of Heyford Road – now Lansdowne House – shows that it was built by 1846 on land sold by Mrs Osmond and Mr Tredwell in 1843, so enabling them to recover a little more of their mortgage money. The house next to it (now Spring Vale) was also built and occupied by 1846.

### **Farming at Charlton**

By 1851 the eldest son of the family, John Marten Watson Harris, had settled in Charlton, across the Cherwell Valley in south Northamptonshire, farming the land that had been bought for him under the terms of the 1837