

*Charles Towsey of Henley upon Thames in the County of Wexford Gentleman*

*Mary Harriot Sparks*  
*A. B. Moorhouse*  
*John Towsey*  
*Just Henley*  
*Henley on Thames*  
*Covent*

# TOWSEY TALES

*William Towsey*  
*Edward Towsey*

*John Towsey*  
*George Towsey*  
*Henry Towsey*  
*Elizabeth Towsey*  
*Mary Towsey*  
*Thomas Towsey*  
*James Towsey*  
*John Towsey*  
*William Towsey*  
*Edward Towsey*

**NAME:** William Towsey  
**BIRTH DETAILS:** Ch: 19 Dec.1671 Letcombe Regis  
**DEATH DETAILS:** after 1722  
**CHART REF:** Towsey Chart F1  
**MARRIAGE DETAILS:** 4 May 1707 Ashbury, Berks  
**SPOUSE:** Jane Woodward

William was the first son and fourth of the seven children of William Towsey and Mary Freeman (see Towsey Tale of William Towsey, born circa 1642). He was the elder brother of our ancestor, Edward Towsey, born 1676.

William was a mason, though we do not know exactly what he was doing. He might have been a skilled stone mason, but apart from the occasional repair to the local churches, there was unlikely to be a lot of demand for such services around Wantage. It is more likely that William would have been making and selling the simple stonework used in the better quality houses for door and window frames and for fireplaces.

The fourth of William and Jane's eleven children, was Henry Towsey, a clothier, born in 1712 and died in Letcombe Regis in 1788, with a will in which he left to his wife, Elizabeth, during her lifetime: "my frilling mill together with outhouses, stable, garden close. Also goods and furniture". To his daughter Elizabeth Whitehorn, he left thirty pounds and after his wife's death, Henry specified that everything would go to George Towsey, who was his only son out of five children.

The frilling machine to which Henry referred in his will, was probably some sort of wooden frame that made it easier to produce the ruffs, frills and lace trimmings that were particularly popular at that time.

It would be right to presume also, that with the small population of Letcombe Regis at that time, that Henry was selling to a broader clientele. He might well have had a stall at the Saturday market in Wantage. Perhaps he sold clothes to travelling merchants, or bought items from the large tailoring industry in London.

One thing of which we can be reasonably sure, is that Henry would not be dealing in the fancy coats and silk waistcoats that were popular with the gentry in London.

The life of George Towsey, Henry's son, was clearly not one of prudence and sober Christian reflection.

George was born in 1744 and was a miller in Letcombe Regis. He does not seem to have married and there are no records of his life until things started to go awry towards the end.

Firstly, he fathered an illegitimate son, at the age of 54, with a fourteen year-old girl called Mary Herbert. The child, Thomas, was born in August 1798 and christened a month later. George probably wrote his will soon after that, perhaps aware that his health was declining and fearful of God's wrath if he did not sort out his sins. In the rather elaborate provisions of the will he acknowledges Thomas Herbert as his son. He also mentioned his sisters, Elizabeth and Mary.

To add to George's woes, or perhaps because of the distractions of ill health and moral lapses, he was declared bankrupt in 1800, thereby rendering the generous gestures of his will somewhat pointless.

George Towsey did not have to worry for very long about the destiny of his mortal soul, as he died in 1801.



*The sort of clothing made and sold by Henry Towsey in the 1770s & 80s.*