

Charles Towsey of Henley upon Thames in the County of Oxford Gentleman

Mary Harriet Sparks

H. B. Moorhouse

TOWSEY TALES

NAME: Augusta Mary (Gus) Towsey

BIRTH DETAILS: 5 April 1850 Henley-upon-Thames

DEATH DETAILS: 30 April 1918

CHART REF: Towsey Chart B1

MARRIAGE DETAILS: unmarried

Gus was the fourth child and first daughter of Charles Augustus and Mary Harriet Towsey.

We do not know where Gus was educated and there is no evidence throughout her life of any musical training. We can also



June 1865 Augusta Mary Towsey



Augusta Mary "Gus" Towsey 1868

assume, probably because of her father's bankruptcy in 1857, that Gus' education was conducted locally. This is reinforced to some extent by her being at home during the 1861 census, aged eleven and listed as 'scholar'. But then, she might have spent some time at some ladies college in her teenage years. She was though, back at home ten years later for the 1871 census.

According to the census of April 1881, Susanna Terry's great niece, 30 year-old Augusta Mary Towsey, was

living at 67 Bell Street as a "Companion to her Aunt", along with two servants.

Susanna Terry died a month later, in May 1881, two weeks after her eighty sixth birthday.

Gus's attention to the needs of her ailing great aunt were undoubtedly spurred by what seems to have been a genuinely caring personality, but it nevertheless resulted in Susanna leaving her £600 of 5% per annum Capital Stock in the Great Indian Peninsular Railway Company. This income would probably not have been enough by itself to support Gus in an independent lifestyle, but would have been enough to provide for her basic comforts.

By this time of course, the family had moved from Henley down to the coast, which is where Gus would have joined her parents after her great aunt's death.

When her father died, in 1883, Gus and her mother moved in with Gus' sister, Edith, who by then was married to Reverend John Banks Beers. They might or might not have moved in straight after Charles Augustus Towsey's death, but John and Edith Beers were at the vicarage at Sturmer in Essex, by 1882.

In 1891 the rectory at Sturmer still housed not just John and Edith Beers but also Mary Harriet and Gus, then 41 years old, who was working as governess at the local church school. Gus had not moved in permanently and we see that ten years later, she was employed as a companion to 89 year-old Helen Boyd in Clapham, south London. Also in the house were Helen's 71 year-old nephew, a retired surgeon and his wife, together with five servants.

Helen Boyd died at the end of that year, so Gus, by then 51 years old, probably moved on to another position.

By 1911, Gus was living in genteel retirement with her sister, Connie, at Beaumont Hall, a private hotel on the coast at Clacton-on-Sea in Essex, where their mother had died in 1900.



Beaumont Hall Hotel, Clacton-on-Sea

No doubt Connie and Gus spent their days promenading along the sea-front, taking in the invigorating salt air, whilst reminiscing about how pleasant their lives had been so far, particularly without the encumbrance of husbands.

It is not known exactly when Gus moved back into the vicarage at Saffron Walden, but she was there, with Edith and John Beers, when she died in 1918. She left her entire estate, of £1047-11-7 to Constance.