

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

Mary Harriet Sparks

H. B. Moorhouse

# TOWSEY TALES

**NAME:** Hubert Towsey

**BIRTH DETAILS:** 1st May 1861 Henley-upon-Thames

**DEATH DETAILS:** unknown

**CHART REF:** Towsey Chart B1

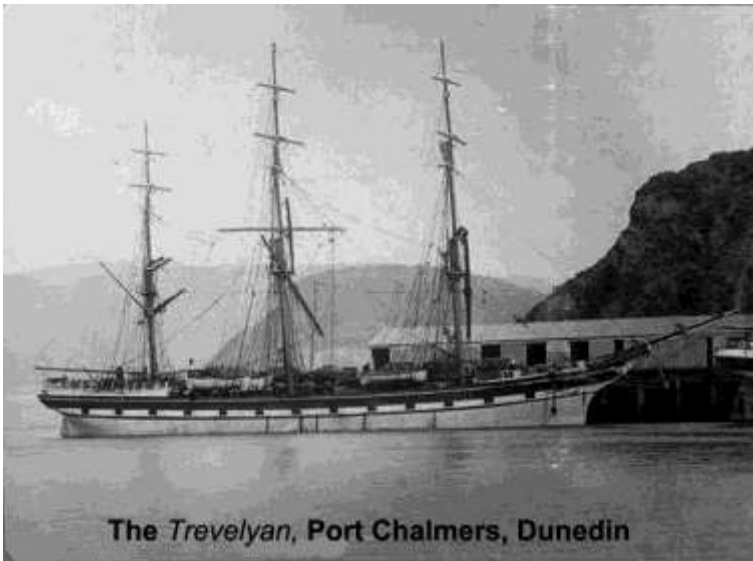
**MARRIAGE DETAILS:** 1895 Sydney, Australia

**SPOUSE:** Margaret Mounser

Edward Towsey

Apart from his appearance at home in Henley on the April 1871 census, aged ten, and the photo taken in 1878, after the family had moved to Deal, the first that we hear of Hubert Towsey, is nine years later when, with his elder brother, Arthur John and family, he boarded the *Trevelyan*, at the East India Docks, on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1880.

The ship was towed by steam tug down to Gravesend, in the Thames Estuary, where a consignment of gunpowder was



**The Trevelyan, Port Chalmers, Dunedin**

loaded. This of course, had to be done away from populated areas, just in case a stray spark were to accelerate the ship's passage to New Zealand, via the moon, in millions of tiny pieces. On the following day, the ship was towed closer to the mouth of the Thames, where she lay at anchor for two days, awaiting favourable winds.

Hubert was yet another musician in the family. He seems to have been educated in England. He might also have also studied in Germany, but it was not publicized.

Hubert apparently spent his first 17 months in New Zealand with his brother, Arthur, continuing his musical studies, or so it was reported. This would no doubt be true, but would also have been mentioned so as to enhance Hubert's stature as a musician. There are a number of occasions where we see advertisements for music teachers in New Zealand, where they mention that they studied under Arthur Towsey.



**Hubert Towsey - Ramsgate, 1878**

Hubert then moved up to Gisborne, which is on the east coast of the North Island, just down from the eastern point of the country. An announcement in the Gisborne newspaper in October 1881 stated: "*We understand that Mr. Hubert Towsey, who arrived here by the Rotorua from Dunedin, intends to start as a teacher of pianoforte and*

## Gisborne circa 1880



singing. From the fact he holds first-class testimonials from masters in England and has been studying with his brother, Mr. Arthur Towsey in Dunedin since he arrived in the colony, (whose name is sufficiently well known to commend any pupil of his), we trust that Mr. H. Towsey will soon have a sufficient number of pupils, and have no cause to regret coming here amongst us."

We understand that Mr. Hubert Towsey is engaged in organising a series of Afternoon Novelty Concerts, consisting of classical and operatic music, which, while they will present something entirely new to a Gisborne public, yet will be within the reach of all. We cordially wish him success in his spirited endeavor to elevate the popular taste for music. Prospectuses will shortly be issued.

February 1882

The Choral Society concert as advertised took place on Tuesday last. A fair house was assembled and the performance was, in the main a success. The Choral pieces especially were well rendered, and do great credit to Mr. Towsey, the conductor. He appears to have succeeded in getting the whole of the society to pay attention to the movements of his baton. The duet "Love and War" new, we believe to Gisborne, was well appreciated.

February 1882

## HOLY TRINITY CHURCH.

IT is the intention of Holy Trinity Church to give an ORGAN RECITAL on THURSDAY EVENING, the 16th inst., consisting of both Vocal and Instrumental numbers. Mr. G. J. BROWN, some time Organist of the Church, has kindly consented to assist Mr. TOWSEY. As there will be no Tickets issued the Vestry hopefully expect a liberal Offertory.

## HOLY TRINITY CHURCH.

AS the Holy Communion was interrupted by the fire last Sunday evening, it will be administered on Sunday evening next.

E. W. WILLIAMS,  
Incumbent.

I BEG to Thank every one who so kindly tried to save the Academy of Music from destruction during the late fire; also for removing my valuable Piano and some of the other Property from the building.

P. McFARLANE.

Organ Recital, February 1882

ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

THE First Concert of the GISBORNE CHORAL SOCIETY will be held in the above Hall on TUESDAY NEXT, February 7th.

PROGRAMME :

PART I.

Overture—"Gipsy Ronds," (Hadyn)—Mr. Towsey.  
 Glee—"Carnovale," (Rossini)—The Society.  
 Song—"She wore a Wreath of Roses," (Knight)—Mr. Towsey.  
 Duet—"After the Rain," (Pensuitti)—Mrs. Orr and Miss A. Taylor.  
 Glee—"Sweet and Low,"—The Society.  
 Song—Mr. Dufaur.  
 Glee—"Maiden of the Fleur de Lys,"—The Society.

INTERVAL.

PART II.

Overture—"Turkish Patrol,"—Mr. H. Towsey.  
 Song—"Waiting,"—Mrs. Orr.  
 Glee—"Now is the month of Maying,"—The Society.  
 Song—"Three jolly Sailor Boys,"—Mr. J. Berry.  
 Duet—"Come gently down a while,"—Mrs. Orr and Mr. Towsey.  
 Glee—"Since first I saw your face,"—The Society.  
 Song—"Good Night,"—Mr. Towsey.  
 Glee—"Gentle Peace,"—The Society.

PRICES OF ADMISSION—Front Seats, 2s ; Body of Hall and Gallery, 1s.  
 Tickets may be obtained from Mrs. A. M. BROWNE, Mr. T. ADAMS, and from Mr. H. TOWSEY.

February 1882

CONCERT to take place at the SCHOOL-HOUSE, PATUTAHU, on FRIDAY, February 3rd, 1882.

PROGRAMME :

1. Overture—"Zampa" (Auber)
2. Song—Mrs. Berry
3. Song—Mr. Towsey
4. Duet—Mesdames Smith and Sunderland
5. Song—Mr. Dufaur
6. Pianoforte Solo—
7. Song—Mrs. Sunderland
8. Song—Mr. Towsey
9. Duet—Mesdames Smith and Sunderland
10. Pianoforte Solo—Mr. Towsey
11. Song—Mrs. Berry
12. Song—Mr. Dufaur
13. Trio—"The Wanderer" (Abb).

ADMISSION—2s ; Children, 1s.  
 Doors open at 7.30.

February 1882

Hubert went to Gisborne as organist at the Holy Trinity Church. Perhaps he arranged this posting himself, or maybe his name was put forward by Arthur, or even by Arthur's nephew, Edward F Ward. (You can read about various members of the Ward family in several Towsey Tales and on Towsey Chart B5).

Several months later, we see that Hubert is well established in the musical life of Gisborne. The fact that the advertisement for the Choral Society states that it is their first concert, indicates that it must have been established by Hubert. All of the following newspaper entries are from February, 1882.

Amusements.

GISBORNE LIBRARY  
**DRAMATIC CLUB.**

PARNELL & BOYLAN'S HALL.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND,  
 In aid of the  
 GISBORNE LIBRARY FUND.

PART I.

**CONCERT.**  
 SONGS BY MADAME STEWART,  
 And a host of Amateur Talent.

PART II.

The Laughable, Tragio, Mirth-provoking,  
 and Side-splitting Musical Burlesque,  
**BOMBASTES FURIOSO!**  
*Dramatis Personæ :*  
 Artaxominosa (King of Utopia).....Mr.  
 E. H. Pavitt  
 Fushos (Minister of State).....Mr. J.  
 Bourke  
 General Bombastes.....Mr. G. J. McElwaine  
 Distaffian.....Mr. M. H. Smith  
 tenants, Courtiers, Army, &c.

Musical Conductor ... .. Mr. H. TOWSEY

Doors open at 7.30 ; performance at  
 8 p.m.  
 ADMISSION—Front Seats and Gallery,  
 3s. ; Second Seats, 2s. ; Pit, 1s.  
 Season tickets, 12s. 6d., for a series  
 of five entertainments, may be ob-  
 tained from Mrs. A. M. BROWN, where  
 a plan of the Front Seats may be seen,  
 and places reserved.

*The Poverty Bay Herald*

AND  
 East Coast News Letter.

PUBLISHED EVERY EVENING.

GISBORNE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1882.

Mr. Towsey's concert this afternoon was a complete success. Among those who acquitted themselves with most effect we would mention Mr. Crawford, who, in his violin solo, showed a complete mastery over his instrument; the Misses Thornton, who in their duet delighted everyone with their knowledge of stage business; Mr. Towsey, in his "Serenade," by Schubert, which we believe has become a favorite in private circles; and last, though not least, Miss Tate in her tasteful rendering of Shunman's difficult "Slumber" song. Miss Bessy Rees also was well received, and Mr. Hall was as good a usual on his cornet. Mr. Dunnet, a new vocalist, we believe, sang a couple of Scotch songs with great taste.

## Poverty Bay Herald, Gisborne, NZ 2nd November 1882

### CRESSWELL v. FRYER.

Interpleader summons. Mr. Kenny for plaintiff, and Mr. Brassey for defendant.

Joseph Cresswell deposed: In September 28th last, Mr. Towsey came to me to borrow L4. As he already owed me L16. I refused to lend it to him. I was to lend him the horse. I allowed him the use of the horse. I lent him the L4. I produce the sale note of September 28th. I took formal delivery of the mare. I value the mare at L8.

By Mr. Brassey: Towsey was not to get the horse back. He never paid me L8. He gave me a P/N for the amount. Towsey has the horse now. I remember being with Fryer in the Court when the summons was being taken out. I said I may as well summons him too.

Hubert Towsey deposed: I am professor of music in Gisborne. On September 28th I was owner of chestnut mare branded A1. I sold the mare to Cresswell for £4. (Sale note produced.) I gave delivery of the mare. I went to Cresswell to borrow money: he refused, as I already owed him money. He lent me the horse. This horse was subsequently seized by the bailiff in satisfaction of a judgment of the Court obtained by Fryer. The name of the mare is Filthy Lucre. I signed the receipt for the £4 on September 28th. When the mare was taken possession of by Gruner, I did not tell him that she belonged to Cresswell. I did not know the mare was to be sold until it was seized. The reason

I sold the horse to Cresswell for £4 when I gave £8 for it was because I wanted the money. The saddle which was seized did not belong to me. I did not make any objection to Gruner seizing the horse.

Cecil Ward deposed: I am a solicitor's clerk. On 28th September last I remember Towsey selling a mare to Cresswell for £4.

B. C. Fryer deposed: At my instance, a distress warrant was issued for the seizure of Towsey's mare. Mr. Cresswell was present when I took the summons out at the office of the Clerk of the R.M. Court. Cresswell then said that I would not be the only one in the field. Cresswell offered to sell the P.N.s. There was one for £8, that I remember distinctly.

E. Gruner deposed to seizing Filthy Lucre with the saddle and bridle. Mr. Towsey did not say anything then as to who was the owner. Towsey said he would try and raise the money to release the mare.

By Mr. Kenny: almost an hour after Mr. Cresswell demanded the mare from me. He showed me the sale note.

Harry Browne deposed that he saw Cresswell and Friar in the R.M. office. Mr. Friar told Cresswell that he was going to issue a summons against Towsey. Mr. Cresswell said he had P.N. from Towsey, one of them being for L8. Cresswell did not say he owned the mare.

His Worship ordered that the money deposited be returned, the horse having already been restored to Mr. Cresswell.

Gisborne, New Zealand 1880s - One Horse Town



There is an interesting reference to Hubert Towsey in the society column in May 1882, where the columnist is making witty comments about the guests at a wedding: "Towsey wore a stovepipe hat at least three inches taller than any other man at the wedding. He was the beau of

*the ball, dear boys!"*

An advertisement for a concert in September 1882 and the review of another concert in October, show that Hubert Towsey's musical life in Gisborne was a success. But, as we saw with his brother, Edward, such popularity did not automatically translate into pounds, shillings and pence.

In November of 1882, we see that perhaps Hubert Towsey is not doing as well financially in Gisborne as he might have hoped.

We see that Cecil Ward appeared in court to back Hubert's story of having sold the horse.

Being an article clerk in his brother's law firm, Cecil would have known all about this, as Joseph Creswell was also an article clerk for Edward Ward.

You will notice that Hubert, probably following the example of his respected brother, is also calling himself a "Professor of Music".

Whilst Arthur could justifiably adopt such a title, it must be stretching credibility for Hubert, at just 21 years of age, to also be making such a claim.

Twelve days after this court case, Hubert is mentioned as providing merry entertainment at a social gathering at the end of a day's horse racing. After that there are no more references to Hubert in Gisborne.

Seventeen months later, we see him appearing with "Madam Vesta Amor's Operetta Company" in Thames, near Auckland.

The first part of the programme consisted of a dozen songs, duets, serenades and ballads, with Hubert singing "The Tar's Farewell" and "Thou Art So Near." The second half of the programme was "Offenbach's Sparkling Comic Opera in one act; 'The Lily of Normandy'".

## WELSH FESTIVAL in New South Wales

### A DISORDERLY CONTINGENT

A disgraceful scene occurred at the close of the Eisteddfod in the Town-hall, Sydney, on Nov 10th. When the judges, Messrs John and Towsey, announced their decision in the choral competition, Mr Towsey stated that he disagreed with the remarks made by Mr Ashcroft Edwards, the chairman, in regard to the quartet singing, and as a result, when the Petersham choir, the winner of the competition, came forward according to custom to again render their selection the Newcastle contingent refused to listen to them, though the two judges notified that in respect to the choral award they were not at issue with Mr Edwards. One of the features of the singing was the splendid tenor solo by Mr H. Fletcher, of Newcastle, whose voice proved to be of such fine quality that a public appeal was made by the judges to some public-spirited men to provide funds to send him to Europe to receive a proper training.

### Hubert Towsey in Sydney, Nov.1894

I have found no further references to Hubert Towsey in New Zealand at that time. The next we hear of him is ten years later, in Sydney, where he was a judge at the Sydney Eisteddfod.

The last reference to Hubert Towsey that I have found so far, in Australia, is to his wedding, in New South Wales, in 1895, to Margaret Mounser.

The final reference that I have found to Hubert, anywhere, is of owning a racehorse, in 1896, back in New Zealand.

There are no records of births for any children to Hubert, in the Antipodes or back in Britain and no death

### Hawkes Bay Herald, New Zealand

#### NAPIER PARK RACING CLUB. WINTER MEETING, 1896,

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY 13th & 14th MAY

The following nominations were received for  
the above meeting last night:-

#### TOTAL HANDICAP HURDLE RACE, Of 50 sovs; 1½ mls.

Mr T. T. Watts' Roseall  
Mr W. Carr's b g Kauri Gum  
Mr T. Thomas's b m Progress, 4yrs  
Mr G. T. Shanly's br g Billy, aged  
Mr W. Robinson's b g Scrap fröm II., 4yrs  
Mr H. Towsey's br g Freeborn, aged  
Mr D. Hopburn's ch h Lord Raven, aged  
Mr R. M'ulloch's blk g Blackberry, 5yrs  
Mr T. Quinlivan's br g Rangipunchu, 4yrs  
Mr W. Stacey's br g Prairie Grass, aged  
Mr C. H. Lance's ch g Tenby, aged  
Hon. J. D. Ormond's b g Forty Winks, aged  
Mr W. Holmes' Umelopogaas, 5yrs,  
Mr W. Rayner's Kerry Lass  
Captain Russell's ch g Capon Rouge, 3yrs  
Mr W. Douglas's blk g Chris, 6yrs  
Mr G. E. G. Richardson's blk m Queens-  
borough, 6yrs

records or electoral registrations for Hubert or his wife.

It is possible that Hubert and Margaret sailed across the Pacific to America, where records were not always well kept at that time.

Taking the various pieces of evidence together, we start to form a picture of Hubert Towsey as no better at financial management than his brother, Edward, but perhaps without quite as reserved a personality.

The report of his wearing the tallest stovepipe hat at a wedding probably demonstrates no more than youthful gregariousness, but his later inappropriate voicing of his opinion at the Sydney Eisteddfodd, together with his brash claim in court that he was a Professor of Music, tends to signal a personality that is not just outgoing, but perhaps a little haughty and lacking in mature judgement.