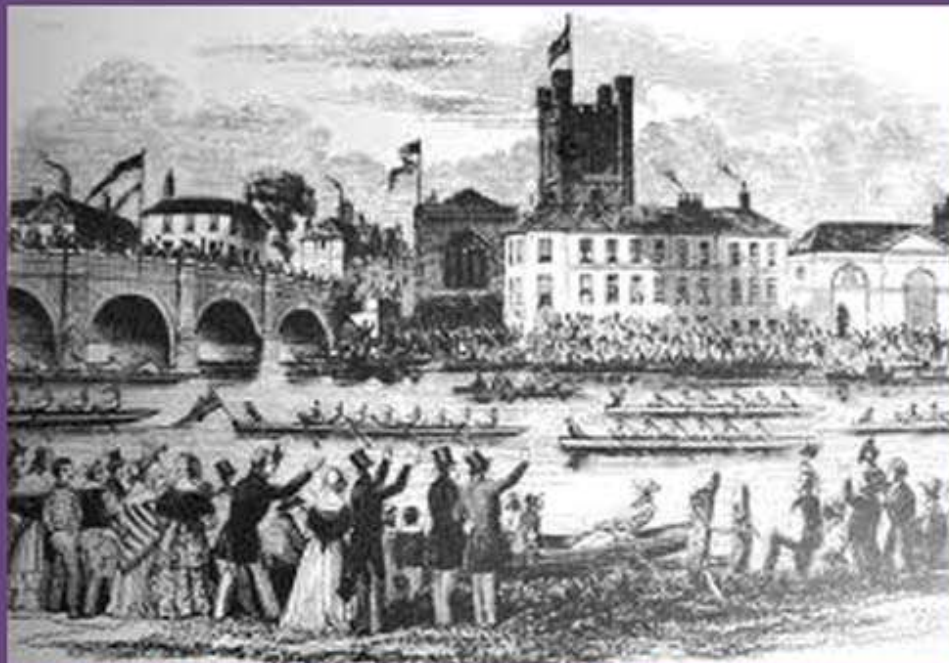


Challenge Cup
further notice.
June 1844.

Charles did not marry until he was 34 years old, on May 20th, 1845, in Henley. His bride was 22 year-old Mary Harriet Sparks, who was born in London in 1823 but had been living just a few doors along Bell Street, with her mother, since at least 1830, so Charles would have known Mary Harriet since she was seven years old



Henley Regatta, 1844
part of Thames Side on opposite bank

Jackson's Oxford Journal 29 July 1848

WINES, SPIRITS, PALE ALE, AND STOUT,
 IN CASKS AND BOTTLES,
 BELL STREET, HENLEY-ON-THAMES.

T O B E S O L D B Y A U C T I O N ,
By Mr. O W T H W A I T E ,

On Thursday next, August 3, on the premises, at Two for Three o'clock, in lots to suit private purchasers (under a Deed of Assignment).—The genuine STOCK of about 120 Dozen WINES, in Port, Sherry, Champagne, Rota Tent, Bucellas, Teneriffe, &c.; 34 Gallons of BRANDY, GIN, WHISKEY, CAPILLAIRE, NOYEAU, and SIIRUB; 220 Dozen of Bass and Co.'s and Truman and Co.'s STOUT, in Quarts and Pints; Two Hogsheads of PALE ALE; large Vats, Casks and Bottles, 450 dozen Wine and Porter Bottles, 30 gross of Corks, Hampers, Utensils in Trade, &c., of Mr. C. A. Towsey, at his stores in Bell-street, Henley.—The Wines, &c. may be tasted at the time of sale, and catalogues had at the Angel Inn, Reading; Lamb Inn, Wallingford; Red Lion, Wycombe; and the auctioneer, Henley.

Jackson's Oxford Journal 11 September 1852

HENLEY-ON-THAMES.

A meeting of the Corporation was held on Tuesday at the Town Hall, for the purpose of nominating one of the members to serve the office of Mayor for the ensuing year; in accordance with the customary routine, E. Young, Esq., of Bell-street, was entitled to priority of nomination; no other member being proposed that gentleman was elected, and will enter on the duties of the office on the last Tuesday in the present month. Messrs. H. Godfrey and C. Towsey were appointed churchwardens.

and he was nineteen.

Perhaps as a child and teenager, Mary had watched admiringly as Charles, a keen oarsman with a fine physique, had rowed up and down the river at the bottom of the street.

Through this interest in rowing, Charles, together with a group of his fellow Henley gentlemen, decided in 1839 to stage a properly organized rowing regatta in Henley, at which Charles was one of the two honorary stewards.

Being a great success, the good gentlemen of Henley decided to make it an annual event.

The success of the regatta was not just in the number of teams taking part, but also in the quality of the spectators. It so often happened, that sporting events would attract all sorts of rowdy,

drunken individuals from the 'lower ranks' of society, who would quickly lower the tone of an event to a point where 'society' would simply not attend.

The Henley regatta probably managed to maintain its dignity, because there were no large manufacturing or mining industries in the area and therefore no large concentrations of the working class. Henley, being a predominately middle class town of a manageable size, also meant that it was easy to enforce the rigid codes of dress and conduct that still attach to the regatta to this day.

The regatta became so successful, that in 1851, Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, became its patron, thereby affording the event the far grander title of Henley Royal Regatta. Since that date, the regatta has remained under the patronage of a senior member of the Royal Family.

Throughout this time, Charles Towsey, as Secretary, was responsible for organizing the regatta.

After Charles Augustus Towsey and Mary Harriet Sparks married in 1845, she moved into the Towsey home at 57 Bell Street. The Towsey family lived above Charles's wine and beer merchant business and I can only assume that the house was

bigger than it looks. It is though, hard to judge.

This building is still there, more or less. To be precise, the facade is still there. In 1990, the upper level of 57 Bell Street looked kind of original, but on closer investigation, the inside was a large hollow space, employed, ironically, as the liquor department of a vast supermarket which stretched out to the back and to one side.

By 1848, we see that all is not going well for Charles' wine business in Henley.

One part of the business was acting as the agent for a couple of English brewers, but perhaps the larger part of the trade, was in buying large quantities of spirits and European wines from importers in London, then retailing them to the sipping citizens of Henley.

With the building of the railways in the mid-1840s, enterprising Henley residents started buying their wine supplies directly from the London merchants, who would oblige by putting the purchases on the train and, although the railway did not pass through Henley itself, there was a station just seven mile away from which the canny Henley residents could collect their purchases. So, you see, there is nothing new about buying on-line.

Within four years of the opening of the railways, we see that Charles is in financial trouble, necessitating an assignment of his entire stock to cover his debts.

An assignment of this sort, was a way to avoid bankruptcy, by giving over your current stock, which would be sold at auction and the proceeds used to pay off your debts. This assignment would be agreed by the creditors, who would then divide up the money from the sale, on a pro rata basis, thereby agreeing to forgive any part of the debt that had not been covered by the sale.

In the 1851 census, Charles and Mary are living at 57 Bell Street with their first four children: William Charles, born in 1846, Arthur John, born in 1847 (not 1846, as most records in New Zealand claim), Edward, born in 1848 and Augusta Mary, born in 1850. They also had three servants.

All of these bodies left no space for Charles' poor old mother who, in 1851, was living up the road at number forty. Elizabeth Ann, at 78 years of age, was probably happy to move away from all those young children. She was boarding with a 61 year old confectioner and his 58 year old deaf, dress-making spinster sister. Elizabeth Ann died there four years later from constipation. Had she been eating too many sweets?

In 1852, Charles Augustus Towsey is listed as a burgess of Henley, meaning that he was a member of the local council. He was also appointed as a churchwarden.

Charles and Mary Towsey had another six children, (Towsey Chart C1), the last being born in 1864. until well into the twentieth century.

One event that certainly impacted on the lives of the family at that time, was Charles Augustus Towsey being declared bankrupt towards the end of 1856.

Being declared bankrupt, meant that you did not have to pay off your debts, however all of your assets were seized by the court, sold off and the proceeds divided between those to whom you owed money.

The bankrupt was barred from most business activities and property ownership until such time as, usually after a few years, they were awarded a certificate that allowed them to again trade freely. A first class certificate would allow the bankrupt to be completely released from all restrictions. A second class certificate would allow them to trade, but with certain restrictions.

In January of 1857, the court awarded Charles Augustus Towsey a second class certificate of bankruptcy. I have not been able to discover exactly what degree of freedom this allowed.

In the newspaper report of the granting of the second class bankruptcy certificate, you will notice that the leading citizens and church officials of Henley, were all backing Charles. This indicates the degree to which he was a popular member of Henley society.

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY—YESTERDAY.

The Morning Chronicle (London, England), Wednesday, January 7, 1857

Charles Augustus Towsey

The bankrupt was a wine and spirit merchant, of Henley-upon-Thames. He now applied for a certificate, supported by Mr. Chidley.

The accounts show—deficiency at commencement, Jan., 1856, £701 14s. 8d.; present debts, £1,947; assets, £670.

There being no opposition on the part of the assignees, a first-class certificate was asked for.

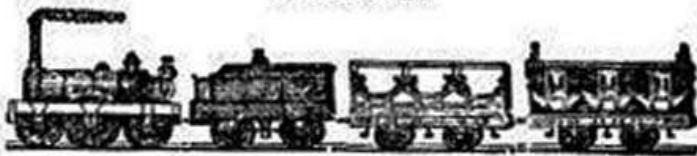
His Honour thought it preposterous that in a case like the present a certificate of so high a class should be demanded.

Mr. Chidley said that the assignees joined with him in asking for such a certificate, and he held in his hand a memorial signed by creditors of the bankrupt, whose debts amounted to £1,600, such memorial being also signed by the rectors of the parishes of Henley and Sawtry St. Andrew, recommending that the bankrupt should receive a first-class certificate. His business had been carried on by his forefathers for several generations, and the falling off of trade was accounted for by the opening of a railway station five miles from Henley, the bankrupt's customers obtaining their goods from London by that means.

His Honour, in giving judgment, said he thought the bankrupt had gone on too long, but the creditors being favourably disposed he would so far accede to their recommendation as to grant an immediate second-class certificate.

Second-class certificate accordingly.

Angel, Star, Mitre, and Roebuck Hotels, OXFORD.



OMNIBUSES to and from the Railway Station to meet every Train, and Parcels delivered and sent four times per day.

AYLESBURY, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at 8.
BANBURY, *Regulator*, mornings at half-past 8.
 " *Rival*, afternoons at half-past 4.
 " *Favourite*, evenings at half-past 7.
BUCKINGHAM, *Rising Sun*, mornings at half-past 8.

The whole incident also indicates that maybe Charles was not actually so inclined towards a merchant's life. He was, after all, cast into the role by family circumstances, but one wonders if, given the freedom to choose, he might not have chosen a life in music, or sport. We see, for instance, that Charles' financial woes had not affected his enthusiasm for the Regatta, which he was busily organizing six months later.

There is no doubt that Charles devoted a lot of time and sincere effort to the organizing of the Henley Royal Regatta, but as a later newspaper mentioned, the post of Secretary was, apparently, financially very rewarding for Charles.

The idea that Charles' interests lay more in the arts, is certainly given weight by the fact that

Jackson's Oxford Journal 20 June 1857

Henley-on-Thames Royal Regatta, 1857.

THIS REGATTA will take place on **FRIDAY** and **SATURDAY NEXT** the 20th and 27th of **JUNE**, when the following **PRIZES** will be contended for by the under-mentioned Crews:—

FOR THE GRAND CHALLENGE CUP.

LONDON—London Rowing Club ... James Paine, Captain.
OXFORD—University B. C. ... A. P. Lonsdale, Captain.

LADIES' CHALLENGE PLATE.

OXFORD—Pembroke College B. C. R. Townsend, Captain.
OXFORD—Exeter College B. C. R. J. Salmon, Captain.

STEWARDS' CHALLENGE CUP.

CAMBRIDGE—Lady Margaret B. C. Herbert Snow, Captain.
OXFORD—University B. C. ... A. P. Lonsdale, Captain.
LONDON—London Rowing Club ... James Paine, Captain.

VISITORS' CHALLENGE CUP.

CAMBRIDGE—Lady Margaret B. C. Herbert Snow, Captain.
OXFORD—Pembroke College B. C. R. Townsend, Captain.

WYFOLD CHALLENGE CUP.

OXFORD—Pembroke College B. C. P. H. Phipps, Secretary.
LONDON—London Rowing Club ... H. H. Playford, Sec.
HENLEY—Henley Boat Club ... John Giles, Captain.

TOWN CHALLENGE CUP.

HENLEY—Henley Boat Club ... John Giles, Captain.
 (Entrance not closed.)

SILVER GOBLETS.

LONDON—Messrs. Casamajor and Nottidge.
OXFORD—Messrs. Warre and Lonsdale.

(Entrance not closed.)

DIAMOND CHALLENGE SCULLS AND PRESENTATION CUP.

Mr. Casamajor, London.
 Mr. J. Paine, London.

SILVER CUP—GILLIAM's (late Walford's) Gift.
 Mr. Giles, Henley.
 Mr. F. Williams, Henley.
 Mr. Piper, Caversham.

The laws of boat racing, as settled and approved by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the principal Boat Clubs of London, will be observed at each race.

The Races will commence each day at Two o'clock.

A Meeting of the Stewards and Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, at the Town Hall, on each day, at Eleven o'clock, when the attendance of the Captains, or other representatives of the crews, engaged in the various races, is particularly requested.

The Race for the Grand Challenge Cup will take place on Saturday.

A commodious Stand (commanding a full view of the course) will be erected, under the superintendence of a sub-committee appointed for that purpose. Tickets of admission (price 2s. 6d.) may be obtained of Mr. Plumb, Market-place, and at the entrance to the Stand; which Tickets will also give admission to the Lawn adjoining the Bridge, opposite which the Races terminate.

A Military Band will be in attendance.

CHARLES TOWSEY, Secretary.

most of his children were educated into the world of music. But then, it might have been the urging of his wife, Mary Harriet, who was undoubtedly paying the school fees, that saw the children directed towards music.

As we see later, particularly in the lives of Charles' children, there is also a thread running through the family of social responsibility and involvement in charitable activities.

All of the evidence of the life of Charles Augustus and his family in England for the rest of the 19th century, indicates that there was no long term damage to their modest but comfortable middle class lifestyle, although they did lose the property in Bell Street. It is likely that the majority of the collective wealth of the family, was in the name of Mary Harriet Towsey who, as we know, had inherited considerable sums from her ancestors.

THE HENLEY REGATTA. 1860

The losers took the lead only for a few yards; it was very close for half a mile, then Cambridge won as they liked.

Immediately after the last race the prizes were conveyed to the Town Hall, which was quickly filled, and they were presented to the winners by the President of the Regatta, Lord Camoys; rounds of cheers were given with much heartiness for each of the competitors. At the suggestion of the Noble President, the name of the Secretary, Mr. **Towsey**, was given, and received with a hearty ovation, and we are pleased to mention that gentlemen who have been engaged in the regatta sports and business have on many occasions borne testimony to the business-like and gentlemanly manner in which all transactions connected therewith have been conducted by the Secretary.

It would have been these funds that paid for the education of the children which, as we shall see later, with Mary Euphrasie (May) Towsey, their youngest child, would have been very expensive.

The bankruptcy of 1857 did though, have some impact on the life of the family.

The second class certificate that Charles was awarded seems to have allowed him to continue as a wine merchant.

HENLEY REGATTA.

The Henley Regatta took place on Monday and Tuesday last, and the amount of sport on the card gave promise of a brilliant meeting, which was fully realized on the first day, the weather being all that could be desired and the assemblage of visitors unusually large, every point which commanded a view of the termination of the course being crowded to excess, whilst the Berkshire shore of the river, for a mile in extent, was lined with spectators, the bridge also bearing its usual burden of elegant carriages, filled with beauty and fashion. The Grand Stand (re-arranged and renovated), together with the lawn in front, was numerously patronized, whilst the proprietors of the inns and hotels, who speculated on a large demand on their stores, had little reason to complain. For the excellent arrangements, and the admirable manner in which they were carried out, the thanks of all are due to the Secretary, Mr. Towsey. Each race was well contested, and the interest that attached to the majority of them was of no ordinary character; altogether Monday was a day of great enjoyment. Unfortunately the weather changed on Tuesday, and although the contests were of surpassing interest, yet the continued rain from an early hour in the morning until far into the afternoon, detracted much from the pleasure of the meeting. Messrs. Lonsdale, Codrington, and Lloyd acted as judges. The first-named of these gentlemen is of the University of Cambridge, the next of Oxford, and the last of Cambridge.

29 June 1861

Of course the premises at 57 Bell Street had been surrendered, so we see that by the 1861 census, Charles is trading as a wine merchant and living at 10 Hart Street, just up the road from the church.

Also by 1861, Charles and Mary Harriet had nine children, of whom the six youngest were living at home. The eldest, William Charles Towsey, a 15 years old student, was staying with his great aunt, Susanna Terry at 67 Bell Street and Edward, their third child, had joined Arthur John at St. Michael's College in Tenbury, where their studies were centred around music.

An advertisement from 1863, shows that Charles Towsey was the Henley agent for an insurance company.

Ind, Coope & Co's. Romford Ales.

SOLE AGENT

CHARLES TOWSEY.

WINE AND BEER MERCHANT.

HART STREET, HENLEY.

Agent for Bass & Co., Allsopp & Sons, Guinness & Co.

Henley-on-Thames Royal Regatta, 1862.

THIS REGATTA will take place on **MONDAY** and **TUESDAY** NEXT the 7th and 8th inst., when the following **PRIZES** will be contended for by the under-mentioned Crews—

Grand Challenge Cup—Eight-oars.

OXFORD	University College B. C.
OXFORD	Trinity College B. C.
LONDON	London Rowing Club.
KINGSTON	Kingston Rowing Club.

Ladies' Challenge Plate—Eight-oars.

ETON	Eton College Rowing Club.
RADLEY	St. Peter's College Rowing Club.
OXFORD	University College B. C.
OXFORD	Trinity College B. C.

Stewards' Challenge Cup—Four-oars.

LIVERPOOL	Mersey Rowing Club.
CAMBRIDGE	Third Trinity B. C.
KINGSTON	Kingston Rowing Club.
OXFORD	Brasenose College B. C.

Visitors' Challenge Cup—Four-oars.

CAMBRIDGE	Third Trinity B. C.
OXFORD	Brasenose College B. C.

Wyfold Challenge Cup—Four-oars.

LONDON	London Rowing Club.
LONDON	West London Rowing Club.

Town Challenge Cup—Four-oars.

OXFORD	Staff Rowing Club.
WINDSOR	Windsor Rowing Club.
BRAY	Royal George Club.

Silver Goblets—Pair-oars.

CAMBRIDGE	Hawkshaw and Chambers.
LONDON	C. Schlötel and H. Custance.
LONDON	L. P. Brickwood & E. D. Brickwood.
OXFORD	Champneys and W. B. Woodgate.

District Goblets—Pair-oars.

Diamond Challenge Sculls.

LONDON	G. R. Cox.
CAMBRIDGE	Hawkshaw.
LONDON	E. D. Brickwood.
CAMBRIDGE	Fixell.
OXFORD	W. B. Woodgate.

N.B. The laws of boat-racing, as settled and approved by the Universities and principal Metropolitan Clubs, will be observed.—The Races will commence each day at 2.30 p.m. The attendance of the Captains and other representatives of the contending crews is requested at the usual meeting of the Stewards and Committee, held each day at 11 o'clock. A commodious Stand will be erected.—Tickets of admission (2s. 6d. each) may be obtained of Mr. Plumble, Market-place, and of Mr. Henry Clements, Bell-street, or at the entrance to the Stand, which Ticket will also give admission to the Lawn adjoining the Bridge. The Band of the Second Oxfordshire Volunteer Rifle Corps will be in attendance.

CHARLES TOWSEY, Secretary.

This shows that although he continued on with his wine merchant business in Hart Street, he was also branching out into other fields.

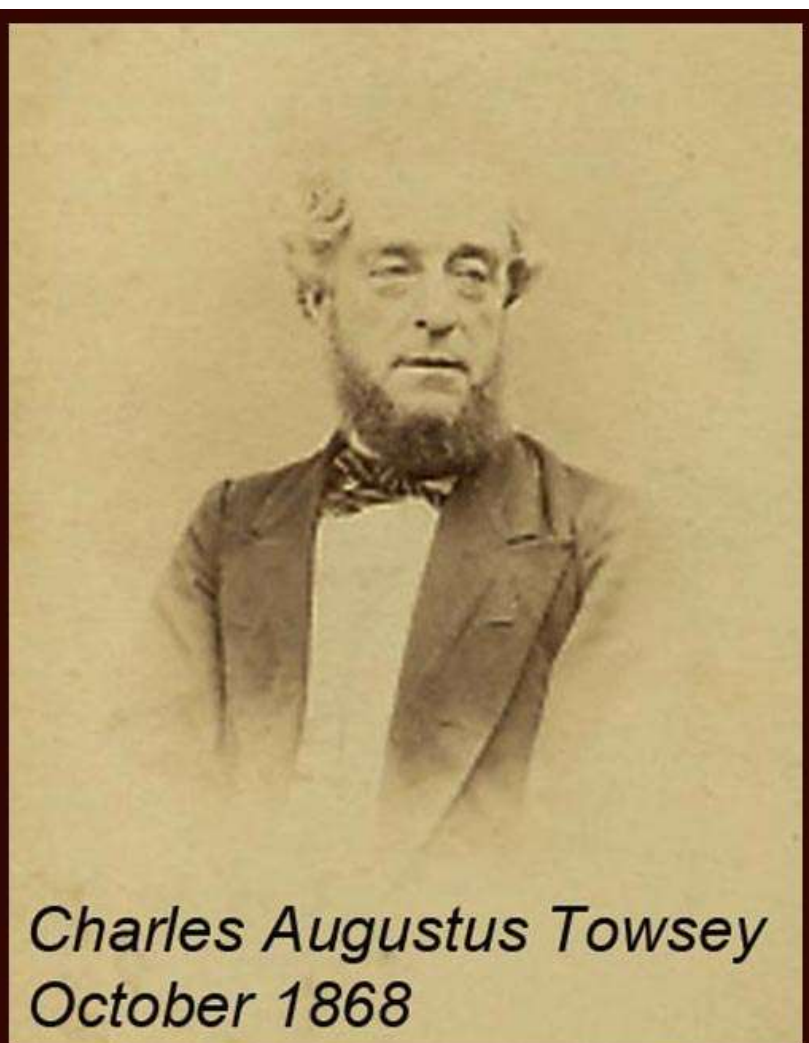
Charles and Mary's tenth and last child, Mary Euphrasie Towsey was born in 1864. Two years later, their seventh child Gertrude ("Gerti"), died at nine years of age.



Gerti Towsey circa 1865

For some time in the 1860s, or earlier, Charles Towsey owned, or more likely leased a pub called "The Bull" at 25 Hart Street.

At the time of the census in April 1871, the family were still living at 10 Hart Street, but on that particular night, only Charles and three of his children were at



Charles Augustus Towsey
October 1868

home. That is, his eldest daughter, Augusta Mary, then aged 21, Alfred, aged 16 and Hubert, aged 9.

The three eldest boys, William, Arthur and Edward, had all

HART STREET HENLEY

Sale of useful and modern Household Furniture and effects, the property of C. Towsey Esq. who is removing.

Mr. W. H. Cooper has been favoured with instructions to sell by auction on the premises on Wednesday July 5th, 1871 at 11 o'clock precisely.

THE FURNITURE AND EFFECTS

comprising mahogany and painted wardrobes, toilet tables, washstands, iron bedsteads, capital bedding, blankets, linen &c. Brussels and tapestry carpets, chairs and easy chairs covered in chintz, mahogany bookcase, walnut loo tables, capital pianoforte in handsome walnut case, china, glass and various useful articles.

May be viewed the day previous to and morning of sale and Catalogues had at Mr. W. H. Cooper, Auctioneers &c. Bell Street, Henley-on-Thames and Oxford St. Reading.

KINCH'S HENLEY ADVERTISER

24th June, 1871

Jackson's Oxford Journal 27 June 1874

STEWARDS' CUP.

FIRST HEAT.

London Rowing Club ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Kingston Rowing Club ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2

Won easily.

SECOND HEAT.

Dublin ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Thames Rowing Club ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2

The weather on Thursday was most delightful. There was a very large company present, and the scene altogether was a very brilliant and animated one. The racing was almost all exceedingly good, and the public appeared to feel a keen interest in the various contests. The race for the Town Cup was a surprise; the Marlow crew, a young one, made a most creditable appearance for a local four, quite rowing away from their opponents, the Henley crew, and winning most easily. Altogether a more satisfactory aquatic meeting could scarcely occur. At the termination of the racing, the prizes were presented to the winners by the President of the Regatta, Lord Camoys, on the lawn in front of the Red Lion Hotel. His Lordship was assisted by the Secretary, Mr. Towsey, and the Rev. R. W. Risley, one of the umpires, and as each prize was presented the fortunate winners were greeted with hearty applause. The following are the results of the races:—

GRAND CHALLENGE CUP FOR EIGHTS.

London Rowing Club ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Eton College Boat Club ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Thames Rowing Club ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3

gone to New Zealand several years earlier.

Of the others, Connie, aged 12 and May, aged 7, were lodging in a guest house in Brighton, enjoying the first warmth of spring at the seaside with their mother. Edith was teaching at Spring Hill, a private school at Nailsworth, in one of the Stroud Valleys of the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire.

Jackson's Oxford Journal 3 April 1875

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Notice is hereby given to persons Assured against Fire, that the renewal receipts for Premiums due at Lady Day are in the hands of the several Agents of the Corporation, and are ready to be delivered, and that Assurances on which the Premium shall remain unpaid after 15 days from the said Quarter-day will become void.

Fire, Life, and Marine Assurances can be effected with the Corporation.

The Directors are ready to receive applications for Agencies.

JOHN P. LAURENCE, Secretary.
AGENTS.

Bampton, E. R. Farbrother; Banbury, George Garaner; Bicester, W. F. Painter; Chipping-Norton, Samuel Pryer; Oxford, William Holiday; Wheatley, John Cook; Henley-on-Thames, Charles Towsey.

Jackson's Oxford Journal 3 April 1875

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Charles Towsey retired in July 1871 and the few family members still at home moved to Deal, near Ramsgate on the Kent coast.

The family would no doubt have taken their most important pieces of furniture with them to Kent, but the list of items being sold is of some interest, nevertheless.

A Brussels carpet is one of good quality, made of wool on a linen background. A loo table is a round card table with a single, central pedestal, where the top can fold down for ease of storage. Selling more than one loo table

Henley Royal Regatta 1877



possibly indicates that the Towseys enjoyed card parties. As to the piano: being the middle of the Victorian era, when furniture became bulky and overly decorated, means that the 'handsome walnut case' of the piano, must have been at least elaborately carved, but just as likely ponderously kitsch.

Alfred Morell Towsey, their sixth child, died in 1872 at seventeen years of age from kidney failure. He died at the family's rented home, Clevedon Villa, in Deal. The newspaper report poignantly pointed out that his father was with him when he died.

Edith Margaret (Charles and Mary's fifth), married Reverend John Beers in Ramsgate in September 1876. The notice in the Thanet Guardian of Saturday, September 30th, says: *Marriage: Sept 19th at Christ Church. Rev John B. Beers of Notting Hill, eldest son of Rev. James A. Beers, Rector of Ballyroney, County Down, to Edith Margaret, eldest daughter of Charles Towsey Esq of Ramsgate, late of Henley-on-Thames.*

Edith and her husband, who did not have any children, spent at least the next 30 years moving frequently from one parish to another, staying in several for no more than one year. Were his sermons that boring?

Although the family had moved away from Henley, Charles would frequently travel back up from the coast, staying at a guest house during whatever time was required for the management of the Royal Regatta each year. We see that through the 1870s, he was also still acting as an insurance agent.

imagine her enthusiastically dressing up in her 86 year-old aunt's old threads.

At the time of the April 1881 census,

Extract from

Memoirs of The Thames Rowing Club 1874 - 1882

Weighing in for Henley Royal Regatta, 1878
(Hastie was the team cox and captain)

But our rule, after we were through staleness, was never to row slowly or without power; always to be smart, and to pull and shove hard, whenever we were out in any racing boat.

Another (rather absurd) tradition of ours was, always to appear as light a crew as possible on the programme. So, on weighing day, we used to have a light breakfast, go out early, and stay out a long time, doing a very hard morning's work, and go up to weigh last of all. In 1878 we had rather a lark with old Towsey (the then Secretary), and really there might have been a row about it—and, when one thinks of it, it was not quite the thing, perhaps. We had never contemplated getting under the 11 stone average, but when the last man came off the scale, it was seen we were only 2 lbs. over. So Hastie (a born huckster and humbug) began on Towsey, that there was a mistake here and there. Old Towsey said, "Well, gentlemen, I think the weights are right, but I shall be happy to check them for you." What do you suppose Hastie got us all to do then? Why, to pull off our shoes, and get into the scales, each man with Safford's (the cox's) canvas slippers in his hands—and old Towsey stood it.

Only when our No. 5, nearly 6 foot 3 inches, and immense of limb, with a foot a yard long, sat on the scale, Towsey looked at him, and looked at the 7-inch (or so) slippers in his hand, and asked him if he did not put his shoes on to row. But he passed him, and we got under the average, by 4 lbs. or 5 lbs., I think. It was so late there was not another soul in the place. I think old Towsey liked us, and at the same time did not think we had the ghost of a chance. We did not think so, ourselves.

"Old Towsey" - Charles Augustus Towsey, 1811-1883

Jackson's Oxford Journal 3 February 1883

HENLEY-ON-THAMES.

DIED.—Jan. 25, suddenly, at Lowestoft. DEATH OF
MR. CHARLES TOWSEY, of Henley-on-Thames, aged 71.

—All persons interested in Henley Regatta will hear with much regret of the death of Mr. Charles Towsey, who had been the Secretary of that institution ever since it was founded in 1839. Mr. Towsey had been an oarsman in his youth, and till about ten years ago had carried on business as a wine merchant in Henley-on-Thames. He then retired from business and resided at Deal, but never relinquished his interest in the regatta which he had done so much to promote. He assiduously attended to all duties as Secretary, journeying from Deal to Henley for all official meetings and for the conduct of the regatta each summer. During the winter he had been in failing health, and on Friday last he died at Lowestoft. He was in his 72nd year.

Charles Augustus was at the lodging house of Annie Bates, in Hart Street, Henley. He may well have been in Henley working on plans for that year's Regatta, or to deal with some other small business interest. Mary Harriet, at 53 years of age, was finally free from all parental responsibilities and staying at a beach-side hotel in St. Leonards-on-Sea, near Hastings.

Charles and Mary's youngest son, Hubert, had sailed to New Zealand a year earlier, as we shall see later and May had started a four year musical education in Berlin, about which we will also hear more later.

Connie, then 22 and calling herself a school teacher, was living with the family of John Sayer, a wealthy fish monger, in Lewisham, south London, as governess to his 5 year-old triplet girls (born 3rd Qtr. 1875, Wandsworth).

The ever mobile Edith and John Banks Beers, were in Essex, where he was Curate at Braintree. Edith was also blessed with having her widowed mother in-law, 61 year-old Alice Beers, living with them.

At about that time, but possibly as early as 1880, Charles and Mary Harriet had moved from Deal up to Lowestoft, which is about the most easterly spot on the English coast, in Suffolk. It was here that Charles Augustus Towsey died from cancer at 71 years of age, on 25th January, 1883, at the small village of Mutford, just outside Lowestoft.

He had already disposed of whatever estate he might have accumulated since his bankruptcy, because the balance which he left to his wife in his will was valued at just £25-15-0.