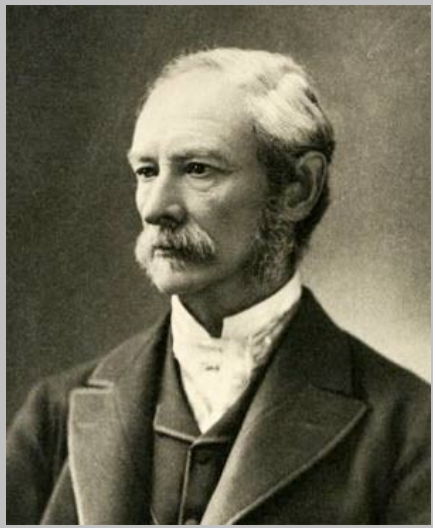


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Townsend, Frederick (1822 -1905)

Posted on [February 19, 2011](#) by [Chris](#)



Frederick Townsend was born in Rawmarsh, Yorkshire, where his father the Rev. E J Townsend was Rector. He was the grandson of Mr Gore Townsend of Honington Hall, Warwickshire. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge (where he took his B.A. in 1850).

Whilst at Cambridge, he became acquainted with Babington and William Newbould, with whom he undertook botanical rambles in the vicinity of Cambridge. Newbould was Curate at Bluntisham, near to Cambridge. He and Newbould first met at Madingley, on one of Henslow's 'botanical excursions'.

Whilst young, Townsend expressed the desire to train as an artist and traveled to Italy with Paul Naftel (water colour painter & teacher); though he did not become an artist – he continued to draw and became an accomplished photographer. He was much influenced by the writings of Ruskin.

In 1863, he married Mary Butler and they settled in 1865 at Shedfield Lodge, Wickham Hampshire. They stayed here until 1874, when on the death of his uncle, he succeeded to the 'family residence' of Honington Hall in Warwickshire. Here, he created a beautiful garden which contained many of the plants that he collected on his travels not only in Europe, but also America and Canada (which he visited in 1891). He also involved himself with the local community (library, hospital etc).

His botanical knowledge and interests were apparent from his Cambridge days onwards and he soon published his first paper on *Glyceria pedicellata*.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

Nov. 12th, 1846.—Dr. Balfour, President, in the chair.

The following communications were read :—

I. On the species of *Glyceria* by Mr. Fred. Townsend, of Ilmington, Warwickshire. In this paper the author gave full descriptions of *Glyceria fluitans*, Br., *G. plicata*, Fries, and of a supposed new species found in Cambridgeshire and Warwickshire, which he proposes to name *G. hybrida*, and pointed out the distinctions by which they may be known from each other.

III. On a supposed new species of *Glyceria*.
By FREDERICK TOWNSEND, B.A.

READ 13TH DECEMBER 1849.

IN 1846 I drew up a description of a supposed new species of *Glyceria*, which had probably been confounded with other described species, viz. *G. fluitans* and *G. plicata*; and a paper on the three plants was read before the Botanical Society of Edinburgh on November 9 in that year, but for the purpose of adding the results of further observations, it was not then published. Revised characters for, and some remarks upon, the three supposed species are now again submitted to the Society.

(Transactions and proceedings of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, Volumes 3-4)

Many of his subsequent papers were concerned with the “elaboration of segregates” and he published on the morphology of *Carex* and other monocots. He published a paper in French on *Veronica lilacina*, a plant found by him on the Bel Alp, Valais in the Bull. Soc. Bot. France. However, his main work was the ***Flora of Hampshire***, which he worked on whilst resident in that county. Though it was nearly complete by 1880, a period of illness delayed the publication of this work so that it did not appear until 1883. The second edition of this volume appeared in 1904 – with the help of E S Marshall. Townsend was first to indicate the distinctiveness of the *Spartina* later to be described as a species -by Henry and James Groves – in his honour *i.e. Spartina x townsendii*.

Townsend’s life at Honington is perhaps best summed up by a comment in the local newspaper which wrote “ *a generous landlord and an ideal country squire*”. He was for some time the Unionist MP for Stratford upon Avon and was described as a staunch churchman. Those that knew Townsend well, spoke of the respect and esteem in which he was held by all, and of his generous, kindly nature. His friend, William Newbould was a frequent visitor to Shedfield and Honington, and at some point undertook clerical duties during a vacancy in the family living in Warwickshire.

He became a Fellow of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, The Linnean and a member of the Societé Botanique de France.

Information from his obituary in the [Journal of Botany 1906](#) , p 133

The Herbarium, with the MSS. and drawings of the late Joseph Woods, Esq., author of the ‘Tourist’s Flora,’ have become the property of F. Townsend, Esq.

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