

CHARLES TODD AND ALICE née BELL AT HOME IN ENGLAND

THE EARLY YEARS

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PREFACE

Much has been written about the lives of Charles and Alice in Australia but rather less about their early years in England. Until the mid 20th century many Australians referred to Great Britain as 'Home'. When Charles and Alice set sail for Adelaide in 1855 they were leaving behind not only their own immediate families and friends but also the familiar environment of 'Home'.

Whilst the biographies, listed under 'Sources and Further Reading', record the main events of Charles' career; this article adds observations from family papers and contemporary newspapers to provide a view of domestic life and the general environment in which they grew up.

Charles Todd's progression from a somewhat humble start in England to his elevated position in Australia is a great nineteenth century example of today's study of Social Mobility.

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Great-Grandson of Charles and Alice Todd

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CHARLES TODD AND ALICE née BELL AT HOME IN ENGLAND

Part 1 Charles' Early Years

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Fig. 1 Greenwich Hospital from across the Thames

1.1 ISLINGTON 1826, CHARLES' BIRTH

Charles Todd was born on 7th July 1826, the third of the five children of Griffith Todd and Mary née Parker; who were then 27 and 22 years old. Charles, and his older siblings Mary, then 3, and Griffith George, 1, was born in Islington which at that time was a small Middlesex town 4Km north of the City of London. It comprised two main roads forming a Y at Islington Green; Lower Street following the course of the 'New River' and Upper Street, the main road to Highgate, with the parish church of St Mary. The Todd family lived on Lower Street (now Essex Road).

Little is known about Islington in Charles' first years except that in the Church of England Parish of Islington there were at least six other chapels or meeting rooms used by other Christian denominations known as Dissenters or Non-Conformists.¹ The Todd family were Dissenters. Non-Conformist (Dissenters) refuse to conform to the tenets of the Church of England. The various denominations disagreed on matters of doctrine, church government, practices and attitudes to ministry. Islington was noted for accommodating many such Dissenter groups.

Despite family connections to Islington², in about 1830 Griffith and Mary moved across London to Greenwich to take advantage of the major development of the urban centre.



Fig. 2 Move South from Islington to Greenwich

1.2 GREENWICH 1829/30, CHARLES' BOYHOOD

There has been a settlement since Roman times on the southern bank of the River Thames at Greenwich in Kent, 9Km downstream from the City of London. A Royal Palace and hunting lodge were built there and later replaced by the Queens House (1636) and the Royal Hospital for Seamen (1712); the Royal Observatory (1676) replacing the ruins of Roman fort in the park.



Fig. 3 St Alphege's Church South end of Church St.

Key: Star==Todd's Grocery/Triangle =School/Circle = Later Todd Residence

Charles' father Griffith was attracted by improvements in the town with a smart parade of shops in the newly built Nelson Street that opened in 1829. The prospect of the first dedicated passenger railway line from London was a further attraction, but was only completed in 1838. Importantly Greenwich offered the chance for the boys to be educated at good charity schools. It was a vibrant environment for the growing family, Elizabeth Parker Todd and Henry David Todd being born there in 1830 and 1836 respectively.

The Todd grocery shop was near the corner of Nelson Street at the southern end of Church Street opposite the 'The Old Church', Nicholas Hawksmoor's imposing St Alphege Church³. Initially the family lived above the shop. From the 1841 census their neighbours on Church Street between Nelson Street and Stockwell Street were as in Figure 4.

In 1835 advertisements were published by suppliers listing Todd's grocery as a stockist of 'Thorns' Potted Yarmouth Bloaters and Tally-Ho! Sauce⁴ and 'Brand's' Concentrated Beef Tea and Chicken Broth, recommended for 'persons of delicate constitution'.⁵

Nelson Street	Clothier
	Ironmonger
	Draper
	TODD'S GROCERY
	Surgeon
	Bootmaker
	Grocer/Cheesemonger
CHURCH STREET	
	Cow Keeper [A cow to milk behind the shop]
	Tailor
	Chemist
	Butcher
Stockwell Street	Oilman

Fig. 3 Neighbours to Todd's Grocery



In the same year Griffith inserted a newspaper advertisement offering rooms and stabling⁶.

It described the grocery as:

G. TODD'S Foreign Fruit and Tea Warehouse, opposite Church -street.

A Trade Card and bespoke glazed stone flagons confirm his ambitions at that time.



Fig.5 G. Todd Tea Warehouse Trade Card



Fig.6 G.Todd Stone Flagon

Kelly's directory of 1841 describes Griffith as running a Grocery and Italian Warehouse. The latter, in those days, described a grocery shop that also sold some 'foreign' wares, such as dried pasta, dried fruits, tins of anchovies as well as salt, soap and various kinds of oil and wine.

As an established trader Griffith witnessed documents for others⁷ and was elected as an Overseer⁸ for managing the lighting and watching (crime prevention measures) in Church Street.

Exactly when Griffith closed his Grocery shop is uncertain but general lack of business success and the prospect of the proposed major work immediately adjacent to the shop for the extension of the railway to Maze Hill were factors.

Charles spent time in the shop with the staff including opportunities to ride on the cart with the old porter, Samuel Hamerston, delivering groceries to as far away as Southend, now part of Lewisham, 10Km south of Greenwich⁹. Various errand boys, the children of neighbours, were around to talk to as was their servant Catherine Hallit, who was described in court in 1840 as 'a very interesting-looking young lady of 20' after she had been assaulted on the way to get supper beer for Griffith from the nearby White Hart pub, at about 10pm one night.¹⁰

Charles, his brother Griffith George and other siblings remained in contact with their paternal cousins, the children of Uncle William, who lived near Islington. In 1835 Charles, his siblings and cousins were all baptised on the same day. The fact that youngest was 4 years old suggests that they were Baptists who, by tradition, do not baptise babies.

Greenwich was famous for the Easter and Whitsun Fairs that were held in Greenwich Park near their home. The fairs attracted thousands of people from London to enjoy themselves both in the park with shows, stalls and dancing and by frequenting the town's pubs and tea rooms. Often new attractions appeared such as the 'Voyage Volante' from France when Charles was 9 years old. It comprised suspended boats holding four people that tossed and pitched as the carrousel rotated. Charles Dickens, who famously wrote about the squalid living conditions of the urban poor, was a visitor to the fairs at Greenwich and described the somewhat boisterous goings on in the 'Sketches of Boz'.

Later, in 1857, the fairs had to be banned because of the pickpockets and general lawlessness that they attracted.

In the 1830's the stretch of the Thames by Greenwich was busy with commercial and some naval shipping. With more than 300 sewage outlets upstream, the water was polluted, so much so that eventually in 1858 the Big Stink motivated the building of Bazalgette's great sewer system. Ignoring the risk, local children mudlarked on the shore at low tide and even swam in the river. Charles and his brother enjoyed fishing¹¹. It is worth noting that despite the polluted river, Charles and all his siblings survived to adulthood, unlike Alice Bell's family in Cambridge. The residents of Greenwich took the precaution of drawing water from the streams feeding the Thames and not the river. The Royal Hospital was fed via special conduits designed by Hawksmoor which supplied water, filtered naturally through the ground of Greenwich Park, from the elevated area of Blackheath above.

The Thames flooded frequently during Charles' youth, in October 1841 the water covered the lower part of Church Street ruining the stock in the cellars of the bakery and the other shops within 120metres of the river¹². The risk for Griffith's grocery at the top of the street was surface stormwater from the hill above.

While living in Greenwich, where many of the Navy's old seaman resided at the Royal Hospital, Charles learnt of the world beyond the confines of the town. Charles and Griffith were very friendly with one old salt¹³ who had served at Trafalgar and enjoyed recounting stories of his voyages to anyone who would listen. Additionally at home Charles learnt about Brazil, where his maternal aunt Ann Parker was a governess in Bahia.¹⁴ Australia would have been mentioned in connection with the hulks of old warships moored along the river which had been used to hold convicts awaiting deportation to the colonies. An expensive table telescope engraved CT 1839, that was discovered near Adelaide, might have belonged to Charles and indicate an interest in astronomy while still at school. The provenance of the telescope however remains unsubstantiated¹⁵.

In addition to meeting the suppliers and customers of the shop, Charles spent time with other residents of Greenwich recalling, many years later, an old blind lady who made a lasting impression on him handling wool with her very sensitive fingers.¹⁶

1.3 EDUCATION & THE START OF HIS CAREER 1841

In 1841 Charles, left the Grey Coat School, maintained by the John Roan charity. For Charles it was conveniently located in the road opposite the grocer's shop. The school¹⁷ had 200 boy pupils aged from 7 to the leaving age of 15. A single master assisted by 'Monitors' (some of the older boys) taught Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and the Catechism. Neat handwriting was encouraged.

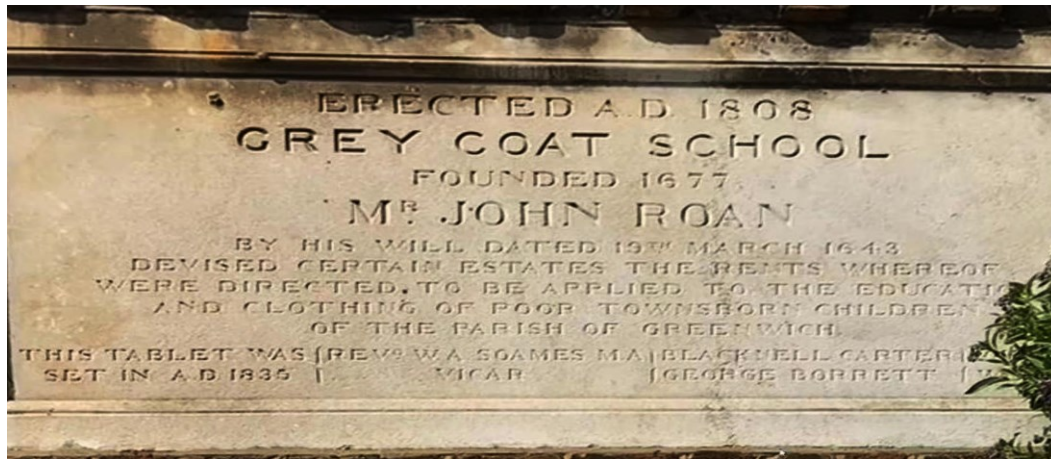


Fig. 7 Grey Coat (Roan) School Tablet.

ERECTED AD 1808, GREY COAT SCHOOL, FOUNDED 1677, Mr JOHN ROAN
By his will dated 19th March 1643, devised certain estates the rents whereof were directed to be applied to the education and clothing of poor townsborn children of the parish of Greenwich
This tablet was set in AD 1835
{Rev WA Soames MA Vicar} {Blackwell Carter George Borrett} Church Wardens

His leaving school coincided with changes at home, for in January 1841 his father advertised¹⁸ for some help!



The 'young gentlemen' were the teenagers Charles and his brother Griffith George! From a comment in a letter a few years later, the boys were close and probably quite a handful, the most likely reason for the advertisement being the failing health of their mother Mary who was caring for the 5 year old Henry at home.

Charles' father was a respected tradesman but the family must have been considered to be poor for the boys to have to have been admitted to the charity school. With this background Charles' future depended entirely upon his own hard work and a great deal of good fortune. Charles, not for the last time in his life, was in the right place at the right time, when within a few months of leaving school, George Airy, the Astronomer Royal, received funding for a project to convert the data from many years of astronomical observations into a standard form. The task required the mathematical skills of a team of human Computers, mostly drawn from the local schools.

The young Charles, with his acknowledged proficiency in mathematics, was selected by Professor Airy, who was a Governor of the Grey Coat School¹⁹, to become a Computer at the Royal Observatory at the top of the Park.

Fig. 8 Routes to School and the Observatory

Charles joined eleven others, some older than himself, in the Meridian Building being paid the equivalent of about sixpence per hour. Sixpence was the price of a railway ticket in an open carriage from Greenwich to London.²²

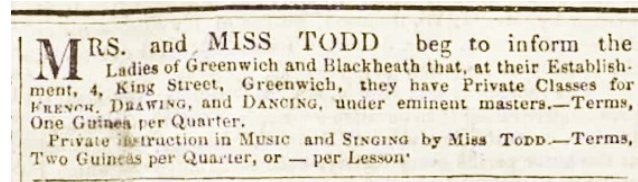
Fig 9 Meridian Building Greenwich Observatory

Charles' older brother, Griffith George who left home in November 1843 to sign on with the East India Company to become a Bengal pilot, questioned Charles' future prospects at the Observatory. In a letter home from Calcutta, dated April 1844²⁵, Griffith George remarked 'I hope that if he leaves the Observatory that he will (*find*) as good a situation as it (*is*).'. He adds 'I wish he was out here with me'. In the event Charles did leave the Observatory in December 1844 but rejoined a year later. What he did during the year is not known.

The letter from Griffith George was addressed to King Street indicating that the Todds had moved home from Church Street around the corner to No.4 King Street, close to the gates of Greenwich Park. In 1851, an advertisement described No. 4 as a Private Dwelling House with Garden and Premises (outbuildings) with a rent of £45 p.a.²⁶. Today a row of 1870 style terraced houses stand where the Todd's once lived. The move may have enabled them to let out the rooms above the grocery for more than the rent of the King Street house.

In December 1845 Charles rejoined the team of Computers at the Observatory and was soon promoted by his superior James Glaisher to undertake astronomical and meteorological observing duties. But in February 1847 he was laid off,²⁷ presumably because of budget constraints.

Meanwhile, late in 1846, in an attempt to bolster the family income, Mary and her mother placed newspaper advertisements²⁸ offering lessons:



The address given was their home at 4 King Street. These advertisements perhaps foretold that, after her marriage to Samuel King, Mary would set up of a school.

While out of work in 1847 Charles learnt of a vacancy at the Observatory in Cambridge. Determined as ever, Charles wrote to Glaisher in Greenwich asking to be recommended for the post of Junior Assistant at Cambridge, some 80Km (50 miles) north of his boyhood home. Without hesitation Glaisher wrote the following to Professor Challis:

*"I think that Mr. Todd will suit you very well. I found him most useful and I was sorry when he had to leave the Observatory"*²⁹

The glowing testimonial letter by Glaisher that Charles presented at his interview indicates that his positive attitude and attention to detail at Greenwich had been noted.

*'The bearer of this is Mr. Todd in whom I hope you will find a faithful and useful assistant. I have every reason to think that you will do so as I believe him to possess several necessary qualifications for a good observer as well as for a good and quick computer. He is neat in his work and therefore I introduce him with some confidence'*³⁰.

Having made a good impression whilst at Greenwich he now had an opportunity as a Junior Assistant in Cambridge to develop the skills and self confidence that he demonstrated later in life.

1.4 APPOINTMENT TO THE OBSERVATORY AT CAMBRIDGE 1847

As a full member of the staff at the Cambridge Observatory with a stipend of £70³¹a year Charles had more responsibilities and opportunities. His name appeared on weather reports published in the local newspapers³². Years later very similar reports appeared in Adelaide.

As an astronomer Charles's was called as an expert witness to a case of 'Ancient Lights' at the Summer Assizes in 1850 advising on the position of the sun as the claimant said light was blocked by his neighbour's new building³³. Edward Bell appeared a witness supporting the claimant's statement.



Fig. 10 The Observatory Cambridge.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS. <i>Made at the Cambridge Observatory.</i>										
Day	BAROMETER.		THERMOMETER.		THERMOMETER.		Mean Daily Temp.	Wind.	Rain.	
	9 a.m.	Ther	3 p.m.	Ther	Max	Min.				
	in.	°	in.	°	°	°	°		in.	
Sept. 8	30.028	59.6	29.916	61.0	65.2	55.9	59.1	ws		
9	29.992	58.5	29.950	60.8	65.8	49.8	57.8	ws		
10	29.775	61.0	29.692	61.9	65.4	35.0	60.2	sw	0.44	
11	30.045	54.5	30.177	56.5	55.5	43.1	49.3	ne		
12	30.338	53.2	30.381	55.1	55.1	41.8	48.5	calm.		
13	30.384	51.2	30.333	53.3	56.3	34.9	45.6	calm.		
14	30.288	53.3	30.255	55.1	61.2	46.2	53.7	ne		
Suma										0.44
Mean.	30.121	55.9	30.105	57.7	60.6	46.2	53.5			
REMARKS.										
September 8: densely cloudy during the morning; shortly after 9h. a.m. the wind increased and continued to blow strongly the whole day: the clouds were much broken in the afternoon, and from 10h. 30m. p.m. until past midnight, the sky, with the exception of thin cirro-stratus in the south, was cloudless. More or less cloudy on the 9th, and the wind blowing in strong gusts; between 6h. and 7h. p.m. the sky was nearly covered with cirro-cumuli; during the evening the clouds were much broken, and imperfect coronae were frequently visible around the moon: after 10h. 30m. p.m. the sky was overcast: the 10th was very tempestuous, the wind blowing strongly, and the sky imperiously overcast throughout the day: frequent showers after 10h. 30m. a.m.: the barometer falling until the evening, when it reached its minimum, after which its readings increased rapidly. The sky became cloudless early on the morning of the 11th, and continued so with few exceptions until 10h. 30m. a.m., after this, detached masses of cirro-strati and fleecy clouds were continually passing over, and at times wholly covering the sky: the 12th was generally cloudy until between 6h. and 7h. p.m., when it became brilliantly clear, and remained so the whole night: the temperature was remarkably low, and early on the morning of the 13th the ground was covered with white frost: the sky continued cloudless until 11h. a.m., when detached cumuli and cirro-stratus prevailed: it was generally cloudy after then, and became quite overcast at 6h. p.m.: a slight breeze sprang up from the W. about 5h. 30m. p.m., but continued for a very short period, otherwise the air was quite calm. During the morning of the 14th: dark and threatening masses of cumuli and clouds of no definite modification, prevailed: it continued very cloudy until 5h. 30m. p.m., when the clouds exhibited a tendency to disperse: they however again collected shortly after 7h. p.m., and cirro-cumuli covered the sky until 10h. 30m. p.m., after that time the clouds were much broken.										
CHAS. TODD.										

Fig. 11 Newspaper Weather Report
by Chas. Todd

Towards the end of his time in Cambridge Charles gave lectures on astronomy in the Town Hall to the Young Men's Christian Association³⁴ (YMCA). According to the press report the talk on the first of the two evenings went over the heads of some of the audience, however both lectures were well received! Astronomy was always a great interest throughout his life. Not only was he one of the first to observe the Planet Neptune, using Professor J.C. Adams' calculations, but also, he was the first person in England to photograph the Moon, using the Daguerreotype process.

In 1848 Charles was given a letter of introduction to the Bell family. Who provided the letter is uncertain, but it was probably through the church remembering that both families were dissenters, the Bell family worshipping at St Andrew's Street (Baptist) Chapel³⁵. In his first letter home from Adelaide, Charles described himself as a dedicated churchgoer³⁶. The introduction to the Bells bound Alice's and Charles' lives together for the next fifty-one years.



Fig. 12 Charles as a young man

Charles had his own accommodation in Cambridge provided by the Observatory. He was able to have his cousin Richard Todd to stay with him for a fortnight during which he showed him the Northumberland telescope for which he was responsible³⁷. Interestingly on the day of the 1851 census Charles was recorded as a 'Visitor' at the Bell family house and not as a 'Boarder' which indicated that he was not living with them. In 1852 Henry, Charles' younger brother by ten years, joined him in Cambridge to work as an extra Computer. Until then Henry had been living in Lee³⁸, near Blackheath, with his sick mother and his father who, it is suspected, was having an affair with Maria, his mother's nurse. Interestingly Charles' letter³⁹ home in 1855 gives no hint of any affair.

Charles worked for Professor James Challis who had succeeded George Airy at the Observatory. He clearly impressed both men.

He was in the interesting position of standing astride the divide between Town and Gown that definitely existed. His academic talents were eventually acknowledged in 1886 when the University awarded him an Honorary Degree.⁴⁰

Observation of the night sky inevitably meant working antisocial hours' which interfered with any outside interests and social life, however he found opportunities to study when not honing his skills at Chess and Draughts in which he excelled⁴¹. How he occupied his free time is not recorded but from comments in his letter home on the voyage to Australia, he attended church, had links with the Young Men's Christian Association and played board games with his colleagues who always referred to each other by their surnames as was then the custom.⁴²

Walking was his only recorded form of exercise; it was a forty-minute walk from the Observatory to the Bells' house in town.

1.5 RETURN TO GREENWICH. 1854

In May 1854 a vacancy for the post of Assistant occurred at Greenwich. George Airy invited Charles to return South as an observer with responsibility for the galvanic apparatus controlling the Time Balls at Greenwich and Deal, 100Km distant on the south coast of Kent. The post carried a salary of £100 a year plus £30 housing allowance⁴³. Initially Charles was concerned that his brother Henry would lose his job having been Charles' assistant and sharing accommodation. Charles' immediately asked Professor Challis to keep Henry on but he



Fig. 13 Flamsteed House & Timeball

was only able to stay until the spring of 1855⁴⁴. Charles moved south to live at No. 78 Ashburnham Grove⁴⁵ not far from the Observatory and the railway station. Late in 1855 Henry became a Computer at the Observatory at Greenwich, his address being recorded as No.14 Ashburnham Grove⁴⁶.

While Charles had been in Cambridge his sisters Mary and Elizabeth established a girls school on the edge of Blackheath with twenty five boarders aged 8 to 17. One of them was Alice Bell. His parents had also moved from Greenwich to Lee. The 1851 census records that six girls, aged between 6 and 11, were living with them. The girls probably attended Mary's school which was within walking distance of the parent's house. The census recorded Charles' father's occupation as 'Accountant'.

The Timeball at Greenwich had been installed in 1833 to signal the time for ships to set their chronometers. It dropped daily at precisely 1pm. In 1852 the manual mechanism was changed so that



Fig.14 Deal Timeball

the ball's descent was triggered by an electrical signal from a master clock. A similar Timeball was installed on the old Semaphore Tower at Deal connected to Greenwich by the telegraph wires of the South Eastern Railway. Charles had visited the site to instruct the local staff, so when the Timeball at Deal became unreliable on 30th January 1855 Charles was sent without delay to diagnose and fix the problem.

Unknown to Charles, when he caught the train for Deal, George Airy was studying his performance closely. Airy had been asked by Sir Hugh Young at the Colonial Office to recommend an individual to go to South Australia to manage the colony's telegraph system and to undertake astronomical and meteorological observations. Airy's first choice, Charles' predecessor at Greenwich, had declined having already accepted a post in Canada. This caused Airy to write to Young that he was in difficulty for although he considered Charles as his next potential candidate.....

"I doubt whether he has the boldness and independence of character which may be required"⁴⁷.

The visit to Deal was to be the deciding test for Charles.

1.6 THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

Despite the atrocious freezing windy weather, Charles completed his task in just eight days, having discovered, amongst other things, that the sulphuric acid electrolyte had frozen⁴⁸ to jelly. He then returned via Tunbridge (now Tonbridge) for a meeting, requested by Airy, with the railway company's telegraph manager to make final adjustments to the link. To his surprise a letter from Airy dated 7th February was handed to him.....

"application has been made to me by the Colonial Office for the nomination of a superintendent for a telegraph line to be laid down from Adelaide (Australia) to Port Adelaide: and I wish to know whether you would like to take this appointment into your consideration. The salary will be £400, which is equivalent to £250 in this country. Half salary will commence with the undertaking of work in London, and the whole salary on landing. An answer as immediate as possible is required"⁴⁹

Having had to stay overnight because of the snow, Charles returned to Greenwich to reply to Airy that he needed two days (almost certainly the weekend of 10th February) to go to Cambridge to ask Alice and, of course, her father for her hand. Alice, who was still 17 years old at the time, was true to her word of some five years before: “when I am old enough I will marry you”⁵⁰.

Under the terms of the appointment (see below) Charles and Alice would be committing themselves to at least three years away from ‘Home’, totally isolated from their families and friends with letters taking three months to be delivered.

On receipt of Charles’ acceptance, Airy wrote to Young at the Colonial Office referring back to his previous letter:

*“.....I expressed doubt of the personal character of Mr. Todd. I have since sent Mr. Todd on a mission.....he has dispatched the business so well as to raise himself greatly in my estimation.”*⁵¹

On hearing the news of his appointment James Breen, a former colleague at Cambridge, sent his congratulations on 16th March with a very true observation:

*“..you would be a long while waiting at Greenwich Observatory before you get such a berth....”*⁵²

From that moment on Charles’ life changed, there was so much to do in the five months before he sailed.

His appointment was formalised by the Agent General for the Crown Colonies within two weeks.

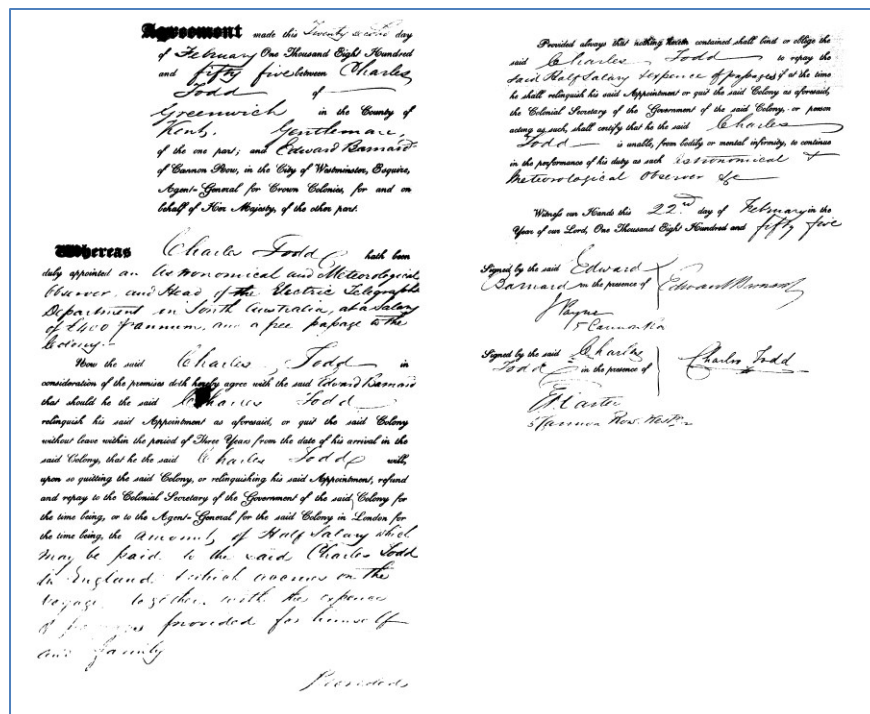


Fig. 15 Charles' signed Agreement document

Agreement⁵³ made this *Twenty second* day of *February* One Thousand Eight Hundred and *fifty five* between *Charles Todd* of *Greenwich* in the County of *Kent; Gentleman*, of the one part; and *Edward Barnard* of Cannon Row, the City of Westminster, Esquire, Agent-General for Crown Colonies, for and on behalf of Her Majesty of the other part.

Whereas *Charles Todd* hath been appointed *an Astronomical and Meteorological Observer, and Head of the Electric Telegraph Department in South Australia, at a salary of £400 per annum, and a free passage to the Colony.*

Now the said *Charles Todd* in consideration of the premises doth hereby agree with the said *Edward Barnard* that should the said *Charles Todd* relinquish his said Appointment as aforesaid, or quit the said Colony without leave within the period of Three Years from the date of his arrival in the said Colony, that the said *Charles Todd* will, upon so quitting the said Colony, or relinquishing his said appointment, refund and repay to the Colonial Secretary of the Government of the said Colony for the time being, or to the Agent-General for the said Colony in London for the time being, the *amount of Half Salary which may be paid to the said Charles Todd in England & which (unclear) on the voyage together with the expense of passages provided for himself and family.*

Provided always that nothing herein contained shall bind or oblige the said *Charles Todd* to repay the *said Half Salary & expense of passages* if at the time he shall relinquish his said Appointment or quit the said Colony as aforesaid, the Colonial Secretary of the Government of the said Colony, or person acting as such, shall certify that the said *Charles Todd* is unable, from bodily or mental infirmity, to continue in the performance of his duty as such *Astronomical and Meteorological Observer etc.*

Witness our Hands this 22nd day of *February* in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and *fifty-five*

Signed by the said *Edward Barnard* in the presence of *J Payne 5 Cannon Row*

Signed by the said *Charles Todd* in the presence of *E Carter 5 Cannon Row Westminster.....*

1.7. HECTIC PREPARATIONS & DEPARTURE

Just eight weeks after becoming engaged Charles and Alice married in Cambridge on Thursday 5th April.

At the reception Charles replied to the toast 'To the bride and bridegroom' with a speech that included a premonition of his involvement in the telegraph link connecting Australia with England⁵⁴. There is no record of there being a honeymoon as Charles had to concentrate on arranging all his personal affairs, including obtaining approval from the Admiralty, who funded the Greenwich Observatory,⁵⁵ defining and acquiring all the materials, including wire for the 15Km line from the City to Port Adelaide and some foreseen extensions. Additionally, he had to select and order all the instrumentation associated with the telegraph and the observatory that was to be built. Many of the items had to be made specially to his specifications. One task was to select staff to go with him. As early as 6th March he chose Edward Cracknell as his technical assistant but, guided by Airy, he elected not to take any other staff.

In an attempt to discover more about conditions in Australia; on 13th March Charles wrote to Charles Sturt who had returned to England from Adelaide after his expeditions of two years previously. He enquired about the availability of mechanics and labourers, the supply of timber for telegraph poles, the climate and about the astronomical instruments at Adelaide⁵⁶. In the letter he repeated that he looked forward to the time when the telegraph would be extended by submarine cable from Australia to London. Sturt replied the following day in a long letter of facts, advice and encouragement⁵⁷. In particular he warned Charles about white ants that would eat the wooden telegraph poles, the occasional very heavy thunderstorms and the swamps around the Port. He also recommended that Charles should follow Professor Airy's advice to limit the number of staff chosen to go out with him.

Charles had little time free with Alice as he was busy acquiring the materials for the telegraph and, with assistance from Airy, selecting the astronomical and other instruments and documentation required for an observatory in Adelaide.

Just ten days before departing Charles wrote a letter of thanks to his former employer the Rev. Professor Challis at Cambridge. In a rather formal letter he made no mention of Alice or even 'we'; however, perhaps fearful of the journey ahead, he observed "when, should I be spared, I am many miles distant I can assure you.....". Interestingly Charles states that his principal duties would be the construction of the Observatory and two timeballs, one locally and one connected by galvanic current at the Port.

Charles met with Captain Bruce of the barque *Irene* in early July to ensure that his and Alice's possessions and up to 70 tons⁵⁸ of material for his projects were stowed securely onboard the tiny sailing ship of just 447 tons, 44m stem to stern by 7m beam.

Charles, Alice and Caroline, her maid, boarded the *Irene* at Gravesend⁵⁹ in Kent, about 30km (20miles) downstream from Greenwich, ready for departure on 29th July.

From Gravesend they sailed out of the Thames Estuary to anchor on the 'Downs' within sight of the Timeball at Deal. At Deal Small boats⁶⁰ came out to exchange final letters and newspapers. They then set course along the south coast, passing Dover and anchoring again at Folkstone to wait for favourable wind and tide before heading for the Lizard and thence to the Atlantic Ocean.



Fig 16 Deal and Timeball from the sea

From then on they were alone seeing few other ships and just one uninhabited island until they reached Australia.

During the ninety-nine day voyage Charles and Alice joined in the social life on board with the 14 other first-class passengers, including his new assistant Edward and his wife Margaret Cracknell. Charles led services on Sundays and sadly had to take the burial service for the Cracknell's baby who died during the voyage.⁶¹ On arrival at Adelaide the *Irene* anchored outside the port enabling others to go ashore by boat; Charles and Alice however stayed on-board until 6th November until after it was in dock⁶². A few days later the passengers placed a thank you message printed in the newspaper⁶³ addressed to Captain Bruce for befriending them all and delivering them safely to South Australia.

Charles arrived in Adelaide to find that a private contractor had already erected a telegraph which was to start operating a commercial line to the Port on 1st December offering a promotion of free messages during the first week⁶⁴. Undaunted, Charles, proceeded with the construction of the Government line⁶⁵. However this prompted questions to be asked as to whether the government should be providing the telegraph lines or rely upon private enterprise to install them⁶⁶. It was even suggested that Charles Todd and Edward Cracknell should be found other work or paid off and sent back to England. In defence of the Government providing the telegraph lines, the Colonial Office gave strict instructions to Charles to provide cost estimates for the line to the Port only and to omit any costs relating to the extensions that Charles was already planning to connect Semaphore and the Observatory⁶⁷. Charles had to defend these figures before the Select Committee on Estimates⁶⁸. Fortunately the impoverished Government accepted their commitment to have the telegraph run by the Government⁶⁹. Thankfully Charles, on Sturt and Airy's advice, had not filled the posts of three additional clerks from England that had originally been suggested⁷⁰. Mr MacGeorge, the owner of the private line, challenged the Government with a petition for compensation but it was refused⁷¹.

Charles and Edward Cracknell did not delay while the politicians deliberated; the Government Telegraph to Port Adelaide was opened on 18th February 1856⁷². MacGeorge's private line remained as a thorn in their side until it was decommissioned and sold in November 1857.⁷³

Having connected the Port, the pressure continued. Links further afield were demanded allowing them little time to help their wives to settle in! As proved to be the case in the years that followed, Alice with Caroline, her maid, and Margaret Cracknell spent long days without their husbands having to adapt to life in Adelaide.

Charles however did find time to celebrate the arrival of Charlotte Elizabeth in March 1856 just four months after their arrival.



ILLUSTRATIONS in PART 1

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- Fig. 1 *Detail from G.Todd Tea Warehouse Trade Card Trade Card from around 1835. Subject to Single user Licence purchased from Agency Alamy.*
- Fig. 2 *Move South from Islington to Greenwich Detail from: Batholomew Sht30 1903. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.*
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- Fig. 11 *Newspaper Weather Report by Chas. Todd. Cambridge Chronicle 16th Sept 1848 Page 2.*
- Fig. 12 *Charles as a young man. Private Collection. Author copy available SLISA.*
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Abbreviations:

SLSA= State Library of South Australia

SRSA= State Records of South Australia

RGSSA= Royal Geographical Society of South Australia

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CHARLES TODD AND ALICE née BELL AT HOME IN ENGLAND

Part 2 Alice's Early Years

- 2.1 Cambridge, 1836 Alice's Birth
- 2.2 Death, The Background to Alice's Young Life
- 2.3 Pleasant Memories of Cambridge
- 2.4 Education in Cambridge and Blackheath (Greenwich)
- 2.5 A Glass of Sherry that Changed Alice's Life
- 2.6 A Wedding in Haste
- 2.7 Alice's Voyage into the Unknown

Illustrations in Part 2

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Fig. 1 Cambridge from 1 mile South circa 1830

2.1 CAMBRIDGE, 1836 ALICE'S BIRTH

Alice Gillam Bell was born on 7th August 1836 the eighth child of Edward Bell and Charlotte née Clark, her parents were then 42 and 36 years old. Alice's middle name, which she used throughout her life had been her paternal grandmother's maiden name. She was born at a house in Peas Hill in the heart of Cambridge near the warehouse and shop of Edward's Corn



Fig. 2 Bell's Corn & Seed business, 12 Peas Hill

Cambridge as well as trading from the shop².

Cambridge is the county town 90Km north east of London. It is best known for the world famous university founded there in 1209AD.. The Bell's business was in the overcrowded market town that traditionally served the surrounding agricultural region but, in Alice's time, was expanding and introducing new industries as the railway network developed. Edward and his fellow business men were so concerned about the state of the town that after complaining to the council they formed their own mutual support group:

'The Town of Cambridge Association'³ .

'For the speedy Apprehension and effectual Prosecution of Felons and Thieves of every Denomination and of other Persons committing Offences on the persons or property of any of the Subscribers. Instituted January 22, 1839'

and Seed business. His business and his involvement in the civil life of the town were more successful and prominent than those of Griffith Todd in Greenwich probably because the business had been established a century before Alice was born¹. It served both the wholesale and retail trade with her father and eldest brother attending markets in and around

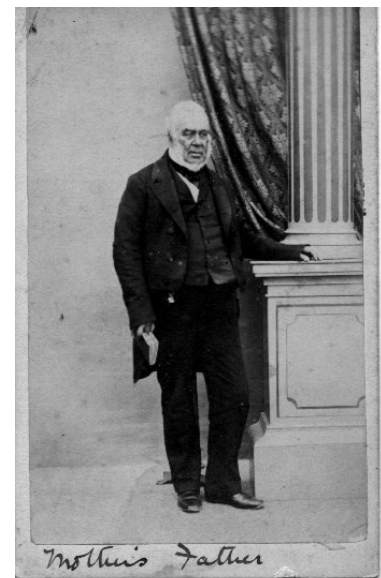


Fig. 3 Edward Bell, Alice's Father

2.2 DEATH: THE BACKGROUND TO ALICE'S YOUNG LIFE

Alice was the eighth of eleven children but, like so many Victorian families she had to live with the death of her siblings right up until she married. A silhouette⁴ of her parents and all eleven children at Christmas 1842 proved to be the only time that all of the family were alive, Alice was six.



Fig. 4 The Bell Family Christmas 1842

The happy scene above with Alice standing in front of her mother, was soon followed by a succession of heartrending DEATH NOTICES mainly published in the Cambridge Chronicle.

10th March 1843⁵

March 10, **Henry** Infant son of Mr. E. Bell, seedsman, Peas Hill

19th November 1843⁶

On 19th instant, in 21st year of his age. **William**, eldest son of Mr E. Bell, seedsman, Peas Hill, in this town. He bore his lengthened affliction with great resignation

18th June 1844⁷

At Cambridge, on 18th inst., in the 6th year of his age, **Charles**, the youngest son of Mr Edward Bell, of Peas Hill. The uncertainty of life has been awfully manifested in the above family, three sons having been removed by death in about 15 months.

3rd August 1845⁸

On 3rd ult., after a lengthened illness, **Eliza**, daughter of Mr Edward Bell, seedman, Peas Hill, Cambridge, aged 5 years

6th August 1847⁹

On 6th inst., after a most painful and protracted illness of up to 2 years, borne with great submission and Christian quietude, **James** Clark Bell, son of Mr Bell, seedsman, Peas Hill, in this town, aged 19 years.

14th September 1851¹⁰

At Peas-Hill, Cambridge, on 14th instant, **Charlotte**, second daughter of Mr E. Bell, aged 19



Fig. 5 The surviving members of the Bell family in 1855

2.3 PLEASANT MEMORIES OF CAMBRIDGE

Despite many sad family events there were regular distractions for Alice and her siblings such as the June Midsummer Fair and visiting circuses on the Common on the banks the River Cam. In November 1844 a circus constructed a brick building to house the wild beasts which were then paraded around the town. On this occasion the mayor allowed the circus to remain for a fortnight. In December each year Alice would have heard the Waites, a small band of musicians who processed through the streets on Christmas Eve attracting parents and children out to hear them play.



Fig. 10 A Waites band. 1840

For the rest of her life Alice carried memories of Midsummer Common. In a letter¹³ of 1892 to her daughter Maude, who was visiting Cambridge, Alice recalled the twenty-minute walk from home to the ferry across the river on the far side of the Common. By the riverside Alice would have seen the barges bringing goods up river from Kings Lynn until 1845 when the railway arrived in Cambridge, killing off commercial river traffic¹⁴.



Fig. 9 Cambridge circa 1888 with Midsummer Common to the North



Fig. 11 Dant's Ferry, on Midsummer Common

2.4 EDUCATION IN CAMBRIDGE AND BLACKHEATH (Greenwich)

There are few records of Alice's education which, almost certainly, would have conformed to the attitude of the time. Education (of women) was seen as a way of making women better wives and mothers, not as a way of transforming their lives. One parliamentary report in the 19th century said girls should be educated to be 'decorative, modest, marriageable¹⁵.' The extraordinary, but widely held, views held about harmful effects of education on women's fertility, held back the development of women's education. In 1840 60% of women were illiterate¹⁶. Women could study at Cambridge but could NOT graduate until 1948!

There is no record of there being a governess at home. If not taught at home there were 'dame' (private) primary schools teaching reading and writing and schools attached to a church¹⁷. At some stage Alice learnt to sing and to play the piano. Playing the piano was obviously one of her hobbies as she took her own piano out on the ship to Adelaide¹⁸.

One imagines that her mother Charlotte brought up her children strictly, controlling how they spent their time, judging by her character years later when living with Charles and Alice in Adelaide. Notably she demanded that Sunday should be dedicated to churchgoing and reading the bible or books such as *Pilgrims Progress*, forbidding any games or laughter¹⁹.

The census of 1851 records that Alice was at a school set up by Charles's sisters Mary and Elizabeth in a large house overlooking the large open space of Blackheath within 15 minutes walk of the Observatory in Greenwich Park²⁰. Charles, then working in Cambridge, had obviously told Alice's parents about the school. Previously in 1846 Mary (Todd) and her Mother had advertised classes in Dancing, Drawing, Music, Singing and French at the family home in King Street Greenwich²¹. This was a precursor to the Blackheath school established after she married Samuel King in 1850. There were twenty-five scholars and a French lady and two governess students all boarding in her house in 1851. The youngest was 8yrs old and the oldest 17.

Alice's time in Blackheath was clearly the result of Charles' suggestion and the trust put in him by the Bells. It may well have been timed to allow Alice to escape from having to endure observing her sister Charlotte's terminal illness. A gift from

Charles simply dedicated very formally to 'Alice G Bell' on 24th June 1854, (not her birthday) of a copy of *Histoire de Russie* by Voltaire in French indicates that Alice benefitted greatly from her time in Blackheath.



Fig. 13 Mary Todd's school Montpelier Row Blackheath

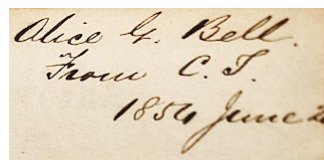


Fig. 12 Inscribed Gift

2.5 A GLASS OF SHERRY THAT CHANGED ALICE'S LIFE

During the 1840s the Bell family moved from Peas Hill near the Guildhall to Free School Lane just opposite the church of St Bene't. Years later Alice's parents moved to Parson's Court. The three locations are marked on the map. When Charles was in Cambridge they were at No.3 Free School Lane; the 'school', for boys only, of course, at that time, was the Perse School, attended subsequently by Alice's son-in-law Rev. F.G. Masters.

After Alice's death in 1898 her daughters wrote accounts of the first time that their parents met; they vary in minor details but all tell the same story²².



Fig. 15 Free Sch. Lane

Soon after starting work in Cambridge, Charles then 22, was introduced to the Bells and visited them one afternoon. Under the thawing influence of the Sherry White

Wine and Madeira Cake, Mrs. Bell enquired kindly after Charles' room and comfort. "You should get married Mr. Todd" she advised, but he replied that "No one would be likely to want to marry so dull a fellow as me".

"I will marry you Mr. Todd" said a small voice and Charles became aware for the first time of a small girl of eleven lying on a white bear skin rug in front of the fire.

Alice's reply was not taken seriously and Charles continued to be welcomed by the Bells at No. 3 Free School Lane. Interestingly, Charles, who had his own lodgings near the Observatory, was staying with the

family on the night the 1851 census.

Charles helped Alice's father in a legal dispute at the assizes about daylight being blocked by a new building²³ and he supported the family during Charlotte's final illness, giving her a present of a bible.

In May 1854 Charles was called back to Greenwich then, early the next year, he was offered the position in Adelaide. Before accepting, Charles then nearly 28, hurried back to Cambridge to pay a special visit to the Bells. Mrs. Bell enquired about the voyage and the new life and asked if he would be taking anyone out with him. Charles replied that he could hardly ask anyone to share so hard and unknown a life. It was then that Alice, for the second time spoke up and said -so simply - "I will go with you Mr. Todd." She was only eighteen.

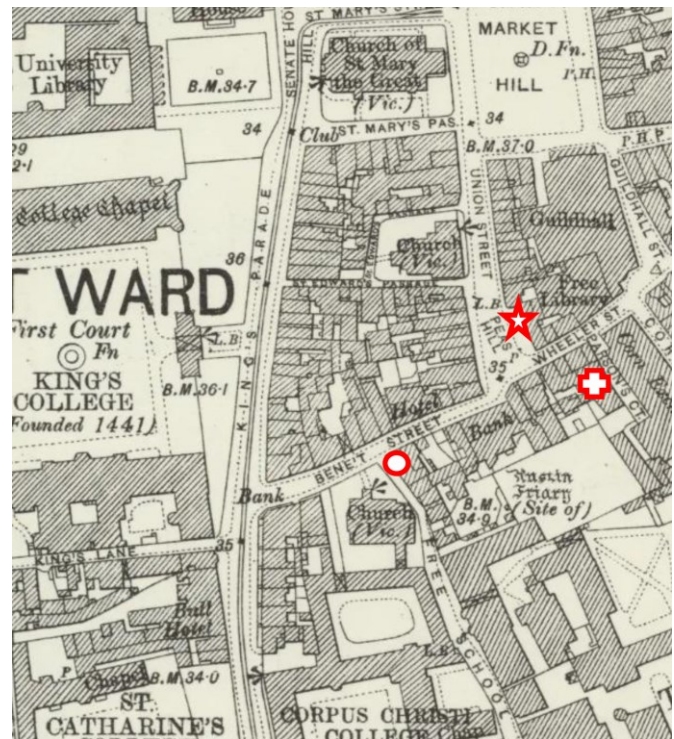


Fig. 14 Bell Homes: Star=Peas Hill/ Circle=Free School Lane/ Cross=Parson's Ct.

2.6 A WEDDING IN HASTE

On return to Greenwich Charles' accepted the appointment and it was formalised on 22nd February. The wedding took place less than two months later, on 5th April at the St Andrew's Street Baptist Chapel where the Bell family worshipped²⁴.

TODD—BELL—At St. Andrew's-street Chapel, on the 5th inst (by the Rev. W. Robinson), Mr Charles Todd, late of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, to Alice Gillam, daughter of Mr Edward Bell, merchant, Cambridge.

Fig. 16 Wedding Announcement printed 7th April 1855



Fig. 18 St Andrews Baptist Chapel. 1855
Exterior



Fig. 17 St Andrews Baptist Chapel. 1855 Interior

Only one photograph of the bride and groom is known to exist. It was almost certainly taken on the day in their wedding outfits. Black dresses had always been worn until Queen Victoria wore white in 1840, however black remained popular as it could be worn again subsequently. It was the obvious choice for Alice as she assembled her trousseau for her new life in the new country.

The pose and the prominence of Alice's rings confirm that this was their wedding photograph. The gold of the chain and rings and the skin tone were added onto the glass plate by a skilled colourist.

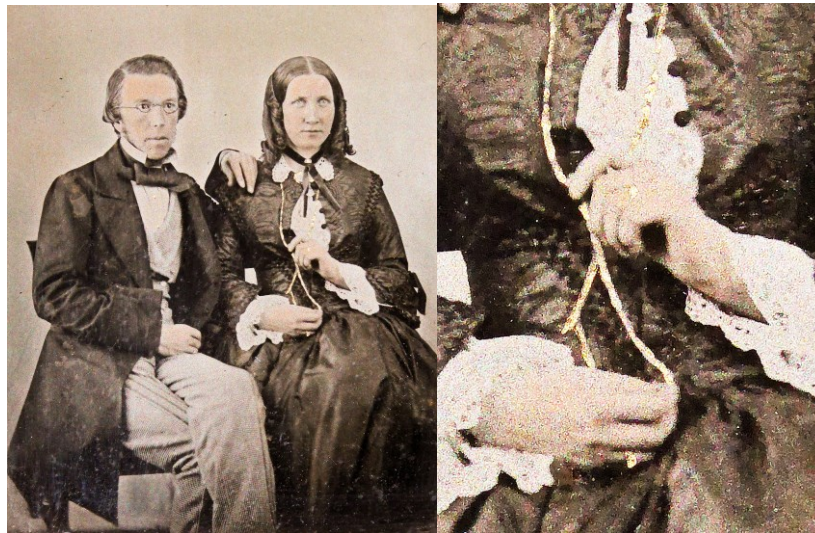


Fig. 19 Wedding Photograph & detail



Fig. 20 Greenwich and Blackheath.
Star= Ashburnham Grove/
Triangle=The Observatory/Circle=Alice's old school/
Diamond= Former Todd Grocery in Church Street

When Charles had returned to Greenwich in 1854 he lived at 78 Ashburnham Grove²⁵, in Greenwich, Alice would have joined him there. For the first, but certainly not the last time, Alice must have felt abandoned waiting until they set sail while Charles concentrated on preparing for his new job. He was required to take with him sufficient material to construct a telegraph line from the City to Port Adelaide immediately they arrived. In addition to buying things for his job Charles acquired many of the practical items that he and Caroline her maid considered that Alice might have found to be scarce in Adelaide.

Having been at school in Blackheath only four years earlier Alice would have known Charles' sisters Mary and Elizabeth and been able to explore Greenwich.

In July, shortly before they sailed, Charles was staying at 14 Ashburnham Grove²⁶, the address held by the Observatory for his brother Henry, meanwhile Alice no doubt visited Cambridge.

2.7 ALICE'S VOYAGE INTO THE UNKNOWN

Alice, Charles and Alice's maid Caroline departed from Gravesend in Kent at the mouth of the Thames aboard the small sailing Barque the *Irene* on 29th July. Alice, referred to by Charles as Lal in his letter home, was already pregnant and, as a result of that and the motion of the small ship, felt sick as they sailed along the south coast of England past Dover where they enjoyed watching the steam train from London emerge from the tunnel²⁷.

Alice's sickness subsided as the ninety-nine day voyage progressed. They had two cabins in the stern which moved uncomfortably during rough weather. They spent time up on deck watching the fish and birds or playing shuffle board. There were only 16²⁸ other passengers on board with whom to pass the time socialising in the small, shared, 'cuddy' during the voyage. While Charles studied, Alice entertained herself singing and playing the much-loved piano that she took with her. On Sundays, when it was calm, she sang at the church service led by Charles and attended by some of the other passengers and a few of the crew.

Caroline, her maid from Cambridge, looked after Alice during the long voyage but was teased mercilessly when they reached the Equator. On 'Crossing the Line' Caroline had worried that everything would turn upside down much to Charles and Alice's amusement.

They arrived at Port Adelaide in early November and after initially staying with contacts and then a week in a boarding house, they rented a two-storey house in Sturt Street which Alice, helped by Caroline, was left to manage while Charles started work immediately.

Alice had no friends of her own age and only a few contacts, apart from Margaret Cracknell, as she prepared for the birth of Charlotte Elizabeth in March, less than four months after arriving in South Australia. The relationship with Margaret may not have been easy initially as her baby had died from malnutrition during the voyage²⁹, however Margaret soon became pregnant again and gave birth in late September 1856³⁰.

Alice was young and unsophisticated and was thrown into an established older society. In her letter³¹ to her sister Sarah two years later she wrote:

"I have a few very dear friends here whom I love very much but the society here is so stuck-up. They think of nothing but dress and going about and giving parties. They dress here very extravagantly - nothing is too grand & really going out is very expensive work."

"I do not like the place myself at all and I should not be happy if I thought we should always be here."

Her last comment no doubt referred to the minimum three year term of the contract that Charles signed when accepting the appointment.

ILLUSTRATIONS in PART 2

Abbreviations:

SLSA= State Library of South Australia; SRSA= State Records of South Australia,
RGSSA= Royal Geographical Society of South Australia

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- Fig. 1 *Cambridge from 1 mile South 1830. Museum of Cambridge. CapturingCambridge.*
- Fig. 2 *Bell's Corn & Seed business, Peas Hill. Cambridge Museum. CapturingCambridge.*
- Fig. 3 *Edward Bell, Alice's Father (caption 'Mother's Father' added by daughter Maude). Author.*
- Fig. 4 *Silhouette. The Bell Family Christmas 1842. Author (also State Library SA Adelaide).*
- Fig. 5 *The surviving members of the Bell family in 1855. Author.*
- Fig. 6 *Record of Bell Family Births and Deaths (see also Transcription in Part 3). Author.*
- Fig. 7 *Engraving Market Hill with Hobsons fountain 1841. Museum of Cambridge. CapturingCambridge.*
- Fig. 8 *Pump outside the Bell business in Peas Hill. Detail from Fig. 2. Cambridge Museum. CapturingCambridge.*
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- Fig. 10 *A Waites band. John (HB) Doyle, The Waits, 1840. National Portrait Gallery NPG D46360.*
- Fig. 11 *Dant's Ferry, on Midsummer Common. Museum of Cambridge. CapturingCambridge.*
- Fig. 12 *Inscribed Gift Voltaire's Histoire de Russie... Author's family.*
- Fig. 13 *Mary Todd's school 19 Montpelier Row Blackheath 2026. The Author*
- Fig. 14 *Bell Homes over the years: Detail from Cambridgeshire XLVII.2 1901. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland'.*
- Fig. 15 *No 3 Free School. Lane. The Author.*
- Fig. 16 *Wedding Announcement printed Cambridge Independent Press. 7th April 1855.*
- Fig. 17 *St Andrews Baptist Chapel. 1855 Exterior. CAS10075. Photograph reproduced with kind permission of the Cambridge Antiquarium Society.*
- Fig. 18 *St Andrews Baptist Chapel. 1855 Interior CAS10267. Photograph reproduced with kind permission of the Cambridge Antiquarium Society.*
- Fig. 19 *Wedding Photograph & detail 1855 The Author (also SLSA) Note: The original was hand tinted.*
- Fig. 20 *Greenwich and Blackheath. Detail from London Sheet P LXXXI Surveyed 1862, 'Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland'.*

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- ¹⁶ *Literacy: Oxford Royale Academy. A History of Women's Education in the UK.*
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- ¹⁸ *Letter Charles Todd to parents from Irene 1855_ SLSA PRG 630/2/29.*
- ¹⁹ *Telegraph Todd, by Lorna Todd. Chronicle, Thursday 22 October 1953, page 14 (and 41).*
- ²⁰ *Alice at Blackheath, UK Census 1851.*
- ²¹ *Mary & Mother's advertisement. West Kent Guardian 17th October 1846.*
- ²² *Telegraph Todd and the Overland Telegraph Line Chronicle by Lorna Todd , Thursday 4 December 1952, page 24. SLS) also Maude Masters née Todd: 'One Cold Afternoon in 1848'. Author.*
- ²³ *Cambridge Summer Assizes: Cambridge Chronicle and University Journal 27th July 1850.*
- ²⁴ *Letter to Editor: Cambridge Weekly News 3rd April 1986.*
- ²⁵ *Letter Todd to Charles Sturt 13th March 1855. SRSA GRG154/24.*
- ²⁶ *Letter heading Charles Todd to Professor Challis 18th July 1855 (10 days before they sailed).*
- ²⁷ *Letter Charles Todd to parents from Irene 1855_ SLSA PRG 630/2/29.*
- ²⁸ *Passenger List Adelaide Observer 10 November 1855: page 5.*

²⁹ *Cracknell baby's death: Letter Charles Todd to parents from the Irene 1855_ SLSA PRG 630/2/29.*

³⁰ *Cracknell birth: South Australian Register, Monday 29 September 1856.*

³¹ *Letter from Alice Todd to Sarah Squires 1857 or 58. Transcription by Frank Carr. Author's collection.*

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CHARLES TODD AND ALICE née BELL AT HOME IN ENGLAND

Part 3 Visits & The Families Back Home

3.1 Charles' Family

3.1.1 Charles' Visit in 1885-6

3.1.2 Charles' Parents

3.1.3 Charles' Siblings

3.2 Alice's Family

3.2.1 Alice's Visit 1861-2

3.2.2 Alice's Parents

3.2.3 Alice's Siblings

3.2.4 Bell Family's Record of Births and Deaths (Transcribed & extended)

3.1 CHARLES' FAMILY

3.1.1 Charles' Visit in 1885-6

Charles returned to England on 10th June 1885, accompanied by his 30year old daughter **Charlotte Elizabeth (Lizzie)**. The visit was timed to enable him to travel to Berlin to represent South Australia at the International Telegraphic Conference from 10th August until 16th September. Throughout the ten-month visit Charles combined business and pleasure, meeting family and friends and sightseeing. An early highlight for Charles was a tour of the Observatory at Greenwich with Professor Airy his mentor of thirty years previously.

In London he was welcomed by the Royal Astronomical Society and by the Society of Telegraph Engineers¹ and other learned societies.

He travelled to Cambridge several times to meet his brother **Henry** who was now living there and, accompanied by Lizzie, dined with Alice's brother **Edward Bell** who was by then the mayor of the city. In March Charles made a special trip to Cambridge to prepare for the presentation on the 11th of an Honorary Degree of Master of Arts from the University, his former employer. The citation was for his Scientific Attainments².

Lizzie went with him to Berlin, taking time on their return to visit several German cities and Paris, interspersing the journey with visits to meet various equipment suppliers and sightseeing. Later Lizzie accompanied him on business to the north of England and together they ventured to explore North Wales before returning to London. When possible, Lizzie had her own itinerary, often being escorted by her maternal cousin Charles Squires whom she married in May the following year having travelled back from Australia accompanied only by her maid. It was nearly ten years after her marriage before she saw her parents again in Adelaide in 1896/7.

In London, as elsewhere, Charles and Lizzie visited art galleries, went to the theatre and took sightseeing day-trips. During the English winter Charles suffered badly from bronchitis³ and was confined to his room at times in great pain for days on end.

While in England Charles was asked to advise upon the appointment of the young physicist William Henry Bragg (WHB) to become the professor of Physics at the University Adelaide. His positive response included the observation that WHB kept off the drink⁴. Did he realise that his daughter Gwendoline would marry him only few years later on 1st June 1889?

Before returning to Adelaide he spent time with his sisters **Mary King**, who lived in Chipping Ongar, and **Elizabeth Bishop** (confusingly also known as Lizzie) who lived near Shepherds Bush in West London. Parting from Mary and Elizabeth in April 1866 was particularly difficult when he and Lizzie set sail for Adelaide.

Charles' diary has been transcribed and is held in the State Library in Adelaide.⁵ A longer article⁶ describing the whole visit is also deposited there. Numerous reports of Charles' activities appeared in the Adelaide newspapers⁷ during his visit to Europe.

When Charles was interviewed in 1905, as he approached retirement, he expressed his ambition to return to Greenwich and Cambridge once more⁸, but he never did. **Lorna**, his youngest daughter, and constant companion however did make the journey, returning to care for him until his death.



His Australian career started at the Deal timeball and ended while staying near the one at Semaphore. Charles died in 1910 at Semaphore.



3.1.2 Charles' Parents

Griffith and **Mary Todd** moved to Lee, near Blackheath in 1849/51 after giving up the grocery business; the 1851 census states that he was working as a bookkeeper accountant. **Mary** died of heart disease on 3rd May 1863 at New Cross, Deptford, Kent. A copy of her death notice was placed, presumably by Charles, in the Adelaide Advertiser on 14th August.

Without delay, on 5th July, **Griffith**, then sixty-four, married Mary's former nurse **Maria Stebbings** who was thirty years younger than him. Maria was already the mother of some five children born from 1851 onwards. Most, if not all the children, have been attributed to Griffith, their names being remarkably similar to his children by Mary. Two further children were born after they married.

Griffith died in Westminster, London, in 1878.

3.1.3 Charles' Siblings

Mary, Charles' elder sister, married Samuel King a solicitor's clerk in 1850. Mary established the school in Blackheath that Alice (née Bell) attended. How long the school was open has yet to be discovered. The first of Mary's six children was born in November 1851. The census of 1881 records her occupation as 'teacher'. In 1885, when Charles visited, she was living in Chipping Ongar, Essex, north east of London.

Charles' elder brother **Griffith George**, became a Bengal Pilot based in Calcutta. His first wife, Augusta, died on the voyage out to India. With his second wife, Maria, he had five children: Frances Ann, Griffith George, Charles Robert who grew to adulthood. The infants William and Henry died followed in 1857 by Maria. Griffith George remarried again Mary Sophia and had a son, Arthur, in 1860.

In 1847 Griffith George was appointed second mate on the brig *Salween* taking convicts to Tasmania. They reached Hobart on 1st February 1848; (almost eight years before Charles and Alice landed in Adelaide). An account of the voyage was made by a fellow seaman, who having retired due to ill health, became Reverend Horace Myer⁹. Myer recorded the voyage and remarked upon Griffith George's poor health. Griffith George died in India from sunstroke in 1861.

The three older orphaned children were living in Greenwich with **Elizabeth Bishop**, Charles' younger sister. All three emigrated to Australia over a period of six years. When Frances was twelve in 1862 she accompanied Alice Todd to Adelaide to live at the Observatory until she married in 1871. Griffith George and Charles Robert remained in Greenwich to complete of their education at the Royal Hospital School¹⁰ for which they qualified being the orphans of a seafarer. Griffith George traveled out on the *City of Adelaide* in 1867 and Charles Robert on the *South Australian* in 1868, both ships being captained by David Bruce formerly of the *Irene*.

Elizabeth Charles's younger sister married Samuel Bishop and lived in Greenwich. They had eleven children including twins between 1854 and 1872. Her occupation was recorded in censuses as 'schoolteacher'. When Charles visited in 1885 she was living near Shepherds Bush, West London.

Henry Charles' younger brother by ten years had been helped by Charles into a job at the Observatory at Cambridge. After Charles returned to Greenwich in 1854, Henry was laid off and had to wait before being taken on at Greenwich on a temporary basis¹¹. For a time he lived near Charles in Greenwich in Ashburnham Grove and later in Hackney (where his father's second wife lived). He returned to a post at the Observatory in Cambridge in 1859, marrying Emma Squires, Alice's cousin. They lived there until his death in 1900. The family connection with Greenwich continued through their daughter Agnes Maude Todd when Henry's grandson, Frank Carr, became the Director of the National Maritime Museum and was responsible for bringing the *Cutty Sark* to Greenwich in 1954.

3.2 ALICE'S FAMILY

3.2.1 Alice's Visit in 1861-2

There were many reasons for **Alice** to return HOME after six years in Adelaide for her one and only overseas trip. She needed see her ageing parents and for them to meet 5year old **Charlotte Elizabeth (Lizzie)**. Alice and Charles wanted to help his orphaned niece Frances Ann (Fanny), who would have had limited prospects in England, but perhaps the greatest reason was that she was homesick judging by the one known letter, written in 1857 or 8, to **Sarah Squires** her sister¹², in the letter (written 4 years before her visit home) she admitted "I love the dear quiet life of old Cambridge much better than the one I am now leading" and also tellingly "I should not be happy if I thought we should always be here".

In December 1861 she and Lizzie set off from Adelaide on the *Irene* which was still commanded by Captain David Bruce. They were away for ten months staying mostly with her parents in Cambridge, making at least one visit to Greenwich to collect 12year old Fanny.

In July the following year Alice, Lizzie and Fanny returned on the *Irene* to Adelaide to be reunited with Charles and her two sons 4year old **Hedley** and 2year old **Charles Edward**. The boys having been in the care of the staff (including perhaps her original maid Caroline) at their new home at the Observatory which had been completed just two years earlier.

Whatever Alice's motivation it must have been enough to justify her spending 229 days at sea and only 80 days HOME in England.



Alice and Lizzie C1862 Courtesy of Judy Munro

Alice never returned HOME to England again but lived the rest of her life in Adelaide spending the hot summer months no further away than Port Elliot. She might have considered traveling to Europe with Charles and Lizzie in 1885, but was looking after 7year old Lorna and chaperoning her older daughters.

A planned trip to Tasmania never happened! Alice died in 1898 at the Observatory in Adelaide from complications following an operation for cancer.

3.2.2 Alice's Parents

Alice's father **Edward Bell** died in London in 1865, four years after Alice's visit. A death notice in the South Australian Weekly Chronicle 19 August 1865 was placed by Alice repeating the same wording as the notice in the Cambridge Independent Press of 17th June.

Following the death of Alice's father Edward, her brother **Alfred** and her elder sister **Sarah Squires**, Alice's mother **Charlotte Bell** left Cambridge in 1869 for Adelaide accompanied by her 14year old grandson William Bell Squires both his parents having died. Alice's mother was at the Observatory while Charles was absent during the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line. Lorna Todd's articles published in the 1950's describe Charlotte as a very strict religious individual who demanded that Sundays should be spent at church followed by reading the Bible or Pilgrim's Progress. She died in 1875 and is buried in the West Terrace Cemetery in Adelaide.

3.2.3 Alice's Siblings

Sarah, Alice's elder sister, to whom she wrote, married Samuel Squires. They had a daughter Alice and one son, William Bell Squires who lived for a time at the Adelaide Observatory after Sarah died in 1868.

Edward Bell, Alice's eldest surviving brother, left school at the age of 12 and became a partner with his father in the family business in 1847 expanding it significantly over the years. He was appointed the Chief Magistrate of Cambridge and became Mayor. He died, while in office, in 1889 at his home, The Old Manor House in Chesterton¹³.

3.2.4 The Bell family's Record of Births and Deaths

Transcription of Document dated July 1864 by Mrs E. Bell				
			Birth Year	Death Year
Edward Bell		<i>born</i> 24 th Feb	1794	1865
Charlotte Bell		<i>born</i> 10 th Nov	1800	1875
William Bell	son of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 21 st Feb	1823	1843
Sarah Bell	daughter of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 22 nd Oct	1824	1868
Edward Bell	son of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 5 th Jan	1827	1889
James Clark Bell	son of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 3 rd Aug	1828	1847
John Gillam Bell	son of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 23 rd May	1830	<i>Not recorded</i>
Charlotte Diana Bell	daughter of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 27 th Mar	1832	1851
Alfred Gillam Bell	son of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 23 rd Dec	1833	1866
Alice Gillam Bell	daughter of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 7 th Aug	1836	1898
Charles Mark Gillam Bell	son of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 28 th Mar	1839	1844
Eliza Bell	daughter of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 1 st Sept	1840	1845
Henry Bell	son of E&C Bell	<i>born</i> 22 Sept	1842	1843
Henry Bell	<i>died</i> 10 th Mar		1843	Friday 6.50 morning
C.M.G Bell (<i>Charles Mark Gillam</i>)	<i>died</i> 19 th Nov		1843	Sunday 4.50 afternoon
William Bell	<i>died</i> 18 th June		1844	Tuesday 3.15 morning
Eliza Bell	<i>died</i> 3 rd Aug		1845	Sunday 5.40 morning
James C. Bell	<i>died</i> 6 th Aug		1847	Friday 7.9 evening
Charlotte D. Bell	<i>died</i> 14 th Sept		1851	Sunday 3.15 morning
Alfred G Bell	<i>died</i> 2 nd Jan		1866	Tuesday 4.30 afternoon
Sarah Squires	<i>died</i> 10 th May		1868	Sunday 5.20 morning
Edward Bell (<i>Father</i>) died at 3 Eaton Terrace, St Johns Wood, London,		10 th June	1865	Saturday 4.50 afternoon
Additional Information				
Charlotte Bell died at the Observatory Adelaide 20 th January and is buried in West Terrace Cemetery		1875		
Edward Bell jr at The Manor House, Chesterton		<i>died</i> 20 th March	1889	
John Gillam Bell		<i>Not recorded</i>	<i>Possibly 1886</i>	

REFERENCES in PART 3

Abbreviations:

SLSA= State Library of South Australia

SRSA= State Records of South Australia

RGSSA= Royal Geographical Society of South Australia

¹ *Membership Election papers dated 1873 for The Society of Telegraph Engineers. Institution of Engineering and Technology, London.*

² *Honorary Degree: South Australian Weekly Chronicle 29th March 1886.*

³ *Bronchitis: Evening Journal 23rd December 1885*

⁴ *William Bragg's appointment: William & Lawrence Bragg, Father & Son. John Jenkin. Page 62.*

⁵ *Charles Todd Travel Diary October 1885 (Transcription) SLSA reference PRG630/6.*

⁶ *Background research into Charles Todd's diary of a tour on the Continent and in England) SLSA reference PRG630/6.*

⁷ *Todd in Europe, newspaper report: July 1885 to May 1886. These appear on pages 186 to 196 of 'Without my T, I would be Odd'. Gavin Bieinke .*

⁸ *Contemplated Visit Home: METROPOLITAN MEMORANDA. The Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser 1th February 1905. Page 3.*

⁹ *The Life Story of Rev Horace Meyer: H. Meyer, Publisher: John F. Shaw & Co., London, [1903].*

¹⁰ *School Admission paper: Royal Greenwich Hospital. National Archives Kew.ADM 73/362/90.*

¹¹ *Letter Todd to Challis 18th July 1855 Cambridge University Library ref MS UA OBSY G.1.xxv item 18 (all).*

¹² *Letter from Alice Todd to Sarah Squires 1857 or 8. Transcription by Frank Carr.*

¹³ *Obituaries for Edward Bell jnr.: Cambridge Chronicle 22nd March 1889, & Cambridgeshire Weekly News 23rd March 1889 (& others).*

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APPENDIX

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

Abbreviations:

SLSA= State Library of South Australia

SRSA= State Records of South Australia

RGSSA= Royal Geographical Society of South Australia

1. Sources: Biographies

1.1 Behind the Legend, The Many Worlds of Charles Todd. Denis Cryle 2017.

1.2 The Weatherman from Greenwich, Charles Todd 1826 to 1910. Tony Rogers & Judy Ferrante 2017.

1.3 The Life of Sir Charles Todd. George W. Symes (Unpublished manuscript). RGSSA 1970s.

2. Sources: On-Line or Catalogued On-line

2.1 The Royal Observatory Greenwich. (A series of linked articles on the web). Graham Dolan.

2.2 State Library of South Australia (SLSA).

2.3 State Records of South Australia (SRSA).

2.4 English Newspapers. (British Library, accessed via FindMyPast.com or British Newspaper Archive).

2.5 Australian Newspapers. (State Libraries, accessed through Trove NLA).

2.6 Old Roan Association. (Greenwich).

2.7 Capturing Cambridge. Cambridge Museum.

2.9 Royal Museums Greenwich (Ref. Collections of Frank Carr).

2.9 Cambridge Antiquarian Society.

2.10 University of Adelaide (Ref. Todd & Bragg material donated by John Jenkin).

2.11 Google Books (scanned copies on-line).

3 Further Reading (in publication date order)

3.1 Overland Telegraph. Frank Clune 1955.

3.2 The Story of the Roan Schools 1643-1956. KS Binnie. (Copy on Old Roan Association site) 1956.

3.3 An End to Silence. Peter Thomson 1980.

3.4 The Singing Line. Alice Thomson 1999.

3.5 William and Lawrence Bragg, Father and Son. John Jenkin 2008.

3.6 The Sesquicentennial Compendium , Articles & Resources Celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Overland Telegraph Line Volumes 1 & 2. Prepared by the OT150 Committee 2022.

3.7 Twenty Poles to the Mile, The Overland Telegraph Line. Derek Pugh 2022.

3.8 Mr. Todd's Marvel. Adam Courtney 2023.

3.9 Connecting the North. Andrew Crouch 2023/2024.

3 10 Charles Todd's Magnificent Obsession. David Dufty 2024.

3.11 Tales of the Overland Telegraph. Richard Venus 2025.

3.12 Without my 'T' I Would be Odd., Sir Charles Todd KCMG. (Life as recorded daily by the press) Gavin Beinke 2025.