Thomas Gambier Parry - (Feb. 22nd 1816 - Sep. 28th 1888)

Thomas Gambier Parry who came from a privileged background devoted all of his life to philanthropy which manifested itself in many ways. A man of great artistic talent, he used it both in his own creative pursuits at home and through his collections acquired in Europe throughout his life. He was a very religious man although had little time for doctrine and it is suggested that his faith was emotional rather than intellectual. He was a strong advocate of the Anglo-Catholic movement and was shown through his regions sensibilities which were aligned to the Ecclesiological movement.

Family Life
Parry was born in Banstead Surrey to Richard Parry and Mary Gambier who both died before he was five years old. He was raised by his maternal uncles and aunts, the Gambiers, among them James Gambier, 1st Baron Gambier and was clearly influenced by them leading to his philanthropic pursuits later in life. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. Thomas purchased Highnam Court in 1838 when he was only 21 and would live there for the rest of his life. He married Anna Maria Isabella Fynes-Clinton on 13th Aug 1839 in Welwyn, Hertfordshire, England. Anna Maria Isabella Fynes-Clinton was the daughter of Henry Fynes-Clinton and Katharine Majendie. Isabella gave birth to six children but only two survived to adulthood. Clinton Charles Parry and Charles Hubert Hastings Parry. The latter was born in Bournemouth. She tragically lost her life to consumption, having only survived the birth of Hubert by twelve days. She died in 1848 at just 31 years of age and was buried in St. Peter’s Churchyard in Bournemouth.

Anna Maria Isabella Fynes-Clinton ( 6th Jul 1816 - 11th Mar 1848 )

Born in Welwyn, Hertfordshire - Died aged 31 in Bournemouth Hampshire
In 1851 Thomas Gambier Parry married Ethelinda Lear. Ethelinda Lear was born in 1827 at Chilmark, Wiltshire, England, daughter of The Very Reverend Francis Lear DD and Isabella Majendie. She married widower, Thomas Gambier Parry on 5th August 1851 in Bishopstone by Salisbury, Wiltshire. Thomas brought three surviving children to the marriage and would have a further six children with Ethelinda.

Ethelinda Lear (23rd Oct 1826 - 24th May 1896)
Born in Chilmark, Wiltshire - Died aged 69 at Highnam Court, Gloucestershire

Legacy of Faith
Later in 1848 Parry commissioned his friend, the High Church architect Henry Woodyer, to build a lavish church on the Highnam Court estate in memory of his late wife, Isabella and the children who died before adulthood. The church would be consecrated as The Holy Innocents in 1851.

The church best memorialised Thomas Gambier Parry’s religious idealism and he considered it to be his greatest legacy. Holy Innocents was designed according to Ecclesiological principles and extravagantly decorated with colourful frescos and stained glass windows. The church is testimony to a man whose devotion to God was closely coupled to his love of architecture.

He decorated the interior of the church himself using a painting technique which he had invented. He had studied the work of the Italian fresco painters which would be reflected
in the interior decoration of the new church which he considered to be his finest work. The whole of the chancel, including the roof, and much of the nave would be adorned using the new Gambier Parry process, “Spirit Fresco”, which he adapted from his study of the Italian fresco painters.

Following his work in Highnam, Thomas went on to carry out contracts in Ely Cathedral and Gloucester Cathedral. His work at Ely was on the ceiling of the nave. Installed as part of the Victorian restoration, the Nave Ceiling was the work of two artists, Henry Styleman Le Strange, who painted the first six panels (counting from the west), and Thomas Gambier Parry, who painted the last six - you can observe a change of style between the sixth and seventh panels.

**The Collector**
Parry was an enthusiastic and versatile collector for most of his adult life. Many of his purchases were made on trips to the Continent, especially in Italy, both with Isabella and
later Ethelinda. He also bought from dealers and auctions in England. His most important collections were of late medieval and early Renaissance paintings, small sculpted reliefs, ivories and Maiolica. He also had a significant early collection of Islamic metalwork and Hispano-Moresque ware.

The collection was bequeathed to the Courtauld’s Gallery in 1966 by Thomas Mark Gambier Parry. Known by most as Mark, he died in the same year.

**The Gardener**

Parry started to lay out the designs for the Highnam Court gardens in 1840. Development of the gardens would continue throughout his life resulting in one of the finest estate gardens in the country. By 1874 there were few to rival it. It was also first to feature a Pinetum.

![Highnam Court Gardens in 1860](image1.png)

**Philanthropy**

Thomas Gambier Parry gained the reputation as philanthropist founding a children’s hospital, an orphanage, a college of science and art in Gloucester and provided a church and school for the his tenants in Highnam.
Gloucester Children’s Hospital
A free hospital for children of the poor was started in 1866 next to St. Lucy’s Home of Charity between Kingsholm and Longford. The home, a converted house east of the Tewkesbury road, was occupied by the sisters of St. Lucy. They were an Anglican community founded in 1864 by Thomas Gambier Parry of Highnam to train nurses and tend the sick in their homes. By 1866 the sisters, who were sent to many parts of the country, nursed some patients in the home. Gambier Parry also conceived the idea for the children’s hospital in connexion with the home and paid much of the building costs. The hospital, a brick building designed by William Jacques, opened in 1867 with 22 beds. Children of the poor from any distance were admitted and out-patients were treated at a house in Bell Lane. The hospital was supported by subscriptions and donations.

In 1872 the sisters of St. John the Baptist from Clewer (Berk’s.) took over the work of the sisters of St. Lucy. In 1876 Gambier Parry moved the home to a large house at the corner of Hare Lane and Pitt Street. The new home included a ward for fee-paying incurables from 1885 and adjoined the hospitals out-patient department, which occupied that building, known as College Gardens, from 1873 to 1905, when a new dispensary opened in the hospital’s grounds. In 1921 the sisters gave up their work at the hospital and the management committee made new arrangements, introducing payments for patients’ keep according to means. Further changes in management came in 1928 when the Clewer sisters resumed their work, and from 1929 children sent by the Gloucestershire Royal Infirmary were admitted. The Clewer sisters were succeeded at the hospital in 1939 by the nursing sisters of St. John the Divine from Deptford (Kent). In 1941 accommodation was increased but in 1947 the hospital was closed and sold to the city corporation.

School of Science and Art
In 1859 a committee of subscribers opened a School of Art at Bearland House; its leading promoter was Thomas Gambier Parry, of Highnam Court, who remained its chairman until his death in 1888. Evening classes in science were begun in the city in 1867 and later moved with the art classes to the new Schools of Science and Art opened in Brunswick Road in 1872. In 1881 262 students were attending the Schools. Later there was a fall in numbers as evening classes in science and art were started at some of the city elementary schools, notably at the National school, in London Road, in 1884. Following the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 and the grant of surplus excise duties, known as the 'whisky money', to local authorities in aid of technical education, the city council made grants in support of the Schools and the London Road classes in 1892, and in 1896 it took over the management of both ventures. In 1906 the Schools became the responsibility of the reconstituted United Schools governors, under whom they remained until 1933 when the education committee assumed direct control.

The curriculum at the Science School included from the 1870s building, machine construction, and agricultural science, and c. 1900 new courses, including telegraphy and plumbing, were introduced, to be followed in the next few years by an expansion of commercial and clerical training. The School, known successively as the Technical School and Technical College, cooperated with local firms, some of which gave day release to their apprentices from 1920. Aeronautical engineering and industrial drawing were among new courses introduced in the 1930s. At the Art School courses in industrial design were developed in the 1920s and 1930s, and following the 1944 Education Act its activities took on a strong industrial bias.
In 1941 the Technical College moved to a new building on the part of the Friars Orchard site that fronted Brunswick Road. Extensions to the building were opened in 1967 and 1974, temporary accommodation having been used meanwhile. The Art School, carried on in the original building and other temporary accommodation, was renamed the College of Art in 1952. In 1968 it moved into new buildings on the east side of Brunswick Road, and in the same year it was amalgamated with the art college at Cheltenham to form the Gloucestershire College of Art and Design. In 1981 the Art and Technical Colleges were amalgamated with the North Gloucestershire College of Technology at Cheltenham to form the Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology, housed in the Brunswick Road buildings, the former College of Education buildings in Oxstalls Lane, and buildings at the Park and Pittville in Cheltenham.

Children of Thomas Gambier Parry in 1880s

Children of Thomas Gambier Parry and Anna Maria Isabella Fynes-Clint

Charles Clinton Parry (16th Sep 1840 - 7th Jul 1883)
Born in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire - Died aged 43 in Sydney, Australia

Lucy Anna Parry (Oct. 1841 - Oct. 1861)
Born in Bayfordbury, Hertfordshire - Died aged 19 in Gloucester, Gloucestershire

Francis Gambier Parry (25th Mar. 1843 - 9th Jun. 1843)
Born in Naples Italy - Died in first year in Messina Italy

Edward Clement Hervey Parry (19th Nov 1844 - 8th Jul 1845)
Born in Marylebone, London - Died in first year in Highnam Gloucestershire

Henry Parry (1846 - 1846)
Born in Bayfordbury, Hertfordshire - Died in first year in Bayfordbury, Hertfordshire

Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1st Baronet) (27th Feb 1848 - 7th Oct 1918)
Born in Bournemouth, Hampshire - Died aged 69 in Rustington, Sussex
Children of Thomas Gambier Parry and Ethelinda Lear

Linda Isabel Gambier Parry (21 Nov 1852 - 22nd Mar 1936)
  *Born in Highnam, Gloucestershire - Died aged 83 in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire*

Ernest Gambier Parry (25th Oct 1853 - 15th April 1936)
  *Born in Highnam, Gloucestershire - Died aged 82 in Highnam, Gloucestershire*

Mary Beatrice Gambier Parry (25th Dec 1855 - 1st Jan 1934)
  *Born Ryde, Isle of Wight - Died aged 78 in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire*

Ethel Geraldine Gambier Parry (24th Jan 1858 - Mar 1943)
  *Born in Highnam, Gloucestershire - Died aged 84 in Kingsbridge, Devon*

Sidney Gambier Parry (9th Jan 1859 - 17th Nov 1948)
  *Born in Highnam, Gloucestershire - Died aged 88 in Cirencester, Gloucestershire*

Hilda Katherine Gambier Parry (8th Mar 1866 - 1st May 1953)
  *Born in Highnam, Gloucestershire - Died aged 86 in Cirencester, Gloucestershire*