

St Mary's Church, Purton - Stained Glass

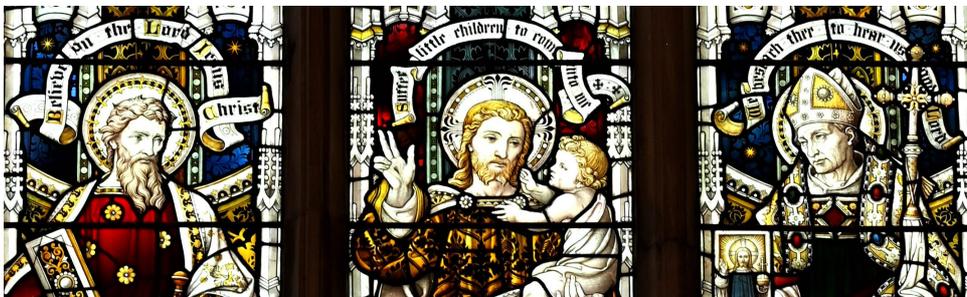
Introduction

The beautiful Stained Glass Windows in St Mary's Church, Purton consist of eight windows, seven of which are designed and manufactured by the renowned firm of Clayton & Bell of Regents Street, London. The seventh window is a compilation constructed using medieval glass pieces from windows previously in St Mary's and new pieces to match. To have so many stained glass windows from the same manufacturer, in one church is quite unusual, especially as they contain the most exquisite painting and staining and highest level of craftsmanship.

The Stained Glass Windows are on the north, east and south elevations and consist of:

North Elevation -

1. **A three light window** depicting St Paul, Christ with a child and a Bishop as a memorial to The Reverend Richard Garlick Brown and installed around 1911.



2. **A two light window** depicting BVM and St Elizabeth, as a memorial to Fanny Sadler and installed around 1879.



3. **A two light window** depicting St Alban and St George, as a memorial to Mervyn Prower and installed around 1883.



East Elevation -

4. **The three light East Window** depicting The Ascension was installed in 1883.



South Elevation -

5. **A two light window** depicting St Michael & St Gabriel in memory of Mr John Prower and installed in 1883.



6. **A Three light window** depicting St Peter, The Good Shepherd and St John in memory of Richard Garlick and Jane Bathe



South Elevation facing East in Chapel

7. **A three light window** depicting The Risen Christ with two Marias and two Apostles, in memory of Sarah, Elizabeth and Anne Bathe the daughters of R G Bathe and his wife Jane and installed in 1903.



South Elevation facing South in Chapel

8. **A three light window** constructed using Medieval glass pieces from windows previously in St Mary's and new pieces.



Clayton & Bell

In the 1850's in England, there was a renaissance in English Stained Glass with a number of young designers (Richard Clayton, Alfred Bell, Clement Heaton, James Butler, Nathaniel Lavers, Francis Barraud and Nathaniel Westlake) working with the Gothic Revival Architects who specialised in Church construction and restoration (George Gilbert Scott, William Butterfield, William Burges etc).

Over a period of years these designers formed themselves into partnerships and started their own Stained Glass design, manufacturing and installation companies. One of the pairings was Richard Clayton and Alfred Bell who formed the firm of Clayton & Bell which was first established in 1855. This company is particularly of note because it was instigated by Gothic Revival architect Sir George Gilbert Scott who subsequently used Clayton & Bell for most of his work and recommended them for use by his students and contemporaries.

Initially Clayton and Bell had their designs manufactured by Heaton & Butler (later to become Heaton, Butler & Bayne) with whom they shared a studio, between 1859 and 1862 (whilst also initially employing the very talented designer, Robert Bayne) but from 1861 they commenced manufacturing their own stained glass in Regents Street, London.

In the late 1860's Clayton & Bell had grown to such an extent that it had become the largest stained glass company in England and employed around 300 craftsmen working 24 hours per day in shifts, producing stained glass (and other church related products) for new and restored churches.

Most notable of Clayton & Bell's commissions were the West Window at King's College, Cambridge (1878) and windows at St John's College, Cambridge, Exeter College Chapel, Exeter Cathedral (1873-1876), Rochester Cathedral (1871-1876), Bangor Cathedral (1872), St Edmundsbury Chapel, Oxford, Pershore Abbey (1864), Sherborne Abbey and countless other windows throughout the British Empire and elsewhere.

In the early years Clayton & Bell established a reputation for beautifully detailed lines that few competitors could equal but as time went on and production increased certain fine details were lost (for which they were criticised by Sir George Gilbert Scott). They were also known for the wide use of primary colours (red, yellow, blue & green) but also

favoured colours like russet, mustard and purple. Other features often seen in their windows were small golden stars arranged at the corner of glass pieces so that they caught the viewer eye and figures standing beneath colourful canopies. Their designs drew on the art of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood favouring scenes showing Christ emerging from the tomb or the dead and Christ being called forth on the Day of Judgement.

John Clayton and Alfred Bell both retired from active participation in the company in the late 1870's and the company was then headed by a succession of Alfred Bell's heirs and survived until 1993. The company moved after WW2 to Buckinghamshire but were in a substantially reduced form.

Clayton & Bell's craftsmanship was of such value that they were awarded a Royal Warrant in 1883.