

... who ten years earlier had secured the largest commission for stained glass in the whole Victorian period, namely the complete glazing scheme for Bishop Edward White Benson's new Cathedral at Truro. Clayton and Bell immediately became the 'go to' firm for many Cornish churches in the following years, and it is no coincidence that the design of this window has many similarities to the great east window at Truro cathedral. Their windows in the last decades of the nineteenth century were highly regarded for their religious accuracy, rich colouring and highly accomplished glass painting, especially of facial features.

One of the most interesting features of the window is the identification of the various accompanying saints. Unlike the Truro window, they do not have their names in each nimbus, and one must rely on the attribute accompanying each figure. Moses' ten commandment tablets and Peter's keys are easy, but some of the post-Gospel figures are a challenge! However, the post-medieval stained glass glazing of Bodmin actually started some seventy years earlier, when a stained glass window (also portraying the Ascension) was inserted in Chancel east by the London firm of Lowe in 18243. The window was donated by Francis Basset, Lord de Dunstanville, and inserted in the year of his second marriage. It was an enamel painted window on rectangular panes of plain glass without lead-lines. This was the accepted artistic style in the 1820s and was the earliest stained glass window in a Cornish church in the nineteenth century. As enamel painted windows were totally disapproved of by the Tractarians and Ecclesiologists of the 1830s and 1840s, this style was soon to be superseded by the medieval mosaic construction.

Today, the only other Cornish enamel painted window to survive is John Pike Hedgeland's Transfiguration at Saint Michael, Helston. By the end of the century both the Bodmin and Helston windows were regarded as anachronistic and replaced by something whose colour and style were far more acceptable to current tastes.