

A slightly different version of this poster was created for the LIS DIS conference in 2015, and was based on my dissertation for the MA LIS at UCL, written under Anne Welsh's supervision in 2013. It aimed to present two book collectors, John Couch Adams (1819 –1892) and Samuel Sandars (1837-1894), who bequeathed their collections to Cambridge University Library. The dissertation studied the parallel lives and bequests of the two men. I have chosen to keep the parallel aspect for the poster. My aim in this revised version is to present the difference in the way the two collections were processed.

I went for visual highlights rather than text, using two of the most beautiful bindings, Adams 7.67.14, *Book of Common Prayer*, 1676, a Mearne binding, and Sandars's SSS.42.9 John Barbour, *The Life and Acts of the Most Victorious Conqueror Robert Bruce, King of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1758, a 19th painted wood and varnished binding. Meanwhile the background evokes the location, as it is *Oppidum Cantebregiae*, Cambridge, Richard Lyne, 1574 (Item no. 7 in volume SSS.12.1), which is the earliest known complete map of Cambridge. The poster highlights the main facts about the collections, and illustrates the different ways in which they are kept. Part of the Sandars's donation was his bookshelves, which are not in use today for conservation reasons, but that I have included here.

#### The Sandars Collection

The collection is arranged by rough order of size, in the Rare Books department book-stacks, which are not in open access. Contrarily to the Adams collection, the Sandars collection is entirely placed in locked shelves and in a controlled atmosphere in a newer aisle of the Rare-books department; this is in part because, contrarily to the Adams collection, the incunabula bequeathed have been kept in. All the books, unless there are size-restrictions, bear a slip from the university Library which indicates that they were "Bequeathed by Samuel Sandars, M.A. of Trinity College". The brief description on the library website insists on the strengths of the collections: "Liturgies, early English printing, books on vellum, fine bindings, 109 incunabula; 15th-19th century."

A brief preliminary survey seems to indicate that many of the book still undistributed in the MS catalogue of the private library are now in the SSS collection, but not all; further research could focus on why and what kind of books have been rejected or excluded from the bequest.

The Library possesses a MS list of books in the Sandars collection, but only for English books from 1501 to 1700. The list includes the dates, titles, etc. but no class-marks – it is indicated, in pencil on the first page, as being part of the annual report for 1894. It could have been part of a draft for classification. It is part of an ensemble of Sandars and Jenkinson's manuscript about the private library and bequest originally part of the collection and now increasingly re-classified as manuscripts. Jenkinson's own working notes on the Sandars bequest also used to be part of the collection as SSS.10.20 – (now, add 4172.) It is a list of Sandars' books in August 1894, which also shows that some books were found in drawers and given to the Librarian by Mrs Sandars in July 1915 (although these were not found in the UL collection.) Although the incunabula have been kept together with the rest of the collection, the MS have not, even when they were first classified as "SSS". This is notably the case of Sandars' lists of books (Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, (1869–1915) Lists of books, manuscripts and incunabula belonging to Samuel Sandars, GBR/0012/MS Add. 4170-4172), re-classified as Manuscripts. And SSS.16.6 "Some of the books printed in the fifteenth century in the Cambridge University Library compiled from various sources and notes made on the spot 1869" now Add.4171. The original presence of the documents in the collection, however, shows that it was, from the beginning, important and carefully monitored; it was also more advertised than the Adams collection: Sandars' obituary in the *Cambridge Review* pointed out to the only Groslier binding and the only two Caxtons added since the death of Bishop Moore in 1715 (*Cambridge Review* 1894, p. 55.) The aesthetics and "treasured" aspect of Sandars' books mean that they are frequently used as a kind of window-display items for the University Library. In 1998, 4 Sandars items feature as illustrations of the great collections of the Library (Fox, 1998) and more recently, a book from the Sandars collection was chosen to be a

“featured book” on the University Library rare books website. Sandars also featured in the exhibition “Shelf Lives, Four Centuries of Collectors and their Books”. Sandars’ books were also used most recently in an incunabula masterclass given in June 2013 by Professor Lilian Armstrong.

The Adams collection:

Along with other rare books named collections, the Adams collection is briefly described on the University Library website as a ‘general library of 1500 volumes ranging from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including 1000 which date from before 1700, and 84 incunabula, with an emphasis on science, especially astronomy’. There is no other general description. The collection is arranged by rough order of size, in the Rare Books department book-stacks, which are not in open access. They are placed under normal conditions of conservation, i.e. not in specifically locked shelves, with the exception of the incunabula which have been classified and kept separately.

The 10<sup>th</sup> volume (extra series) of the University Library Bulletin in 1894 consisted of a printed catalogue of the Adams Collection who was published in a bound volume. The printed catalogue contains a printed addendum, and the copy in the UL rare books rooms includes some later additions by hand. This catalogue of the Adams collection also provides an index of authors, titles or subjects. The collection was inspected on January 10, 1902, when a number of addenda and corrections were added by hand to the University catalogue: there was much work on the classification in the first years of the collection, which was first classified whole, before the incunabula re-classification. Some of the items have been added later on, which seems to indicate a bequest/choice of books in several steps. The striking point is that it has not been kept together; the incunabula have been separated, in sharp contrast with what happened in Sandars’ case. The books have had little public exposure since then. “A small exhibition” was organized at the Cambridge University Library in 1996. The booklet published at the occasion proves some brief details on Adams life and collections. Only 3 books only were chosen for that exhibition, including two incunabula, one from the astronomical Library.

Re-cataloguing and complete description of the incunabula in the collection has however taken place thanks to the Incunabula Project, launched in October 2009, highlighting their place and importance in the Adams collection.

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*Astronomer John Couch Adams and bibliophile Samuel Sandars bequeathed their collections to Cambridge University Library in the early 1890s.*

*"Adams" 1500 volumes,  
1000 pre-1700, 84 incunabula  
Generalist, but emphasis on science,  
especially astronomy*

*"Sandars" 1460 volumes, 109  
incunabula  
Early English printing, books on  
vellum, fine bindings in locked cases*

Cambridge University Library

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