

**University of Sheffield Library. *Special Collections and Archives***

**Title: The Sykes/Baron Broadside Ballad Collection**

**Scope:** The collection is in fact one item – a piece of linen twenty centimetres wide and, when unrolled to its full extent, nine metres long, on to which have been pasted fifty sheets, containing a total of 260 broadside ballads (including seven duplicates). These printed sheets carry song texts, some with tune titles and some decorated at the top with woodcut pictures. A set of photocopies is also available.

**Dates:** 1839-1841

**Level:** Fonds

**Extent:** 2 boxes

**Name of creator:** William Sykes and Sarah Baron

**Administrative / biographical history:**

The collection is in fact one item – a piece of linen twenty centimetres wide and, when unrolled to its full extent, nine metres long, on to which have been pasted fifty sheets, containing a total of 260 broadside ballads (including seven duplicates). These printed sheets carry song texts, some with tune titles and some decorated at the top with woodcut pictures. A set of photocopies is also available

The collection, estimated to date from the period 1839-1841, was created by William Sykes (1821-????) of Green Foot House, Barnsley, South Yorkshire. His name, and that of his daughter, S.A. (Sarah Ann) Baron (1855-????), appears on the front of the collection, handwritten in black ink. A further name, possibly G. Lynwood, also appears on the front of the roll. It is not known what connection this person had with the Sykes/Baron families. Sarah Sykes married John Baron during the 1870s, and it is unclear whether her name appears because she helped in the collecting of the ballads, or (perhaps more likely) because ownership passed to her on her father's death. Certainly, it is known that the collection passed to Sarah and John Baron's son, Howard (1884-????), who in turn passed it to his son, also Howard (1915-1988).

**Source:** Donated by Margaret Baron, widow of Howard, the grandson of Sarah Ann Baron, in 1988

**System of arrangement:** As received

**Subjects:** Broadside ballads

**Names:** Sykes, William; Baron, Sarah Ann

**Conditions of access:** Available to all researchers, by appointment

**Restrictions:** None

**Copyright:** Out of copyright

**Finding aids:** Not listed

## **The Sykes/Baron Broadside Ballad Collection [1839-1841]**

The 'collection' is in fact one item – a piece of linen twenty centimetres wide and, when unrolled to its full extent, nine metres long. Fifty sheets, containing a total of 260 broadside ballads (including seven duplicates), have been pasted to it. These printed sheets carry song texts, some with tune titles and some decorated at the top with woodcut pictures. The choice of medium to carry these sheets is believed to derive from the fact that the Sykes family were cloth merchants.

The repertory is composed mainly of popular 'drawing room' and 'theatrical' songs, and is national rather than local in its subject matter. As such, the roll represents a personal collection of favourite songs and a snapshot of taste in popular songs in the mid-nineteenth century.

In several places on the roll sheets have been pasted one on top of another, possibly as a means of saving space, or as a result of one song's popularity displacing that of the one below. Only through conservation attention and the lifting of these sheets has it been possible to ascertain accurately the number of songs contained on the roll.

### *Arrangement*

The sheets do not appear to have been pasted onto the roll in any particular order (neither chronological nor according to subject matter). It is believed, however, that the pasting of sheets onto the roll started from both ends, such that having filled a certain length from one end it became quicker to start from the blank end rather than unrolling the fuller side to reach the next available space.

### *Conditions of Access and Use*

The roll received conservation treatment during November/December 1996. This involved cleaning the papers, photocopying the original onto archival photocopy paper, the lifting of overlapping areas and photocopying bottom layers, and the reattachment of lifted areas and loose pieces.

The collection is available for consultation by students of the University of Sheffield and other researchers, by prior appointment with the Special Collections Department of the University of Sheffield Library. Due to the fragile nature of the original item, readers may only consult the photocopy sheets in the first instance. If necessary, further investigation of the original may be permitted.