

Edwin Sandys (c. 1519-1588)



College portrait of Edwin Sandys, artist unknown
Reference: College Art Collection

Edwin Sandys was believed to have been born at Esthwaite Hall (Lancashire) in c. 1519. There is some confusion about his parentage but he generally appears as the son of George, citizen of London.

Sandys came up to Cambridge to St. John's College and received his BA in 1538/9, his MA in 1541 and his Doctorate of Divinity in 1549.

Although not holding a Fellowship at St. John's or St. Catharine's, he was elected to the position of Master of St. Catharine's in 1549, a position he occupied until 1553. He was replaced as Master by Edmund Cosyn. During Sandys' time at

St. Catharine's he was also Vice-Chancellor of the University for the 1552-3 period. A notable period for it was in 1553 that Edward VI died and Mary took over as Queen. Sandys however had supported Lady Jane Grey, and so was arrested for treason and taken to the Tower of London for 29 weeks, sharing a cell with the future martyr, John Bradford. Sandys later left for Antwerp, before proceeding to Strasbourg where he remained until news of Mary's death reached him in 1558. He returned to England in 1559.

Under Elizabeth I he was consecrated Bishop of Worcester at Lambeth on 21st December 1559. However, his tenure was overshadowed by quarrels with members of the Worcester clergy. He moved to London as Bishop in 1570, but his tenure was short-lived. In 1577 he was appointed Archbishop of York, a position he maintained until his death.

Sandys died on the 10th July 1588 and was buried in Southwell Minster, Nottinghamshire. The St. Catharine's College historian W. H. S. Jones comments that 'he . . . appears to have had little influence upon the College history'. Indeed after leaving the College in 1553 under the cloud of treason there is little to suggest he ever returned to Cambridge or the College. His focus was on his various bishoprics, quarrels and family.



Tomb of Archbishop Sandys, Southwell Minster

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References:

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1854, by John Le Neve

Athenae Cantabrigienses, Vol. II, 1861, by C. H. Cooper and T. Cooper

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