

DAVIES, DAVID (1741 - 1819), author

Name: David Davies
Date of birth: 1741
Date of death: 1819
Parent: Richard Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: author
Area of activity: Literature and Writing
Author: James Frederick Rees

of *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry* (London, 1795), is often identified with Dr. David Davies (1755 - 1828), headmaster of Macclesfield grammar school [on whom see Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*]. The confusion has probably arisen because both were born at Machynlleth and educated at Jesus College, Oxford. David Davies [presumably the man who matriculated in 1761, aged 20, son of Richard Davies] was rector of Barkham, Berks., and a memorial in the church there records that he served the parish for thirty-seven years and died 6 February 1819. He took a keen interest in the contemporary discussion of the state of the poor, a discussion which had been stimulated by the rapid rise in Poor Law costs, particularly in rural parishes. As a result of careful investigation and much correspondence he was able to compile tables of the income and expenditure of representative families in different parts of the country (among these tables were those of three families in the parishes of Llandegla and Llanarmon, Denbighshire, and two families in the parishes of Llanfor and Llanycil, Meirionethshire). He was thus a pioneer in the collection of material for the construction of family budgets. The results of his inquiries are printed as an appendix to *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry* (London, 1795, quarto, with a subsequent abridged edition, octavo, 1828), which is a notable social document. He dedicated it to the unofficial Board of Agriculture which had been instituted in 1793, for he regarded an improvement in the standard of living of the agricultural labourer as an urgent necessity. He demonstrated quite clearly that the Poor rates were employed as a means to augment inadequate wages, and advocated the principle of a minimum wage as a remedy. His observations on the diet and dress of the poor, his plea for allotments, and, above all, his factual presentation of the facts, reveal him as a humane and understanding observer of contemporary conditions.

Author

Sir James Frederick Rees, (1883 - 1967)

Sources

J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *The Village Labourer, 1760-1832* (London 1911)
Elizabeth W. Gilboy, *Wages in Eighteenth Century England* (Harvard University Press 1934)
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford*

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [David Davies](#)

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