

## DAVIES, SOROBABEL (1806 - 1877), schoolmaster and Baptist minister

**Name:** Sorobabel Davies  
**Date of birth:** 1806  
**Date of death:** 1877  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** schoolmaster and Baptist minister  
**Area of activity:** Education; Religion  
**Author:** Thomas Richards

Born at Llety Shôn near Llandilo; went to the Academy at Bristol, and was ordained at Llandyfân (1825); then minister at Llandilo (1825-7) and Bwlch-y-gwynt (1836-9). Before this he had begun to keep school, especially at Fishguard (1833), where he was of particular service to the Baptist cause when the minister James Richards lost his voice for a time. Preaching and teaching ran together: he kept school at Llandilo, Cross Inn, Llanelly, Laugharne, and St Clears (twice). He was at St Clears when one of the officials of the education commission of 1846 came by, and a letter from Sorobabel is one of the most interesting entries in the notorious 'Blue Books' that were published in 1847. In it he gives an outline of his own career, expatiates on the methods of gathering pupils for the school, on the books brought by the pupils, on the deep poverty of the countryside, on the readiness of the common people to give schooling to their children if they had the means. The school was held in a sometime Unitarian chapel, with an earthen floor; but the master made an excellent impression upon the sub-commissioner, with his placid leisurely manner, his discipline, and easy control of the pupils. In 1852 he migrated to Australia, and became schoolmaster under the State; he kept on preaching, and it is open to debate whether it was he or **W. M. Evans**, the Methodist, who preached the first Welsh sermon in Australia. He became a newspaper proprietor and editor of the *Pleasant Creek News* (that was the name of the district he settled in, 150 miles from Melbourne). He invested money in the gold ventures, and these turned out so fortunately for him that he died in prosperous circumstances in May 1877.

### Author

**Thomas Richards**, (1878 - 1962)

### Sources

David Jones, *Hanes y Bedyddwyr yn Neheubarth Cymru* (1839), 204, 351, 504

*Y Greal sef Cylchgrawn Misol at wasanaeth y Bedyddwyr*, 1916, 153

*Reports of the commissioners of inquiry into the state of education in Wales, appointed by the Committee of council on education, in pursuance of proceedings in the House of commons, on the motion of Mr. Williams, of March 10, 1846, for an address to the Queen, praying Her Majesty to direct an inquiry to be made into the state of education in the principality of Wales, and especially into the means afforded to the labouring classes of acquiring a knowledge of the English language* (London 1847), 1847, i, 244-5

*Seren Cymru*, 27 July 1877

information from Rev. W. J. Rhys

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