

## MORRIS, WILLIAM (fl. 1829-1873?), assistant to the Education Commissioners of 1846-7

**Name:** William Morris

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** assistant to the Education Commissioners of 1846-7

**Area of activity:** Education; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration

**Author:** Thomas Richards

Notwithstanding much research, the dates of his birth and death are still not known. According to Wilkins he had been master of private schools at Cefn-coed-y-cymer and Cae-pant-tywyll in the Merthyr Tydfil district, and had many interesting memories of his experience in the world of teachers and pupils. Undoubtedly, of all the assistants to the Commissioners he was by far the best, as his report, especially on Carmarthenshire schools proves. **leuan Gwynedd** calls him a Dissenter, but he was not a Dissenter of **leuan's** outlook; another calls him a 'Methodist' and assumes he was a Wesleyan. In fact, Morris was a Calvinistic Methodist, very active indeed, especially with the Sunday schools. It has been discovered that he was corresponding with **Ebenezer Richard**, of Tregaron, in 1829 about these schools, and in 1830 about the bi-monthly meetings in which representatives of a fixed area met together to discuss the state of the cause and to catechise the various classes. Previous to that, in 1826, he had published *Cyfarwyddwr i Athrawon Ysgolion Sabothol*, 16 pp., and to him (with another) came the idea in 1827 of bringing out a monthly periodical for the good of the schools, *Yr Athraw*, and these two acted as joint-editors until it was taken over in 1829 by **William Rowlands** (1807 - 1866). It is clear from the pages of *Yr Athraw* that Morris was the secretary of the district bi-monthly meeting, and superintendent of its book-room; it is clear, too, that **Rowlands** had been his assistant, about 1824-5, when Morris was head of the Cefn school. *Robson's Directory* for 1840 tells us that Morris was agent in Merthyr Tydfil and district for the Protestant Dissenters; in other words, the local correspondent of the London Dissenting Deputies. Occasionally one feels that Morris, in his reports to the Commissioners, tends to gloss over facts in order to appear impartial; he is disconcertingly brief, though he was a stout Calvinistic Methodist and hailed from the district, in his appreciation of the Calvinistic Methodist Sunday schools at Merthyr Tydfil and Dowlais; for example, he completely leaves Capel Hermon, with a Sunday school of over 600, unmentioned. He did go to his own school of Cae-pant-tywyll, but we should never have known that it was Calvinistic Methodist unless he had let out that the *Rhodod Mam* was used in it. His contacts with such a zealous churchman as Lingen, however, did not in the least diminish the vigorous nonconformity of William Morris, for in the third vol., p. 82, of **John Hughes's Hanes Methodistiaeth Cymru**, published in 1856, he is referred to as the well-known elder of Panttywyll, whose zeal and fidelity with every good cause was admitted by all. No date is assigned by Wilkins to the reminiscences he heard from the assistant commissioner; there is not a word about his death in the pages of the *Drysorfa*; he was alive in 1868, according to Slater's *Directory*, and if a reference in the *Cofiant* of **William Rowlands** is to be depended upon, still alive in 1873.

### Author

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

### Sources

*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 (Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire, and Pembroke, passim)

*Bywyd y Parch. Ebenezer Richard* (London 1839), 121-3, 156-7

*Cofiant y diweddar Barch. William Rowlands, D.D., Utica, Efrog Newydd, yr hwn a fu yn pregethu yr Efengyl yn nghyfundeb y Trefnuddion Calfinaidd am yn agos i 41 o flynyddoedd, ac yn olygydd y 'Cyfaill' am 29 o flynyddoedd. Bu farw Hydref 27, 1866, yn 59 mlwydd oed* (New York 1873) 45

Charles Wilkins, *The history of Merthyr Tydfil* (Merthyr Tydfil 1867) (1908 ed.), 507, 511

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