

DAVIES, DAN ISAAC (1839 - 1887), a pioneer of the teaching of Welsh in schools

Name: Dan Isaac Davies

Date of birth: 1839

Date of death: 1887

Parent: Rachel Davies (née Charles)

Parent: Isaac Davies

Gender: Male

Occupation: a pioneer of the teaching of Welsh in schools

Area of activity: Education; Scholarship and Languages

Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born 24 January 1839 at Llandovery, son of Isaac Davies, a hatter (from Llandebie), and his wife Rachel Charles. From Llandovery British School he went to Borough Road Training College, and in 1858 became master of Mill Street school ('Ysgol y Comin'), Aberdare, where he broke new ground by encouraging his assistants to use Welsh in the classroom. In 1867 he took over the school of [Evan Davies](#) (1826 - 1872) at Swansea, but was in 1868 made assistant inspector of schools, removing in 1870 to Cheltenham and in 1877 to Bristol. In 1882 (though his actual removal took place in 1883) he was posted to the Merthyr Tydfil district (under [William Edwards](#), 1851 - 1940), but lived at Cardiff. His exile had deepened his love for Welsh, and he now sought to have it taught (not merely used) in the schools. He thus fell in with a movement to the same effect initiated by the Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion and supported by [Professor Thomas Powel](#) (1845 - 1922). Davies spoke on the subject at the Liverpool national eisteddfod (1884), read a paper on it before the Cymmrodorion in London (1885), and contributed to the *Baner* in that year a series of articles which were reprinted (1885, 1886) under the title *Tair Miliwn o Gymry Dwyieithawg*. At the Aberdare national eisteddfod (1885) he was one of the founders of the 'Society for the Utilization of the Welsh Language,' today known as 'The Welsh Language Society.' In 1886, through his chief [William Edwards](#), he succeeded in getting Welsh recognized as a grant-earning subject in schools. He prepared a memorandum on bilingualism, for presentation to the 1886 royal commission on elementary education in Wales, and gave evidence before the commission. The recommendations of the memorandum were largely adopted by the commission in its report (1888), but before that Davies had died, 28 May 1887. He was twice married, and left a widow and children.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

J. Ifano Jones in *Welsh Political and Educational Leaders in the Victorian Era* (1908) (ed. Vyrnwy Morgan), 1908, 437-93

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dan Isaac Davies](#)

Works

Dan Isaac Davies, *[Yr iaith Gymraeg, 1785, 1885, 1985! neu, Tair miliwn o Gymry dwy-ieithawg mewn can mlynedd](#)* (Dinbych 1886)

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