

DAVIES, RICHARD (1818 - 1896), M.P.

Name: Richard Davies
Date of birth: 1818
Date of death: 1896
Spouse: Anne Davies (née Rees)
Child: Henry Rees Davies
Parent: Anne Davies (née Jones)
Parent: Richard Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: M.P.
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born at Llangefni, Anglesey, 29 November 1818. His father, Richard Davies (1778 - 1849), of Llangristiolus, married to Anne Jones of Coed Hywel near Llangefni, was a tradesman at Llangefni, and had three sons: John (died 1848, who is said to have been the acutest of the brothers), [Robert](#) (1816 - 1905), and Richard, who like his brothers was educated at Llangefni national school. The father's business did so well that (about 1830) he set up subsidiary concerns under the management of his sons: John traded at Red Wharf, Anglesey, [Robert](#) at Caernarvon, and Richard at the old ferry-terminal of Porthaethwy, then embarking on its new career under the name 'Menai Bridge.' The latter venture prospered so rapidly that the others were given up and the energies of the family were concentrated at Menai Bridge, where their considerable timber importing business passed into the further stage of ship-owning, on a large scale, by which they acquired very great wealth.

Richard Davies in consequence became a notable figure in politics. Those were the days when Welsh Radical Nonconformists were becoming increasingly eager to displace the older Tory and Anglican supremacy. Davies's wealth seemed to mark him out as Liberal candidate for the Caernarvon boroughs at the election of 1852 (full account by Owen Parry in the volume *Er Clod*, ed. by [T. Richards](#), 1934, 135-50). The seat was an old-established Tory preserve, under the thumb of neighbouring magnates, and Davies was beaten by 93 votes — yet the election was a landmark in the political history of Wales in the 19th century. Davies's success was to come later, at the historic election of 1868, when he stood for Anglesey. The Radical tide was by this time flowing fast, and the [Bulkeleys](#) of Baron Hill (Beaumaris), who in person or by nominee had monopolized the seat from time immemorial, deemed it prudent to decline a contest. Davies retained the seat till 1886, when he retired, being opposed to the proposal for Irish Home Rule. He was not (as is often said) the first Nonconformist M.P. in Wales, for [Walter Coffin](#) had won Cardiff in 1852, and Davies had two Nonconformist colleagues in 1868. But he was Anglesey's first Nonconformist J.P. and its first Nonconformist Lord-Lieutenant, 1884. Richard Davies, though an able man and a liberal but careful benefactor, particularly to Bangor Normal College and to the 'British' schools, is perhaps important rather as a symbolic figure than on personal grounds. As he (and his family) exemplified the new free-

trade economic order, so also in politics he, like his colleague [David Williams](#) (1799 - 1869 in Merioneth, became an almost legendary symbol of the new Liberal Nonconformist middle class, whose ascendancy in Wales was to last into the 20th century. He married, 1855, Anne, daughter of [Henry Rees](#), and had several children, one of whom was [Henry Rees Davies](#). At one time he lived at Bwlch-y-fen, but afterwards at Treborth, opposite Menai Bridge. He died 27 October 1896 at Treborth; he was buried in Llandysilio churchyard.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

R. Hughes, *Enwogion Môn, 1850–1912 (1913)*, 1913;


Baner ac Amserau Cymru, 4 and 11 November 1896;

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Second Supplement, s.v. Davies, Robert.

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Richard Davies](#) 

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