

ROBERT KEYSE OF GORSLEY – TAILOR, PREACHER AND TEACHER

Robert Keyse was born about the time John Hall started working in Gorsley in 1831.

In 1851 when Robert was 20 years old he was living with his parents at Brockmore Head (Gorsley, Newent) with 3 sisters and 4 brothers. He was a tailor, but he also helped with farming and earned money by transporting goods with horse and cart. His parents Thomas (66) and Hannah (44) farmed 27 acres of land. His sister Sarah was an 18 year old glover. Richard was 17, a labourer, Joseph was 16, George was 11 and Henry was 8. Elizabeth and Charlotte were 9 and 7. It is most likely that the family attended Goff's School.

In 1881 Robert was living at Wood Cottage, near Goff's School. He had married Jane from Weston under Penyard. He was 50 and she was 25. They had three children, Alice 5, George 2 and Jane 1.

By 1901 the family had increased to 8 children. George was a carpenter, John was a gardener and Robert junior at 14 was a horse driver. Henry was 12, Lily was 6 and Elizabeth was 2.

On the 1911 census Robert was an 82 year old tailor living with his wife Jane, Henry (23) a Pearl Assurance agent, Lilian 16 and Elizabeth M (13) who was at Goff's School.

Robert died in July 1915 aged 86.

At least 24 Keyse family members were registered at Gorsley Goff's from 1881 – 1923. Some were registered at school in 1864, but one family of Keyse children left in 1872 to attend the new Church School. A year later they returned to Goff's School. The reason for the move is unclear. It may have been that they moved house or they preferred to attend a free school. There was a weekly fee at the National School whilst Goff's school was free.

New Chapel at Four Oaks

Robert had a lifelong association with the Baptist church. He was a preacher and in 1861 he was appointed to be superintendent of the Sabbath School – held at Goff's School and George Forty was his assistant.

In 1886 Robert Keyse organised weekly open air meetings in Four Oaks or *Shaw Green* on the boundary of Dymock and Oxenhall. He invited the new team of workers from London involved with the building of Linton Hall to preach. 25 people attended the first meeting and numbers grew to 120.

In 1887 it was decided to build a room. Within a week this was constructed in timber at Pound Farm, Gorsley and transported by horse and wagon through Haywood by Daniel Goulding and Tom Overton. The next day it was unloaded: windows, doors and seats were fitted and the room was ready to be used. It measured 17ft x 17ft and cost £17 for materials and labour. 100 people squeezed inside for the opening service and 200 people sat down for tea – in a tent. Thirty two years later when the land on the Beauchamp estate was up for sale, the chapel was moved on rollers to a new site across the road (and across the parish boundary). The move was supervised by Mr Cracknell who originally helped to build the room. The land for this new site was given by Mr George Chapman and his son Howard.