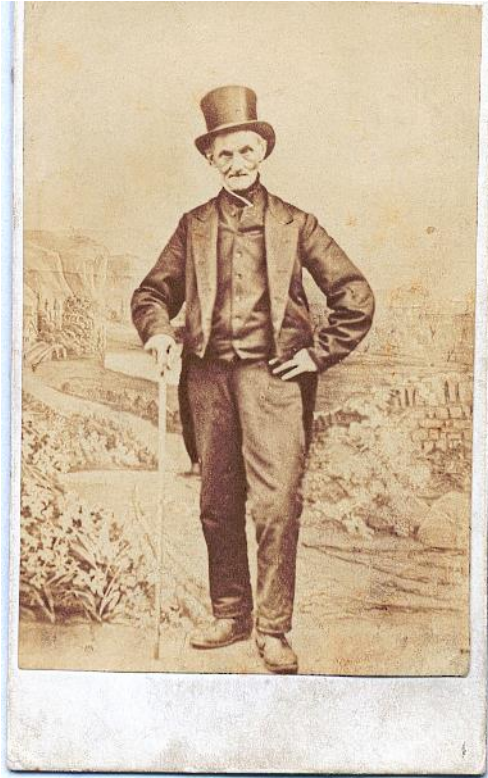


Joseph Evans – Medical Botanist



5 Joseph Evans – from Out and About 2

Joseph Evans was born in Boothstown on 5th July 1803, the son of William Evans, a fustian weaver. William was also a well known naturalist and Joseph was always by his father's side in the pursuit of nature's gifts.

“To range the woods was his delight,
From morn until the shades of night,
In search of plants their names to tell –
Few in the country could him excel.”

Joseph worked as a hand-loom weaver but Botany was his love and he became a healer of many ills by profession. He died on 23rd June 1874 and by then had become a well loved healer and a Botanist of distinction.

The ‘lines’ written by his very good friend and companion, J. Smith Snr, and composed only two days after the death of Joseph, expresses the high esteem he was held. A quote from these ‘lines’ –

“His life was spent in doing good;
His kindness all selfishness withstood;
Not filled with pride, but trusting in God.”



6 Mrs Evans – from Out and About 2



7 Home of Joseph Evans – from Out and About 2

Their thatched cottage was in the heart of the village – the Greyhound in the background. Held his surgery each Sunday 6.00 am to 4.00 pm to large queues.

He was a well loved healer and practiced well beyond the bounds of Boothstown. He worked closely with colleagues of the medical profession and was well respected by them. The extent of the love for Joseph Evans, the appreciation of his healing qualities and his fame was evident when he died. His coffin was carried from Boothstown to St Mark's Church, Worsley, followed by over a thousand mourners.

A granite memorial was erected in the churchyard, paid for by Public subscription, as a tribute of respect and esteem. In addition to this verse from Psalm 104 on his memorial... "He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of man". One of his own is also inscribed on it... "Plants I love and cherish, in them the wisdom and goodness of the Creator are manifest."

Mrs Shawcross:

Then there was the thatched cottage where Joseph Evans lived. My mother-in-law Jane Duncan and her mother and father went to live with him, as housekeepers.

After a while, he went to America, but he was only there a few days and he came back. When he came back he had no money or anything, so he started to make herbs again and used to grow them in the back garden. However, he didn't live very long after and there was no money to bury him with, just enough for the hearse and his coffin. There was hundreds followed him to Worsley Church.

After his widow died, there was a doctor called Dr Bateson, and he used to have his surgery there at the thatched cottage.

My mother-in-law always used to have to go to the Greyhound for a pint of beer for him before he started his surgery.”

Eric Ripley

The photograph and reference to the Boothstown Botanist Joseph Evans reminds me of an oil painting of him which used to hang by the chimney breast in the Queen's Hotel "Smoke Room" which was also the Concert/Music Room.

The Boothstown Botanical Society which was in existence up to the beginning of the second world war (1939) used to meet every lunar month at the "Queens". The Society met on the Sunday Evening nearest a full moon to enable members, in the days before street lamps, to see their several ways home.

I also remember another Boothstown Botanist "Mother Benyon" who was a venerable old lady who concocted all kinds of herbal medicines/pills/ointments for every complaint one could think of (and many of them seemed to work and were much cheaper than a visit to the local doctor for a "bottle" from him).