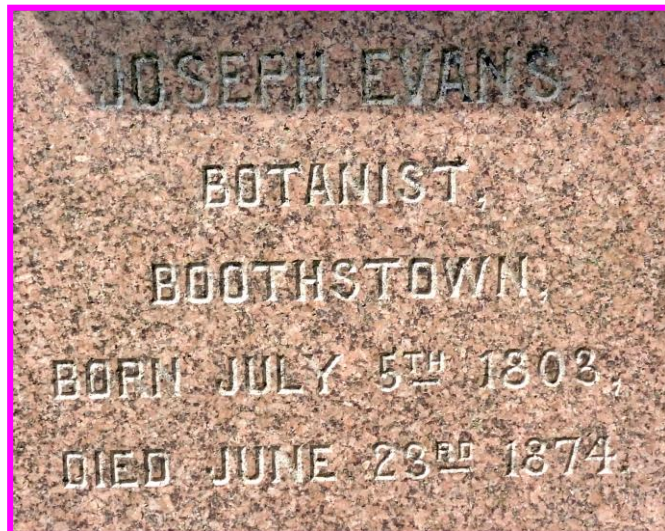
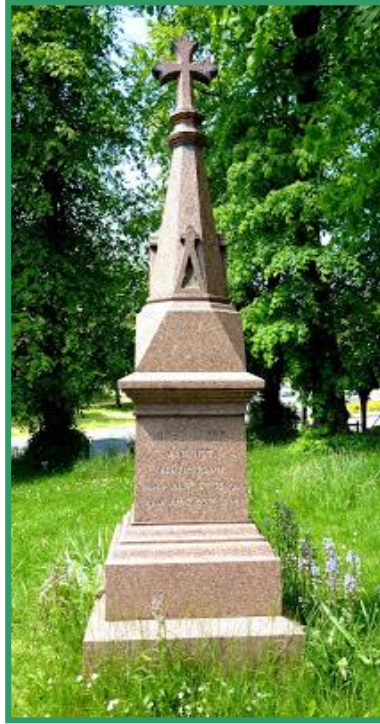


Joseph EVANS



Born: 5 July 1803

Died: 23 June 1874

BOTANIST
'SURGEON' and 'SILK WEAVER'



JOSEPH EVANS - Botanist (1803 - 1874)



This striking pink polished granite memorial stands at the south west corner of the Church, near to the path leading to the west door. It is immediately visible to the congregation as they leave the Church, just to their left. It was bought by public subscription and was erected over the grave of **Mr. Joseph Evans**, Botanist, of Boothstown.

Three announcements had appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* in the summer of **1874**, in which it was reported:

THE JOSEPH EVANS MEMORIAL FUND. At a public meeting, held on Saturday, June 27, at Worsley, it was resolved to erect by public subscription a lasting MONUMENT over the Grave of the late Mr. JOSEPH EVANS, Botanist, of Boothstown, Worsley.

Subscriptions will be thankfully received by Edward Kirk, Advertiser Office, Eccles, chairman; S. Partington, Leigh and Tyldesley Journal Offices, vice-chairman; C. C. Barker, Boothstown, treasurer; Thomas Cockshout, Boothstown, Honorary Secretary; and by any of the members of the Memorial Committee.

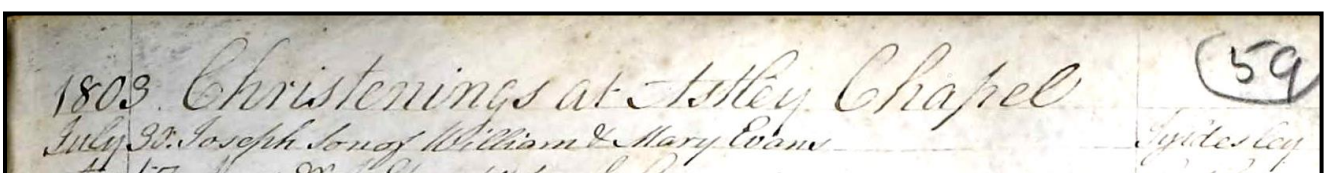
Joseph Evans was born into a working-class family in 1808 [1803 – Ed]. He acquired an interest in plants from his father, William, who was a keen botanist and herbal doctor. Joseph worked as a handloom weaver, and moved to Boothstown, near Worsley, after his marriage in 1827. He had a deep interest in botany and was an active member in a number of local botanical societies. He also continued his father's work as a herbal doctor, and 'Doctor Evans,' instantly recognisable in his top hat, became known for treating ordinary working people. His reputation as a herbalist eventually reached beyond Boothstown. Following his funeral in June 1874, a public subscription was organised to provide the 'Doctor' with a suitable memorial.

[copied from **Public Sculpture of Greater Manchester** by Terry Wyke and Harry Cocks]

On the left hand side of the pedestal are inscribed the words: *Plants I love and cherish. In them the wisdom and goodness of the creator are manifest.* On the right hand side, are the words: *This memorial was erected by public subscription as a tribute of respect and esteem;* and to the rear: *He bringeth forth grass for the battle, and green here for the service of men. Psalm LIV.*

The memorial was erected on 12 June 1875 and measures 2.74 metres in height, by 86cm. square.

Joseph Evans was, in fact, born on 5 July **1803**, to William and Mary of Tyldesley, and was baptised at St. Stephen's, Astley, on 30 July **1803**.



He first married Martha Smith at St. Mary's, Eccles, on 26 February 1826. Their one and only child, a daughter Ellen, was baptised on 28 April 1827 at St Stephen's, Astley, and **Joseph's** occupation was given as surgeon. Then, on 22 April 1839, he again married at St. Mary's, Eccles, this time to Jane Aldred. **Joseph** was again given as a surgeon but also a widower - his first wife Martha having been buried at St. Stephen's, Astley, on 18 April 1834, aged 28.

Joseph Evans of this Parish
 and Martha Smith of this Parish
 were married in this Church by Banner with Consent of
 this twenty sixth Day of
February in the Year One thousand, eight hundred and twenty seven
 By me Thos Blackmore
 This Marriage was solemnized between us { Joseph Evans
Martha Smith's + mark
 In the Presence of { Thomas Gorse
Anthony Harrison's mark
 No. 419.

18th Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Eccles in the County of Lancaster

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
184	April 27 th - 1826.	Joseph Evans	off full age	Widower	Medico	Worsley	William Evans	Surgeon
		Jane Aldred	off full age	Spinster	---	Worsley	James Aldred	Medico

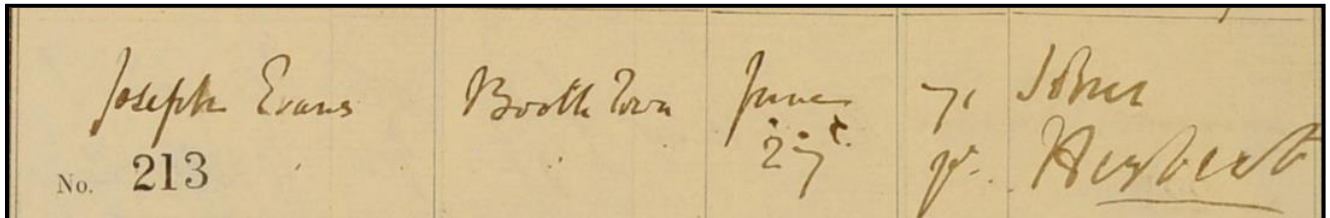
Married in the Parish Church of Eccles according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church of England by me, J Chadwick

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { Joseph Evans
Jane Aldred's mark } in the Presence of us, { William Marsh's mark
Thomas Gorse

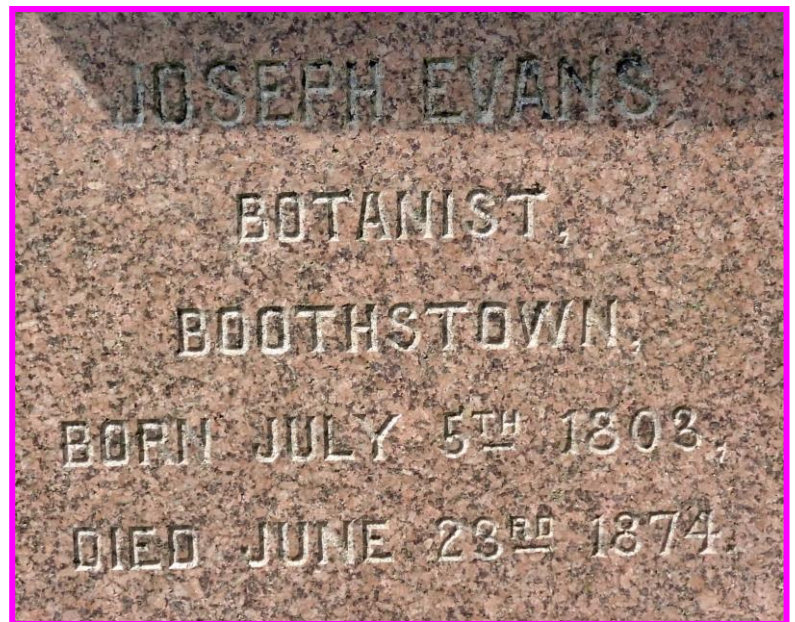
His profession/job title is of interest. At the time of both marriages, he was listed as a surgeon. In the census of 1841, he was shown to be a surgeon (aged 35+), living with his wife, Jane (25+), daughter Ellen (14) and Mary (75+), presumably his mother. Then, in 1851, he was aged 47, with his wife Jane (38) and daughter Ellen (24). However, he was now said to be a silk weaver, just like his daughter. By 1861, now 57, he was a botanical instructor! Jane was shown to come from Bedford, though a resident in Eccles at the time of her marriage in 1839. In the census of 1871, the last one before his death, he was a botanical instructor-cum-professor!! His wife Jane was still with him.

As a young boy, he would be taken to the local botanical meetings by his father, 'walking every inch of the way, there and back.' His father William was known as a renowned botanist who travelled thousands of miles in the quest for plants. Joseph was 'his father's constant companion in the fields.' Joseph Evans 'was taught, when no more than ten years old, how to contemplate the immortal beauty of nature.'

It has been said that he knew the contents of every wood and pond within twenty miles of his home. The number of plants once counted in his neat, small garden exceeded three hundred. Evans died on 23 June 1874 and he was followed to his grave in the churchyard by more than a thousand people, including one hundred and seventy young children. It was written that *'the cottage itself wherein he resided was clean and bright as a sea-shell just washed by the waves.'* In stature, he was *'tall and thin, a lofty forehead conferring a dignity upon his appearance which invariably attracted strangers.'* In his will, which was proved in Manchester on 27 July 1874, administration was granted to his widow Jane. Joseph was referred to as a Botanist of Boothstown.



Manchester had a Botanical Society as early as 1830 and Joseph Evans undertook quite extensive tours of parts of the country. He went twice to Westmorland where it is believed he addressed a gathering of over a thousand people. Because of his wide interest in botany he became known as a herbal dealer, and he drew crowds of ordinary people to his cottage on Sundays, some of whom had walked several miles for treatment. He too would frequently walk a number of miles to see a patient. He believed absolutely in natural cures. Indeed, at about this time, there were many men in Lancashire acclaimed as botanists or entomologists.



(A portrait of a 19th century botanist, possibly thought to be Joseph Evans)

A very interesting piece of research entitled **SCIENCE IN THE PUB: ARTISAN BOTANISTS IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY LANCASHIRE** gives an insight into the study of working-class science. *"Historians have noted the involvement of artisans and operatives in natural history as it became increasingly popular in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That manual workers could participate in this area has been attributed to the accessibility of nature and natural productions; the gathering of specimens, it seems to be assumed, required little expertise. Amusing accounts of working men using Latin names while speaking in broad dialect are quoted, but little attention has been paid to how or why these men acquired this terminology in the first place.... This essay sets out to investigate the practice of science from a working-class point of view. The artisan botanists of Lancashire provide an unusually rich source for such a study."*

Writers in the mid-nineteenth century "*associated the working-men naturalists with the pastoral and the home in order to promote, through exemplary biography, the moral benefits of natural history and its suitability for one's hours of leisure.*" It was felt that pursuits such as natural history might tempt the working classes away from the pub. The Sunday pub meetings were a feature of the associations and this conflicted with the strong temperance and Sabbatarian movements. This conflict clearly troubled the Earl of Mulgrave, vicar of the parish.

The Manchester Guardian of 28 June **1875** wrote:

THE WORSLEY BOTANISTS AND THE EARL OF MULGRAVE

At the annual meeting of the Boothstown, Tyldesley, and Atherton Botanical Societies, held on Saturday, the Rev. the Earl of Mulgrave's caricature of a botanist as one who collected plants on Sunday mornings to make it the occasion for a debauch in the evening at some public-house, recently delivered at Worsley Church on the inauguration of the memorial to the celebrated botanist Joseph Evans, was warmly combated. Mr. Hampson said he thought their Sunday meetings smacked less of debauchery than the aristocratic weekday dinners, which did not break up until four or five in the morning. - Mr. Caldwell remarked that botanists found pleasure in looking for plants which the aristocracy were too ignorant to notice. A society like theirs, which had a library of 160 volumes on entomology and botany, purchased from the subscriptions of working men, ought not to be branded as debauchees. - Mr. Burton held that Lord Mulgrave's remarks were kindly meant, the caricature being as permissible as the one which branded parsons as fox hunters. - Another speaker said the Earl's ignorance of Lancashire working men might be an excuse for him. Botanists could worship God in nature quite as effectually as His Lordship could in church.

A week later, 2 July **1875**, Correspondence in the same paper sought to support the Earl's view. A letter, dated 30 June, from Benjamin Carrington, M.D., F.R.S.E. was published. This letter sought to redress the balance of the argument in favour of Lord Mulgrave. The writer pointed out (1) that the address was "one of the most earnest and touching tributes ever offered to the memory of a working man." (2) In his address, Mulgrave said he had heard of men who "desecrated the pure science of botany by their unworthy conduct - men who devoted the earlier part of the Sabbath to the collection of wild flowers, and met in the evening at some public-house, often making botany the pretext for debauchery." (3) He called upon the speakers to denounce those who besmirched the good name of botanists, and to say that those men "deserved all that was said by the Earl." (4) Since working men had more free time on Saturdays, "no earnest botanist need complain of want of time for the pursuit of his hobby." (5) Finally, he joined the Earl in wondering why "those who, professing to know more than their fellows of the wonderful works of God, [cannot] find time to devote at least some portion of His holy day to the worship He has ordained," the argument being that it is not impossible for a man to be a good Christian and a good botanist also.

As a dénouement to the whole episode, on 11 September **1876**, the paper printed an article under the headline ABOLITION OF SUNDAY MEETINGS OF BOTANISTS. It reported that, following the events of the previous summer, the botanists had converted themselves into a joint-stock company, to be called the Atherton and Tyldesley Botanical Association. They had since bought a piece of land, about two acres, with a small cottage on the periphery. This was to become the residence of one of the members, with a library (about 190 volumes) and a meeting room. No meetings would be held on a Sunday.

His second wife, **Jane**, was buried at St. Mark's on 8 January **1895**, aged 82 years.