

Frank Power, Founder Member of the BHMA

by Ray Hill (past Chair of the BHMA and Honorary Member)

"I first met Frank Power in the early 1960's when I was managing a health store in Hove, Sussex. He was on the road for Potters. He was of the old school, so smartly dressed and so gentlemanly. I was very impressed by his manner and his knowledge of herbs and herbal medicine. He, on reflection, first stimulated my interest in herbal medicine. So convinced was he that herbal medicine had its place in the treatment of disease and it fitted in so well with my Nature Cure philosophy and training.

Now for something quite unusual. Yesterday morning, the day you wrote to me, I was going through some papers in my collection. On the front page of a monthly magazine, Natural Food Retailer, dated May 1979, was the obituary of Frank Power.

Anyway, here is the verbatim obituary.

PASSING OF A PIONEER

It is with deep regret that we have to report the sudden death on March 18 1979 of Frank Power, of Potter's Herbal Supplies, Wigan. Frank was a founder member of the firm. He had joined the old Potter and Clarke Company in the 1920's, being apprenticed to the late Henry Potter, from whence came his early interest and love of herbal medicine.

He served as one of their senior representatives until 1952 when he became sales director and chairman of Potter's Herbal Supplies. His contact became well extended and he became well known throughout the country to everyone in the herbal trade, both retailer and professional medical herbalist alike. His wide knowledge of herbalism and its philosophy made him a respected figure in the field of alternative medicine.

He became chairman of the British Herbal Medicine Association soon after it was founded in 1964, and dedicated his experience and talent to the strengthening of the herbal industry, which has lost a great leader.

His passing is deeply mourned by his family and many friends in the trade.
Ends

I was present when the news was announced by Hugh Mitchell at the BHMA board meeting where we stood silently in memory of him, some who knew him well, including Hugh and I, close to tears. Frank Power was special and it was Hugh who proposed a fund should be raised to record his enormous contribution to the herbal trade.

It was, of course, in 1964 when the BHMA was formed that Frank was the instigator of its being and was able to help win the day for herbal medicine and have its right to trade and practise inserted into the 1968 Medicines Act.

I don't know if you are aware of the Potter and Clarke company, they began trading in 1856 or thereabouts in London and later had premises in Manchester. There is a bridge in Holborn with the Potter and Clarke Lion brand logo on the bridge. How's that for publicity! They obviously had some influence along the way!!"