

## BOB CARLISLE - "The Walker"

Contributed by Steven Dowd

My earliest recollection on my way home from St. Johns School at the corner of Legh St. and Market St., and one that stands out very clearly in my mind, is of seeing a man walking round and round Earlestown Market Square.

I was later to learn that his name was Bob Carlisle, and he was repeating a feat of walking one thousand miles in one thousand hours, at not more than one mile an hour.

This had been performed some time before for a wager between some very prominent sportsmen in the country, and which had created no end of interest at the time.

Of course, Bob Carlisle was giving a demonstration of the feat just for what he could pick up in the way of collections from the spectators, and there was a good number of these every evening for they came in from all surrounding villages and districts especially on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. He lacked no assistants both in pace-making and collecting.

He was provided with a cabin where he rested in between walks. His method was to start, say at one o'clock, walk his mile, and then he could retire and take almost two hours rest by starting off again in sufficient time before three o'clock to walk another mile. So you see, he had walked one mile each hour from one o'clock until two and from two till three. He would continue straight away after three o'clock to walk his mile from three till four and then rest again until just before five o'clock. This enabled him to take longer periods of rest between walks and still walk one mile in one hour. There was an easel and blackboard for the purpose of recording the laps and the hours as they ticked off. When you think it took him eight hours short of six weeks to accomplish the feat he deserved all he got in the way of collections for his endurance.

He had a young son, Billy, about my own age, who was a little schoolmate of mine. I saw Bob Carlisle many years later passing through Earlestown wheeling a barrow from Lands End to John O'Groats, and as he would pass through High Street, Newton, he diverted his route and came into Earlestown, on the chance of seeing some of the friends he made while doing his walk on the Market Square many years before and also on the chance of adding a little more to his collection. His barrow was a very light one and rather gaudily painted. It contained his personal belongings, which were very meagre, but it was pretty well lined with coppers thrown in as he passed along.

Bob Carlisle was a great walker, and his performances were genuine, unlike those of another man who appeared at the corner of the Market Square one Friday evening a few years later. He was selling what were supposed to be real golden sovereigns at sixpence each. They were afterwards found to be absolutely worthless. He was emulating the failure of a gentleman in London to sail in a given time a given number of genuine sovereigns at sixpence each. This was also done for a wager, but the fellow who appeared in Earlestown was just a fraud.

from a publication printed sometime in the late 1940s.

### 65 YEARS REMINISCENCES OF EARLESTOWN AND NEWTON

BY COUNCILLOR TOM BALL

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Transcribed for use here by myself, from an edition supplied to me by website visitors, Trevor & Pat Haselton (now living in Port McNeill, BC, Canada), Trevor received the book from his father, Freddie Haselton, who he says was an avid Newton & Earlestown Historian

Steven Dowd

[Steven.dowd@dowd.co.uk](mailto:Steven.dowd@dowd.co.uk)

