

PETER CROSSLAND (1841 -1899?)

SHEFFIELD'S OTHER VICTORIAN SPORTING SUPERSTAR!

Peter Crossland worked in Sheffield's cutlery industry. When he wasn't working, he was in training or competing as one of the finest heel-and-toe walkers that Britain ever produced. This forgotten local sporting hero was also known as the "*Sharp Sheffield Blade*".

Peter beat the, then world-champion, Daniel O'Leary, of Chicago, USA, at Manchester's Pomona Gardens in late February 1876 in a 300-mile, £100 a-side sweepstakes in front of thousands of spectators.

*From King of the Peds...One of those athletes was the useful Peter Crossland from Sheffield, Yorkshire, who, between Monday, the 11th and Tuesday, the 12th of September at the Royal Pomona Gardens, Colnbrook, Manchester, made a world record of 120 miles 1,560 yards in 24 hours against George Parry of that city. At the time, this was the furthest distance observed in such a contest. What is more astonishing is that Crossland competed the distance **without taking a rest**. Peter won £100 for his efforts, with Parry having scored a respectable 114 miles and 164 yards in the same time.*

Later in his professional career, he would travel over to the USA. Here is an article in the *New York Times* dated May the 15th 1879, which celebrated his arrival...

ARRIVAL OF AN ENGLISH PEDESTRIAN.

On the steam-ship Nevada, of the Guion Line, which made fast to the pier at the foot of King-street at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, was Peter Crossland, the English pedestrian, who has come to this country to take part in the championship race of the world in the 75-hour walking match which is to take place in the Exposition Building, in Chicago, on the 28th inst., under the management of Daniel O'Leary. Crossland was in fine condition when he arrived in this City. He is of medium height, but of magnificent physique. His shoulders are broad, and his form is perfect. Crossland comes from Sheffield, Yorkshire County, England. He brings no trainer with him. He is 40 years old, and began to walk in matches three years ago. Previous to that time he had worked at his trade, a cutler. At the match in the Pomona Palace, in Manchester, a walk of 72 hours, he beat O'Leary 19 miles. He walked at that time 120 3/4 miles and 200 yards without rest. This was Sept. 11 and 12, 1876. He has made the best record in England for 242 and 284 miles, having made the former in 57:02:37, and the latter in 68:40:19. He has made the best 33, 34, and 35 hour time in England, making in 33 hours, 151 miles and 4 laps; in 34 hours, 156 miles and 1 lap, and in 35 hours, 160 miles and 6 laps. Crossland has received the Champion Cup of the Midland Counties, in Nottingham, England, for making 322 miles in a six-days' walk of 14 hours a day. He says he comes to this country to walk, not to run.

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It was in Chicago where he took on some top US athletes in one match, and then O'Leary, in a \$5,000 sweepstakes (\$10,000 to the winner! — worth an incredible £140,000 in today's money!).

Peter's career is fully covered in *King of the Peds*.