

Legendary rower comes home to Hanlan's Point

Sculpture of Canada's first international sports champion to be rededicated today

BY JAMES CHRISTIE

Ned Hanlan comes home to the Toronto Islands today.

The bronze sculpture of the legendary rower who was Canada's first international sports champion in the 1880s has been taken by barge from the mainland across the harbour to the northwest tip of the Toronto Islands that bears his family's name, Hanlan's Point.

The sculpture by Emanuel Hahn, first unveiled in front of the Automotive Building at the Canadian National Exhibition in 1926, will be rededicated today by a group that includes Mr. Hanlan's grandson Edward (Little Ned), his great-nephew Ted English, Olympic triple-gold-medal rower Marnie McBean, ward Councillor Pam McConnell and the sculptor's daughter, Qennefer Browne.

The ceremonies, which will take place from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., include a symbolic row-past and a performance by Ward's Island actor Tom Butscher in the role of Mr. Hanlan.

"This is the right place for Ned to be remembered, on the island where he grew up and learned to become a champion," said event organizer Richard MacFarlane, a member of the Hanlan Boat Club and 30-year veteran of the sport of rowing.

It's the second move for the sculpture, which was moved to a site near the CNE's Marine Museum after the Second World War.

Mr. Hanlan was born in 1855. His father, John, was a hotelkeeper on the island, and Ned had to cross Toronto Harbour to attend George Street Public School on the mainland.

His daily crossing in all kinds of

weather in his first boat, little more than a scooped-out wooden plank, gave the young Mr. Hanlan great confidence on the water.

Mr. Hanlan was stunningly successful in professional sculling. From 1876 to 1886, he lost only six of 300 races.

He won the Canadian championship in 1877 in Toronto, then the U.S. championship in 1879 on the Allegheny River.

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The "colonial" stunned the bettors in the English hotbed of professional rowing when in May, 1879, he beat the English champion William Elliott by eleven lengths in record time on the Tyne race course. Then, on November 15, 1880, the 5-foot-8 Hanlan beat the world champion, 6-foot-4 Australian Edward Trickett, by three lengths on the River Thames. A total of \$500,000 was bet on the outcome of the race.

In 1884, Mr. Hanlan lost the championship to Australian William Beach.

Actor Nicholas Cage played Mr. Hanlan in the story of his career, *The Boy in Blue*.

He died in January, 1908, of pneumonia, at age 52.

Ten thousand Torontonians went to pay their respects as he lay in state at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.