

‘TWO DOTS IN THE DISTANCE’: PROFESSIONAL SCULLING AS A MASS SPECTACLE IN NEW SOUTH WALES, 1876-1907.

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By the last half of the nineteenth century several sports were undergoing a phase of modernisation with the development of written rules, official referees and judges, as well as improved spectator facilities.¹ Players competed for prizemoney, trophies, cups, and premierships, and the monetary value of these rewards rose significantly. This was in itself a strong incentive for competitors to win sporting contests. But in addition to material rewards, successful sporting heroes derived considerable psychic income from their endeavours.² The popular press focused primarily, although not exclusively, on winning sportsmen,³ and as the publicity associated with spectator sports increased, so did the importance attached to winning.

As a consequence, sporting events became ritual spectacles in which competitors were claimed to symbolise the sporting prowess of the community they represented. Moreover, as gambling at these contests was common, spectators were able to put their money where their mouth was, further elevating the importance of winning.⁴ In the light of innovations in organisation, competition, publicity, and facilities, public support for sports spectacles escalated during the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Australia.⁵ It was in this context that sculling match races became one of the most prominent spectator sports in Australia.

Sculling as a mass spectacle.

In the early nineteenth century the crews of visiting British ships conducted impromptu rowing contests in Sydney Harbour. By the 1820s organised team rowing competitions were developed, drawing upon the

rules and traditions of British rowing.⁶ Sculling was similarly adopted in Australia, with match races for stakemoney becoming popular during the 1850s, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria.⁷ This practice drew upon eighteenth and early nineteenth century British precedents, where wager-boat sculling had developed into loosely organised contests between thousands of men employed on rivers such as the Thames.⁸ In Australia these contests were also a familiar ritual, and challenges involving large sums of money appeared regularly in the press.⁹ On the other hand, some scullers raced as amateurs, and were content with competing for trophies rather than stakemoney.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it was not unusual for amateur scullers to have a small pecuniary interest in the outcome of a contest.¹¹

But the development of professional sculling, as distinct from wager-boat racing and amateur competition, arose with the development of English and World professional sculling championships. These were instrumental in generating interest in sculling in the Empire and North America, and several scullers from these regions ventured to London to claim the prize and return home with it.¹² Sydney was the centre of first-class professional sculling in Australia, and New South Wales claimed some of the best oarsmen in the country.¹³

The best scullers were sponsored by backers. This freed them from the time and monetary constraints of regular employment, enabling them to concentrate on improvements in technique and physical endurance.¹⁴ The backer matched the stake of an opposing sponsor, with the successful sculler receiving a percentage at a rate negotiated by the winning parties. In addition, betting on the outcome of sculling contests, as with several other sports, was popular. Stakes races for the sculling championship of the world attracted substantial wagers from the backers of challengers and the supporters of titleholders. As Bennett puts it, 'winning the purses was usually a secondary consideration to a big win in side bets'.¹⁵ The spectating public could also risk cash with moneymen, and this heightened the importance and excitement attached to winning.

But while stakemoney and side-bets were potentially lucrative sources of income for backers, some sponsors also sought indirect financial gain from their association with champion scullers. This was particularly evident in the case of backers with commercial interests, who used scullers to advertise their businesses.¹⁶

In its early stages there was no obvious hint of scandal or corruption in the conduct of professional sculling. This contrasted with Britain, where the sport had a 'poor standing' and was accused of 'shady practices'.¹⁷ Australian sculling was considered to be more reputable than boxing, and a fairer wager than the handicap odds typical of cricket.¹⁸ Moreover, unlike Britain, professional sculling had a wide acceptance. According to the *Brisbane Courier* in 1888, this was because it was considered to be a 'respectable' pastime, and not restricted to any one class of spectator.¹⁹ The sculling crowd was reported to include

The prosperous merchant, the sleek lawyer, the civil servant, the bank and mercantile clerk, the brown- bearded bushman, the muscular-looking labourer... Nor does beauty - that of course includes the whole of the other sex - fail to weave her curiosity and admiration... for the stalwart scullers.²⁰

Aside from pecuniary interests, crowds were also attracted to major sculling contests because of the unprecedented international successes of Australian scullers between 1876 and 1907, when seven Australians held the world professional championship for 22 of those 32 years.²¹ In this respect major sculling races became ritual expressions of Australian sporting prowess in an international, rather than simply a local context. As Bennett argues, 'the fact that they were the best in the world is what caught the [public] imagination.'²² Also, Australian scullers were often competing against those from Britain, and this provided opportunities for the colonists to gain respect from the 'homeland'. Moreover, aside from cricket, sculling was one of the few sports in which Australia competed at an international level in the colonial period.²³ Success prompted stirring newspaper editorials and patriotic speeches

from politicians. For while Australia lacked cultural refinements in music and theatre, such as those of Britain and Europe, at least competence on the sporting field could be claimed. Therefore, sculling championships were not only occasions in which financial rewards and losses were potentially substantial, but they were moments in which collective loyalties and national reputations were at stake. Therefore, many people in the crowd had important investments, both financial and emotional, in the outcome of a race.

On the other hand, some spectators were attracted to sculling championships because of the carnival atmosphere of the occasion, involving brass bands, side-show entertainment, and food and drink stalls. It was a day out in an era of infrequently organised mass entertainment. Moreover, the presence of official dignitaries at championships, including mayors and aldermen, heightened the social and political importance of the occasion. These dignitaries typically booked a passage on a steamer to watch the race. They were joined by Sydney socialites, parading the latest fashions. In sum, aside from a passion for sculling as a sport, inducements towards spectating included pecuniary interests, parochial loyalties, pleasure seeking, and promenading.²⁴

The champion sculler: hero, patriot, entrepreneur.

London was the home of early professional sculling world championships from the mid-nineteenth century. English scullers held the prize in the early years, defying the few overseas challengers. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century several scullers from New South Wales returned home as world champions, and they received enthusiastic public welcomes from cheering crowds and speechmaking civic leaders. They were embraced as heroic representatives of a colony or nation, and they inspired expressions of patriotism, as well as parochial rivalries. In addition to welcoming ritual, champion scullers attracted spontaneous

assemblies of admirers when they trained on local rivers. While they derived considerable psychic income from their endeavours, as sporting professionals they were also keen to maximise their financial return.

Australia's first challenger for the world title was A.W. Green, who competed on the river Thames in 1863. Newspaper coverage of his progress was found regularly in the 'sporting intelligence' columns of Sydney newspapers. At a time when the Australian colonies had begun to compete with Britain at cricket, Green's exploits were typically viewed in nationalistic terms. The sporting press hoped that he would become a symbol of Australian sporting success. But although Green won two lead up races, he lost the championship to the English titleholder. Nevertheless, *Bell's Life in Sydney* argued that Green deserved a heroic reception and invited the Australian champion sculler to compete at the Anniversary Regatta,²⁵ claiming that 'he would unquestionably receive an enthusiastic welcome from thousands'.²⁶ But although Green rowed at the regatta, his display apparently 'created no interest whatsoever'.²⁷ In addition, although a banquet was held in the sculler's honour 'tastefully decorated with flags, [and] the Australian ensign... conspicuous',²⁸ few people attended.²⁹ In the absence of Green's successful challenge, the appeal to parochial loyalties had fallen on deaf ears.

This situation can be compared with the experience, some thirteen years later, of Edward Trickett. In 1876 he returned to New South Wales as Australia's first sculling world champion and, indeed, the nation's first holder of a world title in any sport. The race took place on the River Thames on 27 June 1876, but Trickett's home town of Sydney had to wait three weeks to learn by mail of the result. This was transported by steamer to Port Adelaide, and then telegraphed on to Sydney. Throngs of people waited by the telegraph office for the result. News of Trickett's win created a sensation, both among the sculler's supporters, and in the popular press. Unlike Green, Trickett was a winner, and was revered accordingly.³⁰

The *Sydney Morning Herald* argued that the world championship had wider significance than simply being a sporting victory:

those who wish New South Wales to be well known throughout the United Kingdom... will rejoice because this contest will be a better advertisement for the colony than the entire edition of any possible Government handbook.³¹

It did not seem to matter to the great crowds gathered at Circular Quay on 9 November to welcome Trickett home that they had not actually witnessed the sculler's success. That he had won was cause itself for celebration. Unfortunately, his ship did not arrive till the next morning, so to give people another opportunity to applaud their champion in person, it was arranged that Trickett would not disembark until 8 pm that evening.³² Awaiting the newly crowned champion were 25 000 people, including 'several brass bands, and the firemen of Sydney with blazing torches'.³³ A horse-drawn gig was organised to transport Trickett through the city, but several young men intervened and pulled the gig themselves.³⁴ The *Herald* reported that 'such a [large] crowd rarely, if ever, has been seen in Sydney'.³⁵ The procession struggled through the densely packed inner city streets and traffic was brought to a virtual standstill.³⁶

A public subscription soon followed to demonstrate community gratitude to Trickett. It raised £850, and the sculler bought himself a hotel. But on 15 November 1880 an out of condition Trickett raced again in England, this time against a Canadian challenger, Edward Hanlan. Trickett was absolutely outclassed, even humiliated, as his opponent had a sufficient command of the race to have time to wave to the crowd, and even paused to wash his face in the water.³⁷ Trickett's fame had been transitory, and as the *Herald* explained, 'the infatuated Trickett admirers are now heaping coals of fire on his head'.³⁸

Although the rhetoric of colonial and national pride was employed routinely by scullers, speechmakers and newspapers, there is

evidence that commercial interests were important to competitors and their backers. Brown claims that scullers were essentially businessmen, and they competed primarily for monetary reward, not national glory.³⁹ A sculler's success could be ephemeral, so this was not simply a case of greed. Also, sculling championships were held sporadically, so scullers could not rely upon income from competition to sustain them. Although many of them had the support of wealthy backers, some resorted to commercial initiatives to sustain their income. The entrepreneurial strategies of the Canadian Hanlan illustrate these points.

Hanlan toured overseas as the unbeaten sculling champion of the world. He arrived in Sydney in March 1884 and sought match races for huge sums of money. Hanlan often received challenges from competitors, but he only agreed to race them if they were prepared to match the enormous stake he was prepared to risk. Challengers required significant financial backing combined with great rowing skill and strong physical endurance. With these financial and athletic prerequisites, sculling championship races were not regular events. Hanlan expected to make good money when challenges were mounted, and in the meantime he remained in training, though not earning money directly from competition. Although a full-time professional sculler, Hanlan needed indirect means to secure himself financially.⁴⁰

Hanlan had become a publicly recognised figure. Invited to speaking engagements and presentations, he became an experienced and talented orator, as well as acting as an unofficial ambassador for his country. But Hanlan was particularly interested in pecuniary, rather than civic or patriotic rewards. As a sportsman and showman Hanlan was a crowd pleaser; as an entrepreneur he sought to maximise a financial return from his performances. Hanlan arranged regular rowing exhibitions, for which he charged spectators a fee. This was not simply mixing sport with business. Sculling was his business. The *Bulletin* reported that Hanlan 'intends making a tour of the colonies, giving

exhibitions on rowing machines in theatres, halls etc. and while in Australia will be open to row any man for £1,000 a- side'.⁴¹

Nevertheless, both the commercial and patriotic aspects of Hanlan's tour were played down by the champion. He arrived in Sydney on 16 March 1884, and the route from the wharf to the Canadian's hotel was lined with people who gave a warm welcome. Next day some 12 000 people assembled in the vicinity of Hanlan's hotel and, together with the Mayor of Sydney and several politicians, Hanlan was presented from the balcony to the crowd.⁴² The size of this welcome confirms the high profile of scullers as sporting heroes, and emphasises that sculling fans were drawn to champion performers, even those who did not represent their region. Hanlan addressed the gathering:

He was not sent here by Canada, the United States or any country. He had desired himself to see Australia... He had nothing to gain from coming here, for he had gained a reputation in the rowing world already; he had come here as an honourable sportsman.

When Hanlan wasn't training he spent most of his time organising exhibitions, performing either indoors on his rowing machine, or on the water. He competed in handicap events with inferior scullers, and performed various tricks while rowing.⁴⁴ He was a popular showman who displayed confidence, athleticism and a sense of comedy, 'conclud[ing] his exhibitions by walking on the surface of the water with the aid of large galvanised iron coffin shaped shoes measuring 4 feet six inches'.⁴⁵

Where possible, Hanlan enclosed spectator areas through the erection of galvanised iron fences. On 7 June 1884, 20 000 people attended an aquatic carnival at Albert Lake Victoria, with an estimated 10 000 of them paying admission to a special area to witness the 'Hanlan Regatta'.⁴⁶ Because of its circular shape a lake may have been easier to enclose than the banks of rivers at which Hanlan performed.⁴⁷ Hanlan's

contemporary Bill Beach was in no doubt about the success of these commercial ventures. With some resentment, Beach claimed:

Hanlan is a very cute fellow, and is determined to make as much money as possible. He is making a lot of money from his exhibitions. He does nothing extraordinary, but his name is a great draw.⁴⁸

As Hanlan successfully met several challenges to his world title the sporting press feared that Australian scullers may not be world class, and that Trickett's victory had been an isolated exception. In the light of Hanlan's flamboyant, confident manner, insecurities quickly surfaced.⁴⁹ It is in this context that Beach's victory over Hanlan assured him of a heroic reception similar to that of Trickett.

Beach, the former blacksmith from Sydney, raced Hanlan on 16 August 1884 at Parramatta. The odds for a Beach victory before the race were five to one against, and as Hanlan took a strong lead early in the race, the odds increased to ten to one. Among the crowd of an estimated 100 000 spectators who lined the banks of the Parramatta River, an observer described a mood of 'deep despondency'.⁵⁰ But Beach's stamina counted in the last half of the race and he drew level and then passed Hanlan, to win convincingly. A reporter for the *Sydney Echo* was aboard a vessel which followed the scullers along the river. His account describes the euphoria among spectators upon the realisation of an Australian victory.

'Beach wins! Beach wins! Incredible! But true. Some hats are tossed in [the] air... men leap from the deck in a frenzy of joyful excitement, clasp hands, hug each other... ship after ship takes up the cheering... there are a hundred thousand throats straining!'⁵¹

The reporter suggested an explanation of the extent of the emotion.

To all those who have difficulty in understanding the extravagant exultation attending that winning, it will be necessary to say; turn back the leaves of memory a year or two; remember how Sydney

kept awake all one night awaiting the arrival of a certain telegram, which coming, sent a sign and a shudder through the city such as might follow on the loss of some object long cherished and dearly beloved. Hanlan took us into captivity that day, Beach delivered us [from it] on Saturday.⁵²

Beach became an overnight hero of his NSW colony, and a public banquet was organised in his honour at the Sydney Town Hall.⁵³ It was customary for public figures, such as winning sportsmen and political candidates, to address crowds from the balconies of hotels or other buildings. A meeting was organised at the International Hotel on 18 August 1884 to witness the paying over of the stakes of £1000 to the winner Beach. Outside some 5000 people gathered to applaud the new champion, and to hear speeches from Beach and the defeated Hanlan.⁵⁴

Beach's victory did not remain provincial in its significance as he was embraced as the *Australian* world champion in other colonies. On 29 March 1885 he was a special guest of the Victorian Rowing Association, and he was on public display, for 'late in the evening just as the workers were leaving their offices, alone and unchallenged he rowed along the Yarra and thousand lined the banks to watch him'.⁵⁵ Moreover, with a victorious defence of his world championship in London, Beach returned home in December 1886 to a welcome in Sydney streets even bigger than that bestowed upon Trickett. The Governor, the Premier and the Mayor of Sydney all publicly congratulated him, and an eyewitness described the cheering crowd packed in King and Pitt Streets as stretched 'as far each way as the eye could see'.⁵⁶ Beach remained undefeated world champion, retiring for the fourth time, and from international competition for good, after again beating Hanlan on 27 November 1888. Beach's trainer Peter Kemp assumed the new mantle of Australian and world champion, but he was soon succeeded by Earnest Henry Searle, who broke all previous records on the Parramatta.⁵⁷

The ‘boat race’: scullduggery

Some attention to Searle’s career is necessary here, for it reveals problematic aspects of the conduct of professional sculling. Searle was brilliant yet controversial. His sculling ability was awesome, but his professional integrity was, at times, called into question. He faced accusations of foul play and suggestions of gamesmanship, which complicated his status as a sports hero. There was no hint of this early in his career. In October 1888 when he defeated Kemp for the world title, he was feted in Sydney. He attended a performance at Her Majesty’s Theatre, and was offered the vice-regal box. After the curtain dropped there were calls in the audience for Searle and other champion scullers in attendance to rise. They all bowed their acknowledgements to the crowd, with Searle thanking the audience and promising of ‘his intention of always rowing for the honour of Australia’.⁵⁸ Kemp remarked that he ‘was pleased that it was an Australian who had beaten him, and he was glad that the championship would still be retained in the colony’.⁵⁹ Sculling fans loved these declarations of patriotism.

But during the inaugural Brisbane Aquatic Carnival in November 1888 Searle was guilty of professional misconduct. This episode reveals the importance of crowd reaction to the conduct of sculling races, and it highlights the responsibilities of officials in overseeing the fair conduct of the contests. Moreover, the carnival itself is a good example of the organisational background to sculling championships.

Although having surrendered his world title, Hanlan was never short of initiatives through which to line his pockets. He suggested to Brisbane sportsmen that they organise a race with prizes large enough to attract the best scullers in the world. At a public meeting in August the idea received support, and the event was scheduled to be held on the Brisbane River in December. The Queensland government gave support, ‘by lending a boat to the [race] committee, guaranteeing that the river would be clear during the races, and by declaring the first day 5

December, a public holiday'.⁶⁰ A star-studded field emerged, including Beach, who had come out of retirement especially for the local sweepstakes event.⁶¹ The champion Searle was welcomed to Brisbane in style, with an accompaniment of brass bands, mounted escorts and a grand banquet. He was the man of the moment, at the peak of his career.⁶²

Through inexperienced management the heats for the finals of the Brisbane Carnival were not structured according to the seedings of the competitors. As a consequence the best performed scullers were placed together in some heats, with the lesser lights competing in other heats. Incredibly, one heat included Bill Beach against Henry Searle and Neil Matterson, from which only the first two were to advance directly to the finals. What emerged amazed and shocked both spectators and organisers alike. Searle and Matterson, in apparent collusion, seemed to foul Beach deliberately during the race more than once, which effectively relegated him to the rear. So determined was Searle for Beach to finish third, that he happily relinquished first place to Matterson. Spectators debated whether the fouls were accidental or intentional, although two collisions during a race of professional scullers was highly unusual. The race umpire disqualified Searle and Matterson who, incredibly, then admitted that they had backed Matterson to win the race. But the matter did not rest with the umpire's decision, for the race committee met and, although they confirmed the disqualifications, they allowed Searle and Matterson to be relegated to repechage heats to seek qualification for the finals. They were not, as was usual, barred from competing in the rest of the tournament.⁶³

The reputation of professional sculling had been badly damaged. The reaction by the press and the spectating public typically condemned the committee's decision. Crowds on river banks loudly cheered Beach as he trained, but booed Searle and Matterson. *The Brisbane Courier* likened the episode to English sculling, and claimed that 'unless the sport is to sink into complete degradation, all unfair conduct on the part of

competitors must be put down with a firm hand'.⁶⁴ The editorial of the *Queensland Times* went even further, arguing that

Sculling races, like other races, have been sold before now, but that is a mild form of fraud compared with the unmanly conduct of those scullers, who in our opinion, are virtually, if not actually, guilty of crime.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, wild rumours circulated that the race committee's decision had been influenced by the wealthy backers of Searle, who stood to lose substantial sums of money if he had been disqualified from the competition.⁶⁶

Beach had secured a place in the final because of his compensatory victory, but he refused to compete, announcing that he would never race against Matterson or Searle (his likely opponents) either in the final or ever again. The final matched Searle against Matterson and Kemp, and the largest crowd of the carnival was in attendance, although there was little wagering on the outcome of the contest. Few were prepared to risk their money against Searle, who cruised home 100 yards ahead of Kemp the second placegetter, with Matterson a further 150 yards astern. More to the point, did punter have confidence that the competitors were really 'on the job'?

Reflecting the sense of public dismay at the fouling of Beach, the crowd greeted the winner with groans and the runner-up with applause. There were similar scenes during the presentation of prizemoney cheques, although Searle tried to defend himself, claiming that the wind and the tide had caused the collisions with Beach. But this account was marred by Matterson, who when he next spoke, accused Beach of causing the fouls. He concluded by venting his anger at the people present, claiming that neither he nor Searle were likely to ever return to Brisbane again.⁶⁷ So ended the inaugural Brisbane 'Grand Aquatic Carnival'. Organisers had hoped to make it into an annual event, but it finished in disgrace. Indeed, the *Brisbane Courier* argued that there was 'nothing

throughout the proceedings of the so-called carnival to raise our respect for professional rowing... as in most sports into which wagering so largely enters'.⁶⁸ The centre stage of professional sculling quickly returned to New South Wales, where for the next two decades the sculling spectacle continued to flourish.

From stardom to martyrdom: Searle and the mournful crowd.

Despite the accusations raised against Searle, he continued to race. On 9 September 1889 he defended his world title on the Thames, but unlike Trickett and Beach, the return of Searle from an emphatic victory prompted crowd response of a mournful rather than a celebratory character. This was not because of the outcome of the race itself, or even the professional conduct of the sculler. Searle returned as a dying man.

Searle defeated his opponent by the decisive margin of ten lengths. After the race he boarded a ship to travel home to receive the ritual hero's welcome. But on the voyage Searle was taken ill. Initially he was thought to be suffering a minor ailment, but eventually it was realised that he had contracted typhoid. Searle was immediately hospitalised in Australia, but he died on 10 December 1889 at the young age of twenty-three.⁶⁹

Searle's untimely death was portrayed in the press as a national tragedy,⁷⁰ and his funeral cortege attracted an intercolonial wake. He died in Melbourne but the body was to be taken to Sydney. His remains were transported in a glass-sided hearse drawn by four horses, and the coffin was visible to spectators as it made its way to Spencer Street Railway Station. Several thousand people lined to view the cortège, and 'the crush was so great at the corner of Russell Street that mounted police had to clear the way'.⁷¹

A funeral service was read at the station, including sympathetic messages from the Governor of Victoria, Lord Hopetoun. As the train departed for Sydney, hats were taken off and heads bowed.⁷² Along the route tributes were made to Searle by townspeople. At Benalla station

a crowd assembled to pay respects, and a wreath and floral cross was presented to those attending the funeral carriage. Bennett describes these as ‘decorous, touching events, marked by the solemnity of those present’.⁷³

The *Sydney Morning Herald* predicted that ‘the next day’s funeral would eclipse all similar events yet witnessed in Australia’.⁷⁴ While there were precedents for this type of mass public mourning,⁷⁵ the Herald was surely justified in claiming the funeral as among the ‘most imposing and remarkable events ever witnessed in New South Wales, or indeed, Australia’.⁷⁶ The paper estimated that 170 000 people attended the procession:

citizens were massed in serried ranks... Sydney never saw such a sight before - not even when the [military] contingent departed [in 1885] for the Soudan [sic]... In addition to [people] filling the roadway and the sidewalks, they were on the balconies and the roofs of houses.⁷⁷

Travelling at less than walking pace, the procession took two and a half hours to reach St Andrew’s Cathedral.⁷⁸ Streets were crowded with people, many of whom had to wait several hours for the procession to pass. Flags were flown at half mast, and thousands of people wore black ribbon or Searle’s blue and white rowing colours. Traffic was suspended along the entire route of the procession, which was almost three-quarters of a mile in length. Representatives of various sporting associations and friendly societies participated, with Searle’s fellow champion scullers, including Laycock and (despite the Brisbane incident) Beach, accorded places of honour in the march. Also attending the procession were various official dignitaries, including the mayor, city aldermen and members of parliament.⁷⁹

After the funeral service Searle’s coffin was transported to Circular Quay, where it was lifted onto a steamer for transportation to the sculler’s home town of Grafton. Ships crammed with spectators lined Sydney Cove and a band played tributes as the champion made his last

journey over the water. The untimely and premature death of the champion sculler, just as he seemed at his record shattering best, no doubt exacerbated the public emotion which surrounded his funeral.⁸⁰ But it seems likely that if Beach had died soon after defeating Hanlan that a similar display of public mourning would have followed. Despite Searle's loss, Australia, or more precisely New South Wales, continued to produce world champion scullers till early in the twentieth century.⁸¹

There were critics of the displays of public sympathy that Searle's funeral inspired. Most of them questioned the sense of priority of Australians in bestowing hero status upon an athlete whose feats had been transitory, and were of symbolic value. The *Melbourne Age*, for example, declared:

Can it be said that the mortuary honours paid to Searle were in any way proportionate to his merit as a public man, or the services he has tendered his fellow creatures [?]... All that can be fairly claimed for him is that he was a good-natured but illiterate young man with a magnificent muscular development, who had proved he could pull a wager-boat faster than any other man in the world. Therefore Australia has fallen down and worshipped him... what is the lesson conveyed to the Australian youth if not that the development of biceps, not brains, is most desirable, and that the achievements of Searle are more worthy of emulation than those of a Gordon or an Edison [?].⁸²

What seems most remarkable is that critics did not mention the accusations of corruption which were levelled at Searle during the Brisbane Aquatic Carnival. Ironically, Beach was one of several scullers who took places of honour in the funeral procession.⁸³ So it seems that if Beach had forgiven the champion's fall from grace, most sculling fans had done likewise, or simply remained ignorant of the episode entirely. In short, the Brisbane disqualification seems to have had no bearing upon the public reception given to Searle upon his death.

The sculling spectacle: organisation, publicity, & spectating

Major sculling championships were organised by promoters, who in addition to a love for the sport, were particularly keen to maximise a financial return from their involvement. To this end the banks of the Parramatta River were partially enclosed during race days by the erection of galvanised iron fences, and temporary grandstands were built near the finish line. Entry to these areas required payment from spectators. These developments have been overlooked by Bennett, who has claimed that the absence of gatemoney was a major factor in the decline of the sport.⁸⁴ The following case studies illustrate a variety of measures employed by promoters to maximise their income from the event.

The first example is Hanlan rowing Laycock at Penrith on 22 May 1884 for the 'championship of the world' and £500 a-side. Promoters erected a grandstand at the finish line which could accommodate 6000 paying spectators. To ensure that payment was exacted for entry, a seven feet galvanised iron fence was erected around the stand, and this area was then able to hold an estimated 8000 people. Refreshment booths and tables were situated in the enclosed area, and in return operators paid a fee to promoters.⁸⁵ Promoters also earned income from steamer passages. This usually meant only one or two vessels, with race officials, colonial dignitaries and press men aboard.⁸⁶

The race was supported by the New South Wales government. It provided divers to move obstructions from the river, and public servants to aid in the running of the event. Forty police and detectives were employed both in and around the enclosure; water police used their boats to maintain order along the banks and limit water traffic; train services were organised with special packages to entice passengers, including admission to the enclosure or grandstand. To celebrate the occasion the government proclaimed a public holiday for the people of Parramatta, Windsor, Camden and Penrith.⁸⁷

Both the race and transport arrangements were extensively advertised in the weeks leading up to the big day. On race day Penrith temporarily acquired a convivial, carnival atmosphere. A band entertained an estimated six thousand people assembled on the river bank.⁸⁸ The *Echo* reported:

There were three-card men, skittle and nine-pins, 'under and over', strength-testing apparatus in variety, also shooting galleries of many types, tumblers, musicians, exhibitors of moneys and also in one instance, a large snake twining around a man's neck, and all kinds of nice little games by which ingenious laziness tries to relieve impulsive industry of its loose cash. These people established themselves in the cheaper enclosure above the division, where they assembled in force, and with their loud shouting soon turned the quiet scene into one of discordant uproar.⁸⁹

Despite the variety of entertainment and refreshments offered in the enclosure, the promoters were frustrated that the grandstand, with two thousand patrons, was only one third full.⁹⁰ Other than the steamers on the river, the grandstand offered the best vantage point to spectators. It was an elevated position which allowed the viewer to see further in the distance, and with its graded incline, seated spectators did not obstruct the view of others behind them. Because of these features the grandstand was also the most expensive spectating area. Moreover, as indicated by the admission prices, it was also potentially lucrative to promoters.⁹¹ To the disappointment of the organisers, many people congregated outside the enclosed area. Some even clambered onto the roof of the boatsheds, one of which collapsed, sending people and rubble onto the boats stored inside.⁹²

Although promoters had difficulties in maximising a financial return, the enclosure of grounds and the charging of admission to spectators was an integral part of major professional sculling contests at least from the early 1880s. This contradicts Bennett's argument that the decline of professional sculling in the early twentieth century can be

attributed to lack of enclosure and spectator payment. But the example of Penrith also challenges another of Bennett's assertions, that the decline of professional sculling was also attributable to improvements in spectator facilities and viewing areas in sports other than sculling. Admittedly, terraced arenas, such as at cricket and football, offered panoramic views. But grandstands were also present at sculling championships, and although patrons could not view an entire contest, a system of semaphore flags was organised to keep spectators aware of the state of the race.⁹³

The second example is Peter Kemp's challenge of Searle for the the world championship in October 1888 on the Parramatta River.⁹⁴ The advertised stake was £1000, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* announced:

The final deposits were handed in to the stakeholder last evening. Mr. J.E. Myers, the captain of the East-Sydney Rowing Cub, was appointed umpire, and Mr J.Richards was authorised to act in the capacity of judge. The betting last night was 6 to 4 on Searle.⁹⁵

Newspapers thus gave credibility to the contest, not only in terms of advertising it, but because they announced who was responsible for the management of the contest, and what the broad expectations were of the chance of the competitors.

The race took place on a Saturday afternoon, which for an increasing percentage of urban workers was a half-day holiday. A feature of the occasion was the large number of spectator vessels on the river, and the people crammed aboard them. The *Herald* reported that

between 40 and 50 steamers and steam launches were employed for the conveyance of spectators, whilst there were also used for that purpose a small fleet of no small magnitude, consisting of yachts, sailing boats, and other craft.⁹⁶

This was a potential problem for race organisers, although the marine Board had ruled that no more than two steamers were allowed to follow the race. The vessels authorised to do so were the *Gosford* and the

Inflexible, but, as the *Herald* angrily wrote, ‘not a word or praise could be said in the management of the boats’.⁹⁷

These vessels were late in arriving at the jetty at Circular Quay, and a large and increasingly anxious crowd of several hundred would-be passengers awaited. There had been a delay in issuing passenger tickets and when *Inflexible* berthed a rush was made for places on board. In the crush that resulted a man was forced between the jetty and the steamer and was fortunate not to be drowned. Not until *Gosford* drew alongside was order restored.⁹⁸ Aboard *Gosford* were various dignitaries, including the Mayor of Sydney, several aldermen, past sculling champions, and the official timekeeper. *Inflexible* carried several ‘professional betting men’, and as large bets were laid the available odds periodically changed. The two official boats meandered their way up the river, dodging spectator craft. At one point they collided with each other, although damage was slight.⁹⁹

The *Herald* noted that although river traffic was an important source of spectator conveyance, many people travelled long distances by road to witness the event.

Hundreds of humble, but enthusiastic worshippers of the sport set out early from the city and walked the distance. Others utilised furniture vans, or coal carts, or hawkers’ wagons... Then came the dashing four-in-hand, or the equally rapid hansom, or the buggy, with dignified occupants and professional drivers. The gigantic omnibus at once made its presence known.¹⁰⁰

When they arrived spectators were obliged to find a piece of territory on the river banks to view the contest. The *Herald* reported that ‘[p]eople’s taste in matters aquatic differ. Some prefer to witness the start, others to view the boats midway, and others to be in the finish’.¹⁰¹

The *Herald’s* reporter noted that as

early as 3 o’clock there was a good number present, and the only thing to do was to wait patiently until the time for the contest arrived. With time the numbers increased, and the best positions were soon taken up. One had to stand one’s ground or else it was

speedily occupied... [meanwhile] The coming race was discussed from every conceivable point of view. There were 'tips' innumerable, and the life and exploits of the competitors were generally proclaimed.¹⁰²

On the river there was plenty of movement. Spectator craft of many types rushed by, and several vessels ran aground, much to the amusement of the crowd.¹⁰³

To convey the results of the race as quickly as possible to the media, a temporary telegraph tent was set up near the finish line, but by 4.30 pm there was no sign of the scullers, and some people grew impatient. The reporter related that 'there were several false alarms', but '[a]t last a murmur ran down the banks of the river. The occupants of the steamers far away could be seen to be waving handkerchiefs'.¹⁰⁴ At first nobody could be sure who was leading, although there were several claims among the crowd. But eventually Searle breezed past, attracting sustained applause from the spectators. Meanwhile, after a signal from his backers on *Inflexible*, the well beaten Kemp slowed down in order to preserve his strength for a forthcoming contest with another opponent.¹⁰⁵

The third example is the world championship between Tressider and Towns on the Parramatta River in August 1904.¹⁰⁶ Two steamers were engaged to follow the race, and the press and umpire Bill Beach were guaranteed places aboard.¹⁰⁷ An estimated 90 000 people lined the river banks to watch the race, and some even climbed trees to obtain a more panoramic view. But 'a few more privileged enthusiasts paid as much as a pound to watch the race from the deck of a ferry'.¹⁰⁸ The race had particular significance because it was the first world championship sculling race on the Parramatta for twelve years, and the first since the inauguration of the Commonwealth.¹⁰⁹

The *Herald* posed the question 'who will win'?, and concluded that an element of uncertainty was necessary for the contest to attract

spectator interest. The newspaper also gave credibility to wagering, which had been synonymous with sculling for years.

The speculative sportsman, the man who has... a fairly good idea of merit, but an overwhelming desire to make money. They are necessary for the sport, for they feed it, and work on the policy of live and let live.¹¹⁰

The *Herald* went to great lengths to explain the rules of the contest,¹¹¹ the race conditions as agreed to by the competitors, the identity of the umpire and judge, and the handing over of stakemoney to the editor of the Referee journal.¹¹² This was an explicit effort to assure spectators that the race was a genuine contest and above corruptive influences.

The scullers were promised a share of the tickets paid for steamer passages. The *Herald* announced that '[i]n the event of the championship going to Tressider 75 per cent of the steamer receipts (after expenses) shall go to Towns, otherwise each competitor will take 50 per cent'.¹¹³ With some 2000 passengers anticipated by the Harbour Trust to be aboard the steamers,¹¹⁴ this suggests a tidy return to the contestants. The event was won by Towns, and the *Herald* reported that the crowd had 'the satisfaction of witnessing a good race stoutly contested and honourably won and lost'.¹¹⁵ The paper went on to celebrate a large crowd being in attendance and, after the contest was over, the river being alive with boats, 'present[ed] a scene which has not been witnessed in our waters for many a long day'.¹¹⁶ Most notable in the *Herald's* remarks was that the race had been fair and square.

There was no unpleasant incident to mar the sportsman-like nature of the contest, no suggesting of unworthy stratagems, no suspicion of unfairness. Both men knew what they had to do, and they set to work at doing it with no thought of serving ignoble ends of persons who look on sport merely as an opportunity of making money... it is when races are ruled by the betting market and when men are unashamed to use unfair tactics that the public draws off and turns its attention to other forms of amusement.¹¹⁷

The 1904 race indicates that professional sculling could still draw large crowds, but the tone of the *Herald's* post-race comments suggests that it had suffered problems which, although not present at this race, still hung over the sport. In fact, by the end of the early 1900s professional sculling began to decline as a mass spectacle.

End of an era: the demise of sculling as a mass spectacle

Bennett argues that although Australia produced a line of world champion professional scullers, three of them - Trickett, Beach, and Searle - occupied a special place in the spectating public's imagination and, with their demise, the sport's attraction began to wane.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, Bennett admits that even after Searle's death 'professional sculling seemed to still occupy the special place it had won in Australia during the 1880s... and between 1880 and 1907 Australia retained a virtual monopoly over the title'.¹¹⁹ So, on the surface, the performances of Australian scullers seemed to offer no reason for a decline in public interest in the sport up to that time. Nevertheless, Bennett argues that 'people came to believe that the men who followed Searle were not of the same calibre as the [special] three'.¹²⁰ He maintained that this could explain the drop in crowd size from the 1890s.¹²¹

But organisational and economic factors were more important in explaining the decline of the sculling spectacle from the 1890s. Professional sculling lacked a central organising body, and events were held spasmodically, not regularly. This was not as important in the 1870s and 1880s when there were fewer organised sports to compete with sculling, but by the turn of the century other sports increasingly competed for the gatemoney of spectators. As the sporting public was able to be involved in sports such as horse racing, cricket, and football on a regular basis, this made such contests a ritual spectacle. In contrast, the infrequent nature of sculling championships did little to foster its own traditions of spectating. The occasional championship race could still

attract great interest, such as the Towns versus Tressider world championship race on the Parramatta river on 30 July 1904. This contest attracted 90 000 spectators, but it was the first of its kind on the river for twelve years!

In terms of gatemoney, gambling, refreshment and entertainment booths, spectators were an integral part of sculling championships. This centred around an enclosure which, although a rudimentary and temporary structure, at least gave promoters some control over an area which was normally public space. But not all spectators elected to watch from grandstands and enclosed areas, some preferring to crane their necks from river banks at a distance from the finish line. This can be contrasted with other organised spectator sports, which featured permanently enclosed grounds and viewing areas. As a consequence spectators were able to absorb an entire contest. They were generally obliged to pay for this privilege, but in comparison to sculling it was money well spent. The crowd at sculling contests had but a brief glimpse of the performers as they rowed past. To most spectators they were but two dots in the distance.

In relation to other sports sculling lacked intricacy, quick movement, and physical aggression. Despite such handicaps, sculling's success as a mass spectacle relied upon two main factors: the hero worship of Australian world champions regularly racing for their title in Australia, and large stakemoney which could attract gamblers to the contests. Without these ingredients the races could not attract the backing of promoters or widespread public interest. With the infrequency of sculling races, the ritual of spectating, stakemoney, and gambling at these contests was weakened.¹²²

Moreover, although it is difficult to gauge, there remained a lingering doubt in some people's minds as to the legitimate conduct of the races. Searle seemed to have confirmed such a view, for even after the Brisbane incident, he was accused of rowing 'dead' in a couple of races to collect wagers on winning opponents.¹²³ This was suitably

forgotten in the emotional anguish of his premature death, but the memory may have lingered in the minds of spectators, particularly when they were about to reach into their wallets and back a fancy. In addition, the entrepreneurial nature of scullers' activities resulted in criticisms of commercial exploitation of the spectating public. For example, in 1890 the *Referee* lamented:

Hippodroming is slowly creeping into the game, and if steps are not taken to modify this show business the popular sport of 'boat-pulling' will soon be at as low an ebb in New South Wales as it is in the United States... Boat races, as a rule are made, like all other matches, to test the superiority of one man over another, and of course to win all the coin that can be got from the other side... The rowers, however, take a share of the gate... which goes to prove that professional rowing is drifting towards hippodroming. I wonder what those old celebrities - Dick Green, Ned Trickett, Mick Rush, Hickey Elias Laycock, and others think of the present state of affairs.¹²⁴

There were also new factors which affected sculling. The 1890s depression had an impact on the sponsorship of competitors. Without the big money of backers and regular contests for prestigious world championships, professional sculling lost its entrepreneurial and commercial foundations. Moreover, as a dependence on rivers for routine water transport lessened, so did the existence of the 'self-taught' rower, who 'applied in competition what was often part of everyday life'.¹²⁵ There was therefore less of a pool of 'naturally' talented scullers to compete in world championships. Moreover, the sculling shells were expensive investments, particularly given that contests had declining purses.

Further, the turn of the century saw an increased importance of the amateur ideal in sport, particularly in rowing, rugby union and athletics. Regular amateur rowing races were contested by the colonies from 1863, and the annual Henley-on-Yarra race began in 1904.¹²⁶ These offered young rowers the opportunity of regular competition and,

as various cups and trophies were presented to winners, the popular press gave considerable coverage to such occasions. As a consequence, the psychic income involved with amateur victories increased, particularly as participants could aim to represent Australia in international amateur contests.¹²⁷ Moreover, because amateur sports were free of gambling they corresponded to the utilitarian view of athletic competition which was prized by middle-class social reformers. The gambling and stake-money which were a routine part of professional sculling were anathema to proponents of the amateur ideal.¹²⁸

After 1907 interest in professional sculling contests in New South Wales also began to decline as a consequence of poor performances in world championship challenges. In 1907 the world professional sculling title was won by the New Zealander Dick Webb, and the championship races were taken across the Tasman.¹²⁹ Webb and the Englishman Ernest Barry held the title between them until 1919, and during that period no challenges for the world title were held in Australia. Unlike Hanlan, these champions chose to defend their titles in front of home crowds. Although Australians again held the title between 1922 and 1928, and the occasional large crowd turned out, sculling had lost its way as a mass spectating ritual.¹³⁰

Although professional sculling could not boast elaborate spectating facilities or even rivetting excitement on the water, the sculling event had entertaining features. Much of the attraction to spectators was the sense of occasion, a championship to be won or lost, often contested by scullers from different colonies or countries. This was coupled with vast sums of money to be won on the water and through betting tickets. Also important to many spectators was the festive nature of the occasion. Regions such as Penrith and Parramatta came 'alive' during sculling championships, and people were attracted by the entertainment, refreshments and convivial atmosphere of the day. Many spectators may have had only a passing interests in the race itself, but they wanted to be part of a crowd during the occasion.¹³¹ But because of the infrequent

staging of professional championships, this ritualistic carnival atmosphere of the sculling regions of Parramatta and Penrith was lost. The popular appeal of the dots on the water had been dashed.

NOTES

1. Many sporting arenas were enclosed and, increasingly, some venues boasted elevated mounds and grandstands. B. Stoddart, *Saturday Afternoon Fever. Sport in the Australian Culture* (Sydney: Angus and Roberston, 1986). pp. 15-23, 123.
2. The term psychic income has been adopted from W. Vamplew, *Pay up and Play the Game. Professional Sport in Britain 1875-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). It refers to a degree of public adulation and elevated status a sportsperson attains, normally, although not exclusively, through winning. This is separate from, or in addition to, monetary and other material rewards for sporting performance. Cups and trophies are symbols of success, so they are valued for the psychic income they generate for the recipient, as well as for any monetary value they may have. But if a sportsperson's trophy is traded for a monetary equivalent, then its value as a symbol of success and earner of psychic income is lost.
3. The gender specific term *sportsmen* is used because nineteenth century popular sporting heroes were exclusively men. In a patriarchal society women's sport was widely considered to be unfeminine at worst, or trivial at best. This is not to deny women's participation in sport and recreation in the colonial period. For a recent study in this area, see M.K. Steel, *Half the Race. A History of Australian Women in Sport*. (Sydney: Collins, 1991), pp1.25.
4. J. O'Hara, *A Mug's Game. A History of Gaming and Betting in Australia*, (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1988), pp68-74. Stoddart, *op.cit.*, p.123.
5. The development of the Melbourne Cup illustrates this point. In 1861 the Cup was first run and it attracted an estimated crowd of 4000 spectators to the Flemington racecourse. In 1871 it was witnessed by 40 000 fans, and by 1881 a record crowd of 100 000 packed the course. W. Vamplew, 'Sport and Recreation', in W. Vamplew (ed.), *Australians Historical Statistics*, (Broadway NSW: 1987 Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, 1987), p.386. Some observers described the colonists as having an obsession with sport, although this characteristic was hardly peculiar to Australia. R. Holt, *Sport and the British*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp159-162, 236-279. On the other hand, sports were opposed for a variety of reasons, including on and off-field violence, gambling, the emergence of commercialism and professionalism in sports, and the playing of sport on Sundays. D.W. Brown, 'Criticisms Against the Value-Claim for Sport and the Physical Ideal in late Nineteenth Century Australia', *Sporting Traditions*, 4.2 (May 1988), pp.150-161. Moreover, there were fears that by placing sporting heroes on a pedestal the value of intellectual pursuits would be overlooked. Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*, for example, lamented the popular view that the young Australian male 'was nothing if not a cricketer, a footballer, or a rowing man'. 27 Feb. 1882, cited in Brown, *op cit* p.150.
6. There were environmental differences, however. Australian rowers were favoured by a mild climate, and on the coasts, wide rivers. This enabled them to practice and compete virtually all year round, which was less likely in Britain.

7. S. Bennett, 'Professional Sculling in New South Wales', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 71.2, (October, 1985), p127. For example, on 20 June 1857 *Bell's Life in Sydney* reported a 'Scullers' Match Race for £100, on the Upper Yarra.
8. Dodd claims that there were some 5 000 recorded sculling match races on the Thames between 1835-51, which equates to five contests per week for the period. C. Dodd, 'Rowing', in T. Mason (ed.), *Sport in Britain. A Social History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.280.
9. For example, under the heading 'challenge', the brothers Hickey advertised their preparedness 'to row any two men in the world, either with oars, double sculls, or single-handed, for any sum, from £1000'. *Sydney Morning Herald* 17 March 1868.
10. Such as the scullers Thomas Jordan and Robert Prest, both of Sandringham, who agreed to row the Melbourne Regatta course for the prize of a £10 trophy. *Bell's Life in Victoria*, 1 June 1867.
11. For example, in 1867 *Bell's Life in Victoria* reported that an amateur handicap scullers' match was to be held in Sydney 'for £10 and a pair of sculls'. 1 June 1867. The term amateur in those days did not necessarily infer that races were without monetary reward. Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play*, p.183.
12. Dodd, *op.cit.*, p.280.
13. Bennett, *op.cit.*, p.127.
14. The sporting press often provided elaborate details of scullers' training, physical condition, and mental attitude towards a coming contest. See *Referee*, 3 December 1890 on Peter Kemp's preparation for a defence of his world title against John Mclean of Richmond.
15. S. Bennett. *The Clarence Comet. The Career of Henry Searle 1866-89*, (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1973), p.11. As Bennett describes elsewhere, 'when Searle defeated O'Connor of Canada in 1889, the contest was for £500 a-side, but it was said that the Australians won £30 000 in wagers - and that the Canadians had stood to win much more'. Bennett, Sculling in NSW', p.129.
16. For example, in New South Wales Bill Beach was sponsored by the publican J. Deeble, and Henry Searle was financed by the pharmacists John and Thomas Spencer. *ibid.*, p.129.
17. *ibid.*, p.141.
18. R Fotheringham, Early Sporting Diplomacy. The Case of R.A.W. Green', *Sporting Traditions*, 5.2, (May 1989), p.175.
19. *Brisbane Courier*, 6 Dec. 1888, cited in Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', p.141.
20. *ibid.*, p.129.
21. Bennett, Sculling in NSW', p.129.
22. *ibid.*, p.131.
23. Anglo-Australian cricket contests began from the 1860s, and this coincided with the first Australian challenge for the sculling championship of the world in England. Fotheringham, *op.cit.*, p.175.
24. Promenading was also a feature of the annual Henley-on-Yarra regatta from 1904. C. Jones, 'Henley on Yarra. The Lost Festival', *This Australia*, 2.4 (Spring 1983), pp.7-11. On promenading as a social ritual, see D. Scobey, 'Anatomy of the Promenade: the Politics of Bourgeois Sociability in Nineteenth Century New York', *Social History*, 17.2 (May 1992) p.221.
25. *Bell's Life* attempted to turn Green's loss into a controversy by printing a letter from someone who had witnessed the championship race and claimed that the challenger

- had been drugged. This also elevated the nationalistic dimensions of the race, because the English were indirectly accused of manipulating the outcome. Fotheringham, *op cit.*, pp.182-3.
26. *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 16 Dec. 1863; quoted in Fotheringham, *op.cit.*, p.183.
 27. *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 30 Jan. 1864; quoted in Fotheringham, *op.cit.*, p.183.
 28. *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 16 Jan. 1864; quoted in Fotheringham, *op.cit.*, p.183.
 29. Fotheringham, *op.cit* p.183.
 30. K. Dunstan, *Sports*, (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1973), pp.161-2. Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', pp.131-2.
 31. *SMH*, 19 July 1876.
 32. Dunstan, *op.cit.*, p.162.
 33. *ibid*, p.163.
 34. *SMH*, 10 Nov. 1876.
 35. *ibid*.
 36. Dunstan, *op.cit*, p.163.
 37. *ibid*, pp.163-165.
 38. *SMH*, 1 Dec. 1880.
 39. A. Brown, 'Edward Hanlan, the World Sculling Champion Visits Australia', *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Education*, Vol. 9.2 (December 1980), p.9.
 40. *ibid*, pp.1-21.
 41. *Bulletin*, 5 Jan. 1884, quoted in *ibid*. p.6.
 42. Brown, 'Edward Hanlan', pp.7-8.
 43. *SMH*, 18 March 1884, quoted in *ibid*. p.8.
 44. Brown, 'Edward Hanlan', pp.6, 12, 18.
 45. *ibid*, p.12.
 46. *ibid*, pp.12, 17-18.
 47. More research is required to determine how successful the policy of enclosure was in maximising promoters' returns.
 48. Brown, 'Edward Hanlan', p.12.
 49. Dunstan, *op.cit*, pp.165-66.
 50. *Sydney Echo*, 18 August 1884, cited in Dunstan, *op.cit*, p.167.
 51. *ibid*, p.168.
 52. *ibid*.
 53. Dunstan, *op.cit.*, pp.168-9.
 54. Brown, 'Edward Hanlan', p. 25.
 55. Dunstan, *op.cit.*, p.169.
 56. 'Old Timer', *SMH*, 29 Jan. 1935, cited in Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', p.133.
 57. Dunstan, *op.cit.*, p.170.
 58. *SMH* 29 Oct. 1888.
 59. *ibid*.
 60. Bennett, *Clarence Comet*, p.40.

61. Money obviously still had a lure to Beach, Despite his criticisms of Hanlan's entrepreneurial initiatives.
62. Because of his world title Searle had become a wealthy man. He presented his parents with a cheque for £1200, bought them a new house, and he treated himself to a set of diamond studs. Bennett, *Clarence Comet*, pp.40-41.
63. *ibid*, pp.43-45
64. *Brisbane Courier*, n.d., cited in *ibid*, p.44.
65. *Queensland Times* (Ipswich), 13 December 1888, cited in Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', p.135.
66. Bennett, *Clarence Comet*, pp.44-45.
67. *ibid*, pp.46-7.
68. *ibid*, p.47.
69. Dunstan, *op.cit.*, pp.170-1.
70. For example, The *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote that 'he did us honour, for he was of us, and had the strength of our soil, of our atmosphere, of ourselves, to some degree within him'. 11 December 1889.
71. Dunstan, *op.cit.*, p.172.
72. One estimate put the crowd that assembled to witness the Melbourne cortège at forty thousand people, which was a similar figure to that which had welcomed the new governor-general to Victoria some three months before. A December edition of the *Bulletin* concluded that 'the people thought as much of a dead sculler as they did of a live earl'. Quoted in Bennett, *Clarence Comet*, p.83.
73. *ibid*, p.83.
74. *ibid*, p.84.
75. For example on 6 May 1873 the funeral procession for W.C. Wentworth was viewed by 'tens of thousands of people' in Sydney, and the government declared a public holiday in honour of the occasion, (First citation:) K.S. Inglis, *The Australian Colonists: An Exploration of Social History 1788-1870*, (Carlton Victoria: Melbourne University Press), 1974, p.250.
76. *SMH*, 16 Dec. 1889.
77. *ibid*.
78. The procession must also have been lengthy, for at one point in the route it was claimed to have taken twenty-five minutes to pass by. Bennett, *Clarence Comet*, p.87.
79. *ibid*, pp.84-5. Dunstan, *op.cit.*, p.173.
80. Similar claims to martyrdom could be made about the premature deaths of other sporting heroes, namely the boxer Les Darcy and the race horse Phar Lap. See P. Corris, *Lords of the Ring : A History of Prizefighting in Australia*, (Sydney: Cassell Australia, 1980), pp.60-73; and N. Penton, *A Racing Heart. The Story of the Australian Turf*, (Sydney: Collins, 1987), pp.93-98.
81. Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', pp.129-141.
82. Melbourne Age, n.d., cited in Bennett, *Clarence Comet*, p.89.
83. In fact Beach and the well-known prizefighter Larry Foley were the last people to place wreaths on Searle's coffin as it left Circular Quay. Bennett, *Clarence Comet*, p.88.
84. Bennett mistakenly argues that sculling did not involve spectator payment, even though championship events had required entrance fees in enclosed areas from at least the 1880s. See Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', pp.137-38.

85. Facilities included cake stalls, publicans' booths and a variety of entertainment tables. Brown, 'Edward Hanlan', pp.12-13.
86. In the early years several boats were hired by promoters to follow the competitors along the river courses, but after some of the craft inadvertently (or perhaps otherwise) interfered with the smooth running of races, marine authorities placed a strict limit on the number of vessels which could follow races. For example, during the 1885 Beach versus Hanlan contest the marine Board ruled that only one steamer could follow the race. In response promoters charged ten pounds for twenty reserved seats on their steamer, and increased the price of the three hundred and fifty unreserved seats from twenty shillings to three pounds. These new arrangements proved to be no barrier to demand, and by race day all seats were sold. *ibid.* pp.29-30.
87. Even the Legislative Assembly voted to adjourn proceedings in favour of watching the contest. *ibid.*, pp.13-15.
88. The enclosed area could have accommodated a further two thousand people. *ibid.*, p.13.
89. Quoted in *ibid.*, p.15.
90. *ibid.*
91. Entry to the grandstand cost ten shillings, while admission to the enclosed ground areas was two shillings and six pence. There were also special train packages as an alternative means of admission. The cost of a first class trip from Sydney to Penrith was fifteen shillings, but entry to the grandstand was offered for a total of twenty shillings, which represented a saving of five shillings to the consumer. Also offered were second and third class packages of eight and six shillings respectively, but these only included entry to the ground enclosure. *ibid.*, p.13.
92. *ibid.*, p.15
93. *ibid.*, p.36.
94. This extended from Charity Point to a reef known locally as The Brothers.
95. *SMH*, 27 Oct. 1888.
96. *SMH*, 29 Oct. 1888.
97. *ibid.*
98. There were 250 people aboard *Gosford* and around 550 people on *Inflexible*, and they paid 30s. and 10s. respectively for their passage. *ibid.*
99. *ibid.*
100. *ibid.*
101. *ibid.*
102. *ibid.*
103. *ibid.*
104. *ibid.*
105. *ibid.*
106. This race is not listed in Bennett's list of world championship events. See Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', p.141.
107. *SMH*, 25 July 1904.
108. R. Coupe, *Australia. The Photographer's View : From the 1850s to the Bicentenary*, (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1987), p.82.
109. *SMH*, 30 July 1904.

- 110.*ibid.*
- 111.The race was to be run under the rules and regulations of the NSW Rowing Association. *ibid.*
- 112.*ibid.*
- 113.*ibid.*
- 114.*ibid.*
- 115.*SMH*, 1 Aug. 1904.
- 116.*ibid.*
- 117.*ibid.*
- 118.Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', pp.130-1.
- 119.*ibid.*, pp.136-7.
- 120.*ibid.* p.137.
- 121.*ibid.*
- 122.Bennett points out that in 1886 Beach defended his title twice in the space of a week, yet Stansbury, the world champion in 1892 had no contests to defend his title until 1896. The same situation applied to Towns, champion in 1901, yet not organised to defend his title until 1904.*ibid.*, p.138.
- 123.*ibid.*
- 124.*Referee*, 14 May, 1890.
125. Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', p.139.
- 126.*Age*, 26 Dec. 1863, and 21 March 1904. For discussions of the development of amateur rowing in Australia, see D.G. Lane and I. Jobling, 'For Honour and Trophies: Amateur Rowing in Australia, 1888-1912', *Sporting Traditions*, 4.1 (November, 1987) pp.2.25; A.N. Jacobsen, Australia in World Rowing, (Melbourne: Hill of Content, 1984), pp.14.23; Jones, *op.cit.* and D. Adair, 'Rowing and Sculling', in W. Vamplew and B. Stoddart (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Australian Sport*, (in preparation).
- 127.Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', p.139. Later, this public excitement was escalated by Bobby Pearce's rowing victories at the 1928 and 1932 Olympics.*ibid.*
- 128.O'Hara, *op.cit.*, pp.91-93, 130-136; Lane and Jobling,*op.cit.*, 9-16.
- 129.For example, the Melbourne *Argues* reported on 1 Sept. 1908 that Webb's final deposit of £100 to challenge the New Zealander Arnst for the world sculling championship had been made the previous day in Wellington. To the disappointment of New South Wales sculling fans, this was obviously a long way from Parramatta.
- 130.Bennett, 'Sculling in NSW', p.139.
- 131.Jones and Stephen have come to a similar conclusion in their research. See Jones, *op.cit.*, pp.7-11; and M. Stephen, 'The Port Adelaide Regatta, 1838-1914', *The Flinders Journal of History and Politics*, 12, 1987, pp.9-19.