

# CREATING WEMBLEY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NATIONAL MONUMENT

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Since the early 1920s Wembley has been an essential part of English football culture. Though it has staged other sports - greyhound racing, speedway, rugby league, equestrianism and, in 1948, the Olympic Games - it is with football that the stadium is most popularly associated. As the venue for England's football internationals and the Cup Final, Wembley has acquired a mythic status, compounded of the drama and the memory of events such as the World Cup victory of England in 1966, or the 'Matthews Final' of 1953. More than any other location Wembley has come to represent the physical 'home' of English football, much as Lord's does for cricket. Its place in English national life is such that it is seen by many as more than simply a sports stadium. From its connections with the 'national game', from the frequent presence of royalty at the annual Cup Final and from the radio and television coverage given to it, Wembley claims the position of a national monument.

This paper is concerned with the creation of Wembley Stadium. It focuses upon the convergence of two developments in the early 1920s. On the one hand, the commercial quest to develop the area around Wembley in north London as a leisure attraction with international appeal and pretensions; and, on the other hand, the attempt in the years immediately following the First World War to revivify the idea of Empire. This combination of

historically specific pressures - commercial and ideological - explains the origins of a stadium which has outlived the circumstances of its genesis and gone on to acquire quite new and quite different meanings.

By the beginning of the twentieth century association football was already established as a mass popular sport - 'the people's game'. Improved real wages, more leisure time and greater mobility because of the development of the railway network were the principal factors enabling the game to flourish among working men. But its popularity sprang also from less material sources. Many spectators were also players, and brought a feeling and expertise to their watching of the game which made possible a close association with the professional players. Observing the talent and achievements of these heroes helped men to experience a sense of physical pleasure and spontaneity that was otherwise lacking in the increasingly routinised world of industrial labour. Football became the obsessive focus of much of male life, simply because it dealt in strength, loyalty, decisiveness and self-control. It had an almost existential function in male working class life which contrasted sharply with the didactic role it played in the making of middle class men. Similarly, in the urbanised environment of this time the football team was a cultural form that gave a sense of belonging to a local community, and marked that community out in the national context.<sup>1</sup>

The centrepiece of this popular sport was, by the end of the nineteenth century, the final tie of the Football Association Challenge Cup: the F.A. Cup Final. Inaugurated in 1871, this competition was initially limited in both social and geographical terms to largely upper-class clubs from the Home Counties. In the 1880s, however, it became dominated by professional clubs from the North and Midlands. The contests of their teams ensured that the Final attracted crowds that could scarcely have been dreamed of when the competition was started. Over 100,000 people attended the Final in the years just before the First World War. Significantly, the venue was (with only a few exceptions) London. There was a strong feeling within football's 'Establishment' that a national game should stage its showpiece event in the capital city. From 1895 until 1914 the favoured arena was the Crystal Palace in south London. It was a capacious but poorly constructed stadium in need of a modernisation that its owners did not seem willing to embark upon.<sup>2</sup> The Final of 1914 was

the last to be played on this ground and already the F.A. was considering alternatives. The first three Finals after the War were played at the home of Chelsea F.C., Stamford Bridge, a stadium which had the necessary metropolitan location but which could only accommodate some 55,000 spectators. Not surprisingly, therefore, the F.A. expressed a keen interest in a new recreational development being proposed just after the end of the War in the north London suburb of Wembley. The project, designed to promote the idea of the British Empire, seemed to the F.A. a highly appropriate means through which to realise the aim of a national site for a national sport.<sup>3</sup>

Wembley, a name soon to become synonymous with football, was a little-known community on the fringes of the metropolis. Since the sixteenth century much of the land in this area had belonged to the wealthy Middlesex family of Page. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Richard Page had engaged the landscape architect Humphrey Repton to convert some of the property into a park - Wembley Park - but soon after the family's financial problems caused the Park to be sold at less than its true market value. The shrewd buyer was a London wines and spirits dealer, John Gray, who dreamt like many other members of the English middle class in the nineteenth century of using the profits of trade to acquire for himself the status of a country squire. Gray spent considerable sums improving the Park, though the growth of London was threatening Wembley's rural isolation. In 1879 a railway line was opened by the Metropolitan Railway and a year later Gray was obliged to sell 47 acres of his property to allow the Company to extend the line to Harrow. In 1889 Wembley Park changed hands again when it was sold for £32,929 to the Managing Director of the Metropolitan Railway, Sir Edward Watkin.<sup>4</sup>

Watkin was a man of innovation who, at this time, sought every opportunity to publicise and advance two ambitions: the linking of Britain to Europe through a tunnel under the English Channel, and the construction of a railway line that would connect Manchester to Paris through London and Dover. To promote the latter scheme Watkin secured for himself membership of the boards of both the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, and the South Eastern Railway.

It was through the commercial drive of this man that the business potential

of Wembley began to be explored. Watkin's Anglo-French vision had focused on the success of the Eiffel Tower at the French Exhibition of 1889. He resolved to build a bigger and more beautiful tower inside a spectacular funfair to be constructed at Wembley Park. In 1889 a Tower Company Ltd. was formed and a competition announced for designs for the 'Great Tower of London'. 69 plans were submitted within the three month deadline from various parts of the world. They included some extraordinary proposals, among which was a submission from the Thames Ironworks company (whose owner was the founder of West Ham F.C.) and a design to reproduce the Tower of Pisa in granite. Generally, however, the inspiration was that of Eiffel himself and most competitors attempted to imitate his structure. In spite of the many entries the jury complained of 'there being no single design which we could recommend as it stands for execution'. None the less, a first prize was awarded to the firm of Stewart, MacLaren and Dunn for an octagonal tower of 1,200 feet, 215 feet higher than the Eiffel Tower.<sup>5</sup>

The work was undertaken by a subsidiary company, the International Tower Construction Company. The space inside the building was divided into restaurants, theatres, dance halls, turkish baths, and exhibition halls for various novelties from the worlds of science and entertainment. From the outset, however, construction was beset by numerous financial problems. The appeal for public subscription was unsuccessful and the entire economic burden fell on the company controlled by Watkin himself. The winning design had to be modified into a less expensive one (lower, and sub-divided into only four sides). Work nevertheless began in June 1893 under the direction of Benjamin Baker, designer of the Forth Bridge and the Aswan Dam. The foundations were laid by the firm of J.T. Firbank and the first level of the tower was completed by Heenan and Froude in September 1895.

At the same time a large funfair was under construction. It included cricket and football pitches and an artificial lake, and opened in May 1894. 120,000 visitors were attracted to it during the 1895 season. Wembley seemed to be becoming a favourite visiting place for Londoners in their leisure time. But a halt to the building of the tower - the park's main attraction - was caused when its foundations shifted under the weight of the iron structure. Although the first level was opened to the public in the 1896

season the number of visitors dropped to 100,000. Moreover, the Tower Construction Company had great difficulty in finding funds and was voluntarily closed down in 1899. 'Watkin's Folly', as the tower had become known, remained open until 1902 when, because of poor maintenance, it was declared unsafe and closed. It was permanently demolished in 1907. The area continued to be a popular sports venue, however, and football, cricket, cycling, rowing, ice-skating in winter on the artificial lake and trotting around a circular track encompassing the cricket field were all practised. More than a hundred sports clubs were using the playing fields by the end of the First World War.

Watkin's ambitious plans might have failed, but the idea of Wembley as a recreational park for the metropolis had gained some credibility as a consequence of the commercial ventures of the pre-War years. The role of the Metropolitan Railway was decisive.<sup>6</sup> The opening of numerous railway lines made the park easily accessible from all directions and stimulated activity in other schemes. Notable among these was residential house-building, a project embarked upon by the Tower Construction Company itself when, in October 1906, it was converted into the Wembley Park Estate Company with the aim of transforming the surroundings into a peaceful and exclusive residential area complete with an 18-holes golf course. The area was therefore an obvious one for consideration when, after the War, the Government was seeking a site for the British Empire Exhibition.

There were a number of reasons why the idea of an Empire Exhibition should have a particular appeal to the British authorities at this time. For one thing, there was a precedent. The idea had already been proposed in 1904 by the British Empire League as a way of commemorating a tour of the Empire by the Prince of Wales. This project was suspended because of the Russo-Japanese War, but in 1913 the Canadian businessman Lord Strathcona revived the idea, only for it to be scotched when the War broke out.<sup>7</sup> Fears of external threats to Britain's imperial position undoubtedly prompted these early ventures, and such fears had been greatly intensified by the First World War. Though nominally victorious, Britain emerged from the conflict, like many other European countries, with serious economic and financial problems. Many sectors of industry went through a severe phase of re-adjustment to a peacetime economy which brought

with its high levels of unemployment and conflict in industrial relations. Moreover, Britain's position as an international military power, already in decline before the War, was now rivalled by the U.S.A and Japan, both of which posed a serious challenge to Britain's traditional instrument of global supremacy - the Royal Navy. In such a context a public demonstration of imperial strength would regenerate the material ties of Empire and, simultaneously, act as a symbolic manifestation of British greatness.

It was therefore hardly surprising when, shortly after the Armistice, two independent organisations - the British Dominion Company and the London Great Exhibition Company - again revived the idea of an exhibition. In 1919 they both approached for support the Board of Trade, which advised the fusion of the two associations and gave approval to the project. A temporary executive committee was formed under the chairmanship of Lord Morris and in June 1920 a new registered company - The British Empire Exhibition Inc. - was created.<sup>8</sup> The scheme was officially launched at a meeting at the Mansion House on 7 June.

The project involved an exhibition with permanent structures in which all the members of the 'family' of the Empire were to participate. The economic significance of the exhibition was a principal theme in the project's publicity, stressed particularly in a speech given by the Prince of Wales, chairman of the exhibition's General Committee:

I am convinced that it is only by a general revival of trade that we may hope to reduce the amount of unemployment in this country and bring happiness and prosperity to the homes of thousands of our fellow countrymen who have been passing through a long-drawn period of depression and distress.

He added:

A large work of preparation has to be done, and this would be a cause of immediate employment for thousands of men who have already served their country well - my old comrades, the ex-Servicemen.<sup>9</sup>

In fact some 70% of the 2,000 men who were employed on the construction of the exhibition during 1923 and 1924 were ex-Servicemen. It was anticipated that this miniature example of Keynesianism would serve to

prime a business boom in the area designated for the exhibition.

The choosing of a site produced several possibilities. The Crystal Palace, venue for the F.A. Cup Final until 1914, had accommodated parts of the British Empire Festival in 1911, but the site was in need of modernisation and none of the existing structures met the needs of the planned new exhibition. The White City, where many of the events in the 1908 Olympic Games had been staged, seemed a natural choice in the early stages of planning.<sup>10</sup> Another space considered was the Handley Page flying ground at Hendon, an area of 176 acres adjoining a newly-developing suburb where various banks were prepared to put up a loan of one million pounds in the expectation of the exhibition making a good return on investment.<sup>11</sup> Eventually, however, the choice fell on Wembley.<sup>12</sup> Its advantages were plain. The area was already a centre for recreational activity and used to coping with large numbers of visitors. Railway connections, supplemented by tramways, were excellent, with five lines serving central London and the rest of Britain. As one publicity pamphlet summed it up:

The Exhibition is ten minutes by train from Baker Street to Wembley Park on the Metropolitan Railway, and a similar distance from Marylebone on the Great Central Railway, whose station Wembley Hill, is at the southern entrance of the Exhibition. Wembley Station on the London and North Western Railway, and the Bakerloo Tube and Alperton on the District Railway, are close to the Exhibition grounds. There are over 140 City and Suburban stations North, East, West and South of London from which direct access to the Exhibition without charge is obtainable.<sup>13</sup>

None of this persuaded *The Times*, which still maintained in the autumn of 1921 that Wembley was 'some way out of London'.<sup>14</sup> But the British Empire Exhibition had nevertheless gone ahead with the purchase of 216 acres in Wembley Park from the Metropolitan Railway Company as a building site. The overall plan was in the hands of architects John Simpson and Maxwell Ayrton, together with the engineer Sir Owen Williams, chosen for his knowledge of building in the characteristic material of the exhibition - reinforced concrete. This relatively new material was felt to be suitable for building quickly and at minimum cost.<sup>15</sup> Each colony of the Empire was to be represented by its own building, and in addition there

would be four others: the Palace of Engineering, covering an area over six times that of Trafalgar Square for the exhibition of shipbuilding, electrical and allied engineering, water transport, land transport, motors and cycles for all the members of the Empire taking part; the Palace of Industry, which included the display of chemicals, perfumes, cotton, wool, silk, clocks, jewellery, leather, glass, pottery, musical instruments, gas and building materials, food products, games and scientific instruments; the Palace of Arts, exhibiting the evolution of art in the Empire from 1750; and H.M. Government Building, in which were represented various government ministries and official organisations.

Construction of the stadium of Wembley, entrusted to the firm of McAlpine, started with the excavation of 250,000 tons of earth on the hill where 'Watkin's Folly' had stood. This formed the large hollow of the arena constructed in ellipsoidal form. 1,500 tons of steel, 25,000 tons of concrete and half a million rivets were used to complete the stadium within 300 working days. The maximum measurements were 900 by 650 feet. To decorate the main facade two squat towers were planned, 126 feet high, which quickly became the symbol of the stadium. The capacity of the arena was 125,000, with 30,000 seats. The structure was tested a few days before opening by a battalion of soldiers, who marched in close formation on the terraces, and large groups of McAlpine workers. The total cost was £506,990.<sup>16</sup> The stadium was inaugurated a full year before the opening of the Exhibition itself on St. George's Day, 23 April 1924. It staged the F.A. Cup Final of 1923, an organisational disaster with twice as many spectators filling the stadium as the official capacity allowed for and a resultant invasion of the playing area. None the less, order was created from the chaos, and the event came to be commemorated as a triumph of British good sense and discipline, epitomised in the legend of the 'White Horse'. The circumstances of its opening scenes went a long way towards establishing Wembley Stadium as a national monument. Though it was used only occasionally for major sporting events, and relied upon speedway and dog-racing for its main income in the 1930s, Wembley became the home of the Cup Final and this assured it of a permanent place in the national sporting heritage.<sup>17</sup>

All the other aspects of the Empire Exhibition - material and symbolic - proved far more ephemeral. In spite of the support given to the scheme by

prominent citizens - led by the Prince of Wales - and the State, the exhibition failed as a business undertaking. The close association between the Exhibition Company and the Board of Trade had resulted in the latter making an initial contribution of £100,000 conditional upon a public subscription of £500,000 being raised. By January 1922, largely because of effective publicity centred around the Prince of Wales, this sum had actually reached £1 million, which prompted the Government to double its contribution.<sup>18</sup> Altogether, it was estimated that by 1926 the value of the building projects carried out at Wembley amounted to £12 million. But recouping the costs proved more difficult than raising them. The response of the general public to the exhibition was disappointing. In the autumn of 1924, after the first full season, the balance sheet showed a significant loss, made good only by a loan from Lloyds Bank.<sup>19</sup> It was decided by the Exhibition Company to open for another season in 1925, but following even less impressive receipts in this year the company and the scheme were put into voluntary liquidation.<sup>20</sup>

But the enterprise had been more than simply a business venture. It had been promoted as a symbol of Empire. In this respect it is less easy to assess its impact by recourse to the balance sheet. 'It is', proclaimed the *Official Guide*, 'a Family Party of the British Empire - the First Family Party since the Great War, when the whole world opened astonished eyes to see that an Empire with a hundred languages and races had but one soul and mind.'<sup>21</sup> There was a desire, at times bordering on anxiety, to assert the cultural integrity and the economic viability of the Empire through the Exhibition. Some of this was evident in the architecture. Contemporary opinion on the style of the buildings was mixed. Writing in the *Architectural Journal* Professor C.H. Reilly asked caustically of the Palaces of Engineering and Industry: 'Are they great garages or aeroplane sheds?' Others were more favourably impressed: 'Imagination is baffled by the vastness of this exhibition which is an honour to the enterprising spirit of the British race, and also the capability of British architects...'. Yet again: '[it is] a place in which an architect may be proud of his profession ... where architecture is the proven Mother of Arts'<sup>22</sup> There is no doubt that the architects were inexperienced in the use of reinforced concrete, some of which was misconceived in design terms and also poorly executed by unskilled labour casting the concrete *in situ*. Commenting on the stadium

the critic Oscar Faber noted that ‘the inside was the roughest-looking concrete job I had seen for some time’.<sup>23</sup> The profusion of concrete bridges, lamp posts, kiosks and even roof trusses showed the architects rather overplaying their hand. Owen Williams, whose enthusiasm for this medium largely accounted for its use, was convinced that the Exhibition marked an important step forward in the application of this new building material. The Exhibition buildings, he considered, showed that a material that was previously regarded as a ‘mysterious alternative, only to be adopted for economy’, actually had a bright architectural future.<sup>24</sup>

Innovative in engineering terms it might have been, but architecturally the Exhibition represented a conservative vision.

The imperial theme was dominant. For the most part the pavilions of the colonial countries were constructed in a heavy, neo-classical style, which also characterised the H.M. Government building. Exceptionally, South Africa chose a version of Dutch vernacular, and a similar attempt to re-create ‘authentic’ traditional styles was seen in the Old London Bridge feature. Generally, however, the empires of the past provided the inspiration for that of the present, and the design of the stadium typified this retrospection. The structure is essentially low, the eye is taken horizontally by the use of rounded arches and low towers. A sense of height is achieved, not by building upwards, but by the use of the natural contours of the site. The style is Roman, and there is more than a passing similarity with Basil Spence’s later work at Sussex University in the 1960s. In this sense, therefore, the stadium and many of the other buildings represented a deliberate shunning of the ‘modern’ and the *avant garde*. It is to be seen, perhaps, as part of that general European mood of restoration through the resort to traditional cultural languages that was evident in so many of the artefacts of the post-War European world and which Jay Winter has so compellingly written about in his book *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*.<sup>25</sup>

A more transparent propaganda effect was sought through the early use of the stadium. Though it staged the F.A. Cup Final from 1923 onwards this was not its exclusive purpose. In the two Exhibition seasons it staged concerts of mass military bands, marches and the Pageant of Empire, a parade divided into several episodes where each country of the Empire

presented a show. The most highly qualified specialists in history, music, dance and the decorative arts were engaged for the *mise-en-scene*. The daily order of proceedings was divided into three parts: “the Birth of the Empire, the Growth of the Empire and the Empire Today”. The Boy Scouts featured prominently, not only as stewards and programme vendors but also as performers. The shows had a highly symbolic content, aiming at propaganda to enhance the image of the Empire. For example, a bridge linked the various countries and was accompanied by verses from Kipling’s ‘The Song of the Bridge’.

In this there was a similarity with the attempts by continental European regimes to assert the presence and power of the state through the sports stadium. The Prater in Vienna, the G. Berta stadium in Florence and the Colombes in Paris, the site of the 1924 Olympic Games, were all used at this time to promote a sense of nation. Each was capable of accommodating large crowds in a setting which expressed a national style.<sup>26</sup> In some cases, notably Colombes, the stadium planners were influenced by the need to control the public inside the stadium. The ‘panopticon’ principle of design was adopted, reflecting a vision of the crowd as a dangerous, threatening presence which needed to be controlled. This image of the crowd as ‘enemy’ seems to have had a firmer hold in continental Europe, in both democracies and dictatorships, than it had in Britain. The memories created from the first Wembley final, for example, were of order and self-discipline, and the only measure adopted thereafter to counteract the crowd problems experienced in 1923 was to institute the ‘all-ticket’ match.

Several historians have expressed the view that the ‘political, military events’ of the kind represented by the Pageant of Empire were an important strategic means of establishing order and consensus in countries which lacked liberal values.<sup>27</sup> The historian C.S. Maier, moreover, has suggested that the attempts made to regain the support of the middle class after the First World War and the revolutionary upheavals that followed it were very similar in both democracies and dictatorships.<sup>28</sup> Can this idea be extended to the role of sport and the sports stadium at this time? The question is a large one, and a full answer lies well beyond the scope of the present paper. But some pointers may be offered. There are, we believe, important differences to keep in mind between the dictatorships of

continental Europe and a country like Britain. Military parades and gymnastic displays in German and Italian sports stadiums under the Nazi and Fascist regimes involved a participation *imposed* upon the public by the regime. The apparent consensus represented by the spectacle concealed an ever-present use of violence, not only in a direct, physical form, but as a constant threat, institutionalised in administrative and police procedures. Not to have taken part in these events would have meant being officially identified as a non-supporter of the regime, and therefore having one's name entered in police and militia records. Nothing of this kind occurred in Britain. Even the most propagandistic event was simply a commercial spectacle, which often failed to capture the public's interest. The Pageant of Empire, for example, 'in spite of the perfect organisation and great beauty of its scenes, failed to catch the imagination of the general public ... the magnificence and movement of many of the episodes were frequently insufficient in themselves to grip the audience'.<sup>29</sup> At any rate, those who participated in the events did so of their own free will, not because they were conditioned by the pressures of the regime to do so. In the long run, although an exact quantification is impossible, there might be some plausibility in the suggestion that the propaganda value of a stadium like Wembley was greater than that of its counterparts in dictatorial regimes. It became possible for Wembley to act as a symbol of Englishness in a way that stadiums in Italy and Germany - expressions of a *forced* consensus - could not.

There seems little doubt that the imperial project at Wembley in 1924-25 was a failure, both commercially and symbolically. At the very point when the familyhood of Empire was being proclaimed the Empire itself was beginning to break up. Challenges to metropolitan dominance were gaining strength in India and had already succeeded in Ireland. The formerly loyal White Dominions were no longer inclined to accept the inferior status they had once assumed. The Chanak incident of 1922 revealed a growing independence of mind - they would not now be dragged willy-nilly into war by Britain as they had been in 1914. Even in the paintings exhibited in the Palace of Arts at Wembley there were signs of autonomy from Canada and Australia.<sup>30</sup> Within a few years the Exhibition site was a wasteland of derelict buildings and rubble. Two lasting memorials arose. One was the suburb of Wembley itself. Its rapid development to borough

status in 1937 owed much to the infrastructural benefits bestowed on the area through the creation of the Exhibition. The other was the stadium itself. From its original conception as a national, indeed 'Empire', stadium it in fact became a synonym for *English* football and something of an icon of Englishness: its 'twin towers' were readily identified by millions as a mark of identity, almost as familiar as Big Ben. In the imminent, end-of-century re-building of Wembley the towers are to remain, the only vestiges of the original structure. Thus an artefact designed to commemorate nineteenth-century empire will survive into the world of the twenty-first century.

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### Footnotes

1. See Richard Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 159-69.
2. See Jeff Hill. Rite of Spring: Cup Finals and Community in the North of England, in Jeff Hill and Jack Williams eds, *Sport and Identity in the North of England* (Keele University Press, Keele: 1996), pp. 85-112.
3. For the agreement between the British Empire Exhibition authorities and the F.A. see Public Record Office, Treasury Papers (hereafter P.R.O./T.), 161/134/S.14075/04/1.
4. For the history of Wembley before the British Empire Exhibition see Adam Spencer, *Wembley and Kingsbury* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1995); Geoffrey Hewlett ed., *A History of Wembley* (London: Brent Library Service, 1979), chs 1-14.
5. *Descriptive Illustrative Catalogue ... for the Great Tower for London*, compiled and edited by F.C. Lynde ... for the Tower Company Ltd. (London: Industries, 1895)
6. For the influence of the Metropolitan Railway on Wembley see A.S. Travis, 'The Metropolitan Railway in Wembley (1880-1910)' in 'The Early History of the Metropolitan District and Metropolitan Railways in Wembley', Wembley Transport Society, publication no. 3, July 1963.
7. Public Record Office, Board of Trade Papers (hereafter P.R.O./B.O.T.) 60,9,2.
8. P.R.O./B.O.T, 31, 25971
9. Quoted in Hewlett, *History of Wembley*, p. 175.
10. Public Record Office, Housing and Local Government Papers (hereafter P.R.O./H.L.G) 52, 897.
11. P.R.O./H.L.G., 52, 897.
12. We have not yet found a document which specifically refers to the reasons for the choice of Wembley as the site.
13. British Empire Exhibition, *Official Guide* (London: Fleetway Press, 1924).
14. *The Times*, 13 October 1921.
15. See The Architects, Engineers and Contractors of the British Empire Exhibition, *Wembley Historical Society Journal*, 2, Spring 1981, pp. 31-3; Gavin Stamp ed., *Sir Owen Williams, 1890-1969* (London: Works III, Architectural Association, 1986).
16. See P.R.O./B.O.T., T, 161/154/s.14075/04/1. A.R. Low, *Wonderful Wembley* (London: Stanley Paul, 1983), p. 22. If we consider that a stadium like that of the G. Berta in Florence, built in 1929 with a smaller capacity (52,000), cost roughly £72,000, we realise that the cost of Wembley was rather high. The cost per spectator at Wembley was £4, compared with £1.50 for Florence.
17. Unpublished paper Wembley 1923, given at 'Rediscovering the Crowd: an International Symposium', De Montfort University, Leicester, July 1996.
18. P.R.O./H.L.G, 52, 897; B.O.T., 60, 14, 2.
19. P.R.O./B.O.T., 61, 22, 2.
20. P.R.O./B.O.T., 31, 25971
21. British Empire Exhibition, *Official Guide*, p. 10

22. See *Wembley Historical Society Journal*, special edition on the British Empire Exhibition, 1974, p. 5.
23. Oscar Faber, 'The Concrete Buildings', *Architectural Review*, I, 1924, p. 218.
24. Sir E. Owen Williams, The Construction of the British Empire Exhibition, *Concrete and Constructional Engineering*, vol. XIX, 1924, pp. 420-32.
25. Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
26. See Simon Inglis, *The Football Grounds of Europe* (London: Willow Books, 1990).
27. See E. Gentile, *Il Culto del Littorio* (Bari: Laterza, 1993); G.L. Mosse, *The Nationalisation of the Masses: political symbolism and mass movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975); V. De Grazia, *Consenso e Cultura di Massa nell'Italia Fascista: l'organizzazione del dopolavoro* (Bari: Laterza, 1981)
28. See C.S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* (Bari: De Donati, 1979).
29. P.R.O./B.O.T., 61,19,1.
30. See Tom August, Art and Empire - Wembley, 1924, *History Today*, vol. 43, October 1993, pp. 38-44.