



▲ Viewed in 1928, twenty years after the Olympics, the remaining buildings of the **Franco-British Exhibition** flank what was now officially the **White City Stadium**, with the new Westway (which had yet to extend eastwards) branching off Wood Lane behind the stadium's far corner.

Although saddled with debt and run by a succession of owners, the site continued to stage exhibitions until 1938. But only in December 1926 was the stadium's future assured when it was taken over by the newly formed Greyhound Racing Association. In addition to relaying the tracks, the GRA covered both ends of the stadium and filled in the pool, although, as seen here, its outline could still be made out on the infield for many years.

Meanwhile, seven other White City greyhound stadiums opened elsewhere in Britain, several of them, as in London,

accommodating that other new fangled sport of the 1920s, speedway racing.

Athletics returned too, with White City staging the AAA championships from 1932–70, and in 1934 the British Empire Games, forerunner to the Commonwealth Games. Less successful were attempts to establish rugby league, American football and boxing. Queen's Park Rangers Football Club tried it out during two spells, from 1931–33 and 1962–63, retreating each time to their much homelier ground on the edge of the exhibition site, at Lotfus Road. Bizarrely, White City also hosted Uruguay's game with France during the 1966 World Cup, because Wembley was otherwise booked for greyhound racing.

But by then, with its surrounds now almost totally redeveloped, White City was all but obsolete.



▲ On a paved concourse in the centre of the BBC's new **Media Village** lies the inscription, 'This is the site of the finishing line of White City Stadium which hosted the 1908 Olympics'. Yards away the side of an office block bears a further memorial to the 1908 Games (*left*), unveiled by Jacques Rogge, President of the IOC, on the occasion of the BOA's centenary, on May 24 2005.

The 'Great Stadium' itself had been demolished twenty years earlier. The opening of the Crystal Palace stadium had robbed it of athletics after 1972, while diminishing returns on greyhound racing and the building's vast, ageing infrastructure finally became too much for the GRA's coffers to bear. Just days after the final greyhound race was run in September 1984, and with barely a note of protest, the bulldozers moved in on the world's first purpose-built Olympic Stadium.

Today the area and the BBC headquarters retain the name White City, as does the nearby tube station. Otherwise, the only other remembrances of 1908 are the Dorando Marathon, a greyhound race now staged at Wimbledon Stadium, and, tucked behind the BBC's Media Village, **Dorando Close**.

The little Italian did well from his travails. But even so, he surely deserves better than this.

