

American sprinter Harrison Dillard, known to his teammates as 'Bones', leads the Olympic Roll of Honour, now on display at the new Wembley Stadium.

Taking down the plaques from the old stadium in 2002 proved a major challenge. Exposed as they were on north facing walls, their condition had deteriorated considerably. Moreover, weighing 18 tons with their stone surrounds, each plaque consisted of nearly 250 embossed ceramic tiles.

Diamond cutters were used to cut out the plaques in one piece. They were then lifted by crane onto a flat bed truck. In case of damage, silicone impressions were made.

From Wembley the plaques were transported to a storage yard in Liverpool, and after that to Hirst Conservation of Lincolnshire, where they were painstakingly restored before being returned to the new stadium in 2011.

The plaques' designer, incidentally, was sculptor Hugh L Powell, while the tiles were glazed and fired by JF Walford.



▲ Having spent some £60,000 on the restoration of the two **Olympic Rolls of Honour**, Wembley National Stadium Ltd faced difficult choices as to where they might be displayed. They were too heavy to mount on any of the new stadium's existing load bearing walls, and in any case too delicate to risk being displayed in an upright position. At the same time it was imperative to place them in a sheltered spot where visitors to the stadium could see and appreciate them. Hence their current resting place, set at a slight angle, surrounded by protective barriers, on a covered concourse by the stadium's souvenir store.

The two plaques, flame holder and of course Olympic Way stand out as the three most tangible examples of Wembley's Olympic heritage. As we hope to have shown in this chapter, they and all the other remnants elsewhere enable us to piece together a strong sense of the Games' character and their place in the national story. Self evidently, austerity Britain had concerns that went far beyond those of considering an Olympic legacy. All the more reason, therefore, for us not only to make do with what fragmentary heritage survives, but also to ensure that it stays mended for future generations.