OPINION

Let’s get the useless stats out of the way and get into the serious engineering, with our comprehensive Olympics spectacular.

by Dickon Ross

Anyone who has taken one of the bus tours around the Olympic Park will know that the organisers really do love their facts and figures, from the 8.8 million tickets to the 2,000 relocated newts. But the one statistic I will remember concerns the 21 tonnes of cheese that will be consumed at the Games. It was such a pointless fact, that’s when I gave up trying to take them in. But I will sidestep some of the most useless statistics as I give you a quick tour around this special Olympics issue.

We look at the engineering behind one of the most famous Olympic buildings, the Pringle-shaped Velodrome (65m of timber laid by 26 carpenters using 300,000 nails). The cyclists down below need thinner, warmer air to perform their best; the spectators above them need cooler, more comfortable air. So how does the design stop the hot air rising and spoiling it for everyone? Find out in our feature on p64.

The authorities claim these will be the greenest games ever (contributing 1.9 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions over seven years) and part of that is the engineering behind powering the Park, which we review on p60.

Visitors on tours of the Park can’t fail to notice the safety and security (including 76 miles of temporary fencing). But it goes way beyond the park itself, or indeed the missile launchers on nearby tower blocks. The authorities have rerouted existing CCTV services across London (p58), and on p28 we look at the complex logistics of keeping the Olympics going (supplied by 300 trucks making 15,000 deliveries) and keeping London moving at the same time.

With the queues growing at Heathrow airport (handling 600,000 pieces of luggage during the Games) we look at whether technology can help to avert an embarrassing flask.

We find out how the broadcasters will deliver the Games to the four billion viewers around the world on p54. And on p35 we investigate how social media (800,000 followers already) will introduce a whole new way for spectators, sponsors and athletes to be involved with the Games.

The buildings are up, the stage is set, the athletes are arriving (10,490 to be precise). We look at the new technologies in the equipment (around one million pieces of equipment procured) that could help them to break world records (p44) and on p50 how new design has made Team GB’s clothing faster; better and, most importantly, cooler than ever before.

If you’re a Games grump then you probably haven’t made it this far but if you have you will surely enjoy this month’s After Column from Vitali Vitaliev, who is still bitter about the Moscow Games and tries out some of the more absurd Team GB branded goods on sale this year. That’s besides the £1bn-worth of merchandise the organisers expect to sell by the end of the year.

did you know...

Olympic stadium layout