

UK Media Myths No 474 We Organise Events Brilliantly

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No Entry

OK, I am biased, I didn't get Olympic tickets. And I don't want to get tickets in the second round to see football because I do that for the other 10 months of the year. (Coincidentally, I shall be doing so at the Olympic Stadium from 2014) But the mess around ticketing seems to disprove a media myth that the Brits know how to organise an event well.

Look at the Royal Wedding they say, see how everyone is in-step and to time. Marvellous pageantry etc etc. Look at how the Stratford stadium and all the other cycledromes and rowing lakes are ready to rock. Not like those Greeks who struggled to clear the scaffolding in time for the opening ceremony. (Should've guessed their economy would collapse...)

But when it comes to software we are useless. We squander billions on government computer schemes that never work, when we know that some geek in his bedroom could have sorted it for £500 over the weekend. And so it is with the Olympic ticketing. Not only do you have to pay various fees for the privilege of ordering the tickets yourself online, but the system has been grossly unfair.

Some people have been getting bundles while the vast majority will miss out on what is supposed to be a national celebration. Was it really beyond the ability of state-of-the-art programming to have come up with a system that allocated just one event to each household? So that at least on the first round, everyone would have had at least one chance to attend?

As it happens I am not terribly interested in most Olympic sports – though I am surprised that our bid for fencing tickets failed. But I am a Londoner and this is our games so I shall at least try for the Graeco-Roman Wrestling, even if it is in the unromantic setting of the Exell Arena instead of the future home of WHUFC.

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