

A big 'Thank you' from the REDaction organisers

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Story by Mike

In early January REDaction were contacted by representatives of Highbury & Islington Gazette. Having seen the eventual success of the "Raise The 49" project, they were interested in sponsoring us to do another card display, but this time incorporating the whole stadium.

"LETS TURN Highbury RED AND WHITE"

Having accepted the offer, we set about ordering cards and preparing designs. A whopping 35,000 cards were needed to cover all home sections of the stadium, so it took a lot of maths to work out the ratio of red to white!

We finally settled upon a slightly less conventional display than red and white stripe, we undertook the hardest part of the job – enlisting people to help! 35,000 cards simply don't put themselves out and so appeals for help went out on the official website, fans sites and in the match day programme.

After a slow start things started to pick up. We ended up with around 30 people giving up their day to help us, with no payment or rewards whatsoever. REDaction and Highbury & Islington Gazette would like to thank the volunteers who put in a full days graft, as it couldn't have happened without you.

So it came to the big day. By 10am we were signing in at the marble halls and walking down the tunnel to pitch side, where 70 boxes of cards awaited us. We wasted little time, and as the famous clock ticked past eleven, the North Bank Upper was finished. The work force was going at a tremendous rate and so it was no surprise to find that we had only the West Stand left to do by 1pm.

I must send out another "Well Played" message to Arsenal catering staff, who provided all helpers with free refreshments and lunch. With the free bacon and sausage rolls being handed around and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the stadium finished, we were able to relax, happy with the work so far.

We had just one rule for the day – "DO NOT GO ON TO, OR ANYWHERE NEAR, THE PITCH!" Unfortunately, one day tripper decided to disobey this and stepped out onto the hallow turf. He was promptly ejected from the stadium. What can I say, when you disobey the only rule set out to you, can you expect any less?

After lunch, the West Stand beckoned. The lower tier flew by, but disaster almost struck as we got to the upper tier. The two blocks with the crest in the seats were designated white card areas. However, when we came to put the cards out we found we were considerably lacking in white cards! Shock – Horror! However, after a little bit a shifting things about, we got it finished.

By only 3pm, the whole stadium was completed – not a seat in the stadium left without a card. This is record time! Just 5 hours to distribute 35,000 cards is staggering when you consider that included a lunch break as well.

REDaction could offer nothing to the volunteers for their services, but did hold a prize draw for those who helped out. Paul Chandler was chosen at random, and he was happy to hear that his prize was a free subscription to "The Gooner" Happy reading Paul!

The display itself was a total success. Each and every person held their card aloft with the result being an awesome display. The pictures only back this up.

REDaction would once again like to thank all involved with the cards. That's the people from Highbury & Islington Gazette who helped organise the event (and paid for it) the fantastic helpers who stuck with it for the

full 5 hours (and stuck to the rule!) and each and every fan who held their card up at the right time. Also, a quick thanks to Tim for supplying us with the pictures included in this piece.

Many Thanks!