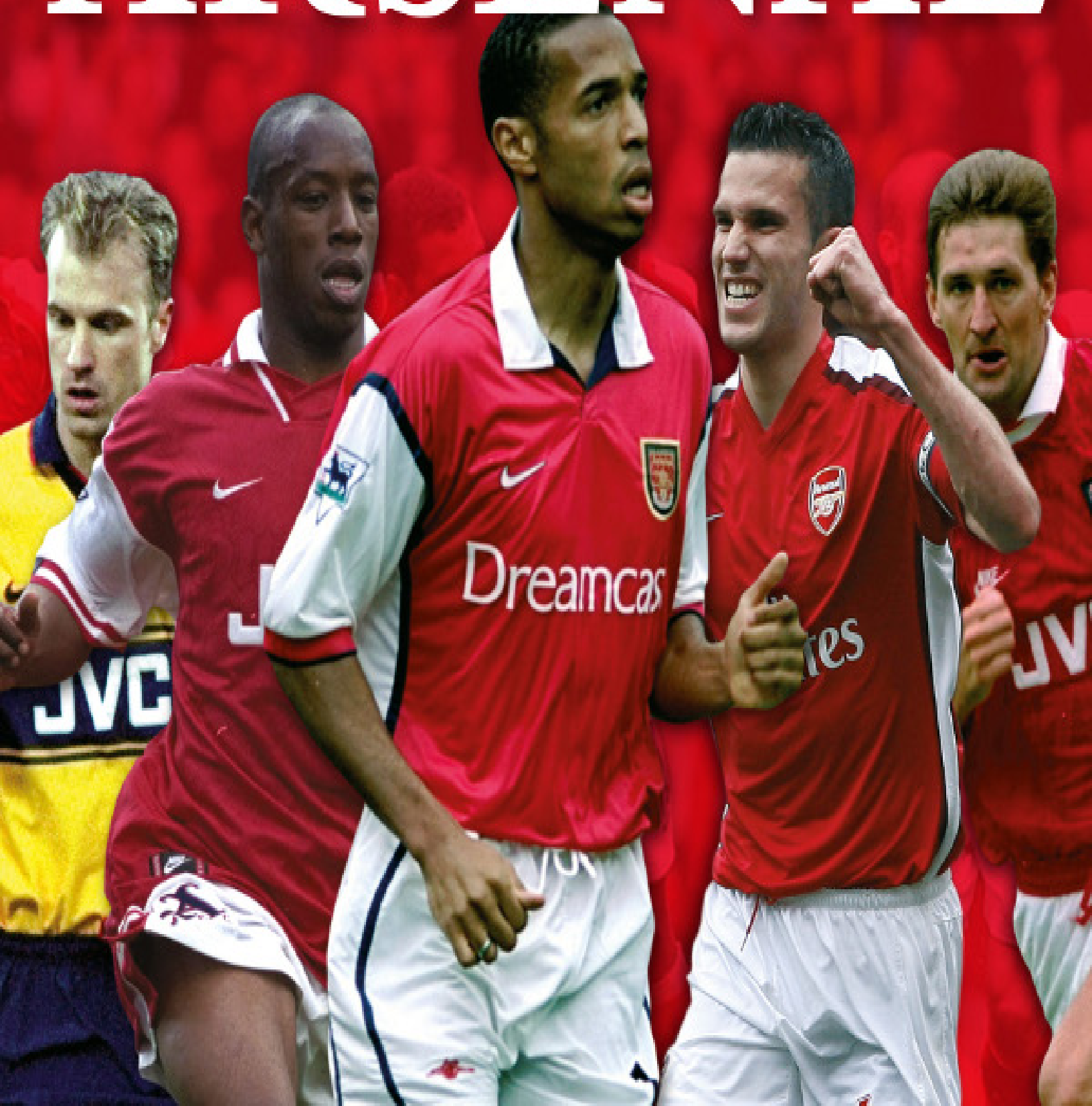


LITTLE BOOK OF

ARSENAL



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Adams



Above: Adams in action during The Tony Adams Testimonial match between Arsenal and Celtic in 2002

Tony Adams (born 10 October 1966) made his League debut in November 1983, the month after he turned 17, given his first chance by another great central defender, then-manager Terry Neill. All went well, but two years later his hopes of becoming David O'Leary's partner were halted by a stress fracture of the right foot. Martin Keown moved in but moved on to Villa after a contract dispute, and Tony made the most of his second chance. His place was never threatened after that, and Arsenal's Player of the Year award came in 1987, confirming that Tony Adams had arrived.

England boss Bobby Robson made it Tony's year, selecting him for the full team and remarking that he had 'such great stature for someone so young.' He went on to play a part in the European Championships, scoring against Yugoslavia in the qualifiers and against the USSR in the 1990

Finals. In between times, he'd played a part in securing the 1987 Littlewoods Cup and, of course, captained the side that took the Championship twice – in spellbinding style at Anfield in 1989, and two years later in 1990-91. He was the lynchpin of a steadfast Arsenal defence under George Graham that was renowned for its well organised use of the offside trap.

Adams was not to wear an England shirt that season, but Graham Taylor recalled him to play in all the 1992-93 World Cup qualifiers, and he remained in favour with Terry Venables. After 66 appearances (13 times as skipper) and 5 goals, he decided to quit international football to lengthen his Arsenal career. His last game for England was in October 2000, when Germany beat England 0-1.



Above: Adams in action during the FA Carling Premiership match against Newcastle United in 1994

Back with his club, Adams skippered the Gunners to their unique 1993 FA Cup and Coca-Cola Cup double against Sheffield Wednesday, and when he lifted the European Cup Winners' Cup in Copenhagen the following year, became the man to hoist more trophies than any previous Arsenal captain. Indeed, he captained Arsenal to League titles in three different decades, a unique achievement.

True to his quote 'Arsenal is a great club and a successful one, so why should I want to play for anyone else?' Adams retired from playing professional football in 2002. A spell as manager of Wycombe Wanderers

proved unsuccessful, but he split his time between studying the game and running the Sporting Chance clinic for sportsmen who, like him, had struggled with addiction to drink or drugs. He was appointed assistant manager to Harry Redknapp at Portsmouth in June 2006 and was subsequently appointed manager in October 2008 when Harry left to take over at Spurs. He was sacked in February 2009 after just 16 games in which Portsmouth picked up only 10 points.

Almunia



Above: Manuel Almunia shouting instructions to his defence

Some nervy displays when deputising for first-team keeper Jens Lehmann gave concern over Manuel Almunia's ability to take over the Number 1 jersey. But after an early season injury to Lehmann in 2007, Almunia kept eight clean sheets in his first 11 appearances which gave him the confidence to become first choice keeper.

He quickly won over the fans too making a stunning stop from Robbie Keane's spot-kick at a crucial point in the North London Derby at the

Emirates Stadium just before Christmas. Nicklas Bendtner scored the winner that day but Almunia's heroics provided the platform for a vital victory.

After making more than 100 appearances for the first team his position as first choice began to be challenged, culminating in a loan move to West Ham United and subsequently being released by Arsenal at the end of the 2011-12 season.

Arshavin



Above: Arsenal's Andrey Arshavin jumps for the ball against Man City in 2009

Having only made a dozen appearances in his first season at Arsenal, Andrey Arshavin became a legend overnight when he scored four goals in an away game at Liverpool – virtually ruining their chances of winning the Premiership.

He was not surprisingly named Man of the Match in the thrilling 4-4 draw – when he became the first player to score four goals in a League match at Anfield since 1946 and only the sixth player in Premier League history to score four goals in an away match.

He joined Arsenal in February 2009 after winning the Russian Premier League with Zenit in 2007 as well as the Russian Footballer of the Year accolade in 2006 and has more than 70 caps for his country.

Mixed performances during the 2011-12 season drew criticism and a spell on the sidelines, prompting a loan switch back to Zenit in February 2012.

Arteta



Above: Arsenal's 2011 signing Mikel Arteta

Arsene Wenger's last minute acquisition of Spanish midfielder Mikel Arteta from Everton in August 2011 was a bolt out of the blue, since there had been no inkling that such a deal was imminent. Whilst his signing raised eyebrows in some quarters, especially as the club were felt to be more than adequately covered in midfield, the subsequent injury to Jack Wilshere proved that Arsene had pulled off a masterstroke.

Born in San Sebastian on 26 March 1982, Mikel had played alongside Xabi Alonso as a youngster but began his career at Barcelona, where he played for the B side, but despite showing great potential was unable to break into the first team and went out on loan to Paris St Germain. In 2002 he came to Britain and signed with Rangers, helping them win the treble of Scottish Premier League, Scottish Cup and Scottish League Cup at the end of the 2002-03 season. In 2004 he was transferred to Real Sociedad, where he expected to link up with Xabi Alonso, but Alonso's sale to Liverpool soon after ruined the plan.



Above: Arsenal's Mikel Arteta in action

In January 2005 Mikel returned to Britain, this time signing for Everton and over the next five or so years established himself as a key member of the side, his worth recognised by both the fans and the critics. His subsequent switch to Arsenal saw him quickly show the reasons why Arsene Wenger had been keen to slot him into the midfield, scoring goals as well as creating them for others during his first season with the club.

Ashburton Grove



Above: An aerial view of Highbury as Arsenal play their last match at the ground before moving to their new stadium at Ashburton Grove

After nearly a century at Highbury, Arsenal decided in 1999 to build a new stadium which would massively boost club revenues and reduce reliance on Champions League and broadcasting revenues.

The stadium opened in July 2006 and has an all-seated capacity of 60,355 making it the fifth largest football stadium in the UK and the third largest stadium of any kind in London, after Wembley and Twickenham.

It was initially known as Ashburton Grove after the road it was located on, before it was renamed the Emirates Stadium after a rights deal was struck with the airline in October 2004.

Attendances



Above: Division One match at Highbury. Police arrest trouble makers in the terraces, September 1982

Records were set through out the Emirates Stadium's first season, 2006-07, an average of around 59,640 comparing favourably with the 38,000 that Highbury had accommodated in recent seasons. The Emirates' highest attendance so far, however, was when 60,161 watched a visiting Manchester United in November 2007 when the points were shared after a 2-2 draw.

This still pales in comparison to the massive crowd of 73,295 that watched a 0-0 draw with Sunderland on 9 March 1935 during George Allison's side's League Championship-winning season.

The club's highest attendance for a 'home' game, however, was registered not at Highbury, but at Wembley. The club played their UEFA Champions' League matches there during the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 seasons and 73,707 people watched RC Lens win 1-0 on 25 November 1998.

The biggest attendance at Highbury since the inauguration of the Premiership was on 15 May 2004 when 38,419 fans crammed into the stadium to watch Patrick Vieira lift the Premiership trophy after a 2-1 win over Leicester City completed Arsenal's famous unbeaten season.

Although the lowest recorded figure of 4,554 for the visit of Leeds United on 5 May 1966 is paltry compared to today's attendances, Arsenal's lowest Premiership crowd is still respectable by some top-flight team's standards. Only 18,253 paid to watch the visit of Wimbledon on 10 February 1993 and the majority would have been disappointed as the visitors claimed the points with a solitary Dean Holdsworth goal.