

# IAN JENKINS - TEN YEARS AS CRAY WANDERERS FC MANAGER

Monday 28 September 2009

As Cray Wanderers head towards their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010, Jerry Dowlen and Pete Goringe remind us all that another milestone in the ever-evolving history of our Club is reached in October 2009.

The ten-year anniversary of Ian Jenkins' reign as Cray Wanderers FC manager dates from his appointment (replacing Fabio Rossi) after Cray lost 1-7 at home to Ramsgate on 2 October 1999. In that game, Jenko put Cray one-up with a shot past Micky Simmons, before Ramsgate responded by netting seven! Cray were floundering at the bottom of the Kent League table.

Jenko's rescue act as manager succeeded in steering Cray to a finishing place above the re-election zone that season, and since then it has been literally 'onwards and upwards' for the Wands under his command.

Ian has presided over the most successful era in the Club's history. Cray won the Kent League championship in 2002-03 and 2003-04, gaining promotion into the Ryman Division One. Five years later, in May 2009, Cray won promotion into the Ryman Premier via the play-offs, taking the Club to the highest level it has ever played at.



Ian Jenkins being interviewed by BBC Radio Kent,  
after Cray's 1-0 play-off final victory against the Met Police.  
(Photo: Trevor Mulligan)

Cray won the Kent League Cup in 2002-03 and the Kent Senior Trophy in 2003-04. Jenko also led the Wands to the Kent Senior Cup final for the first time in over 100 years, courtesy of a memorable 6-1 victory over landlords Bromley in the semi-final at Hayes Lane.

The Wands have also enjoyed their furthest-ever runs in the F A Cup (4<sup>th</sup> Qualifying Round) and F A Vase (quarter-finals) during Jenko's reign. They have also made an impressive start in the F A Trophy, reaching the final qualifying round three times in five attempts.

Ian has won six Kent League 'Manager of the Month' awards and four in Ryman Division One.



Ian Jenkins receiving his Ryman League  
Manager of the Month award for February 2009  
(Photo: Jerry Dowlen)

Jenko originally joined Cray as a player in 1993. He has made 481 appearances and has scored 78 goals for Cray as player or player-manager. He holds a Club record of having scored a first-team goal in 15 consecutive seasons. He served as player-manager during season 1998-99, the first season of ground-sharing at Hayes Lane, before Fabio Rossi's brief spell in charge at the start of season 1999-2000.

Jenko was joined by Joe Francis as assistant manager and coach in 2001, with Paul Blade arriving in 2006.

Together with his management and coaching team, Ian has built up an especially good reputation for signing and developing young local players, most notably Sam Wood who is now in the Brentford first team. The continuity and co-operation with Reserve team managers Sam Wright and nowadays Mark Hanscombe has played a major part in the first team's progress, together with the successful establishment of the Cray Wanderers youth set-up.

Among the other highlights of Ian's reign was a Club record run of 13 successive wins in 2003-04, a 28-game unbeaten run in the Ryman League in 2007-08 (a season in which the Wands won the Ryman 'Fair Play' award) and the feat of the team scoring over 100 goals in six seasons out of the last seven (in the other year they only managed 99!). The 2-0 win against AFC Wimbledon in 2004 ended the visitors' British record run of 78 league games without defeat.

Quite a series of achievements, we all have to agree. Well done, Jenko, and here's to the next ten years!