

WANDERERS ON THE WIRELESS

Cray were occasionally featured on BBC Radio Medway (as Radio Kent was known then) in the early to mid 1970s when they played the likes of then high-flying Maidstone United in cup competitions. But the 'regular spot' didn't happen until the Club rejoined the Kent League in 1978.

During a pre-season (which lasted from May to August in those days) Committee meeting I suggested that, as we were headed towards the Kent League, perhaps it would be a good idea to contact Radio Medway in order to have our match details relayed to our many supporters around the county (or, at least north of Maidstone, as the reception was naff the further south-east you went) who couldn't make it to games at Oxford Road. My suggestion was thought to be such a good idea that... **I** was given the job of phoning the Radio Medway Sports Desk.

In those days, the Sports Show 'Anchor Man' was a chap named George Pixley, who was often heard on a Saturday afternoon. The Kent League round-up was given by Alan Bennett (*not* the playwright of 'Talking Heads' and other such TV programmes). When I made my first ever call to the Radio Station, and got put through to the Sports Desk, the guy on the other end of the line was unmistakably George Pixley, but he introduced himself by name anyway, thus removing any doubt. George was very approachable, and I had quite a chat with him, during which he asked me about the history of the Club. He appeared to be scribbling down everything I said and, towards the end of our chat, he told me that if I could phone the Sports Desk at half-time and then again at full-time in each of Cray's home games and ask to speak directly with Alan Bennett, he will see to it that a report of those games would hit the air waves. And the Wands have been included ever since.

Nowadays, I understand, Radio Kent telephone the Club (or, rather, Greg Mann) every so often during the course of each game for a score update. But 'in my day' it was up to the 'home' clubs to phone in their details at half-time and full-time. The only time since that I've known the Kent League not to be included was around early 1980 when, quite extraordinarily, one of the Kent Coast clubs rang in the details of their Kent League game and reversed the scoreline, changing it from a deficit to a 'win'! Radio Medway didn't take too kindly to what they apparently felt was deception and, with a third of the season remaining, they pulled the plug on reporting on any more Kent League games. Reports resumed the following season, however, and Cray's results have featured ever since—even now that they are in the Ryman (Isthmian) League.

Radio Kent can be found on 96.7, 104.2 and 97.6 FM, as well as online at www.bbc.co.uk/kent/local_radio.

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