

= Mark Stimson =

Mark Nicholas Stimson (born 27 December 1967) is an English former footballer and is currently manager of Thurrock . He signed his first professional contract with Tottenham Hotspur in 1985 , but was unable to gain a regular place in the team . In 1989 , he moved on to Newcastle United , where he made over 80 appearances in the Football League . He later played for Portsmouth , Southend United and Leyton Orient before dropping into non @-@ League football .

He was appointed manager of Grays Athletic in 2002 and remained in charge until 2006 when he took over as manager of Stevenage Borough . He led Grays to victory in the Final of the FA Trophy in 2005 and 2006 , and repeated the feat with Stevenage in 2007 . In November 2007 , he became manager of a Football League team for the first time when he took over at one of his former clubs , Gillingham , but he was unable to prevent the club 's relegation from League One at the end of the 2007 ? 08 season . He led Gillingham back into League One the following season via the League Two play @-@ off Final , but his contract was terminated after the team were relegated back to League Two the following season . On 1 June 2010 , Stimson was appointed as the new manager of League Two club Barnet , but he was sacked on New Year 's Day 2011 with the club near the bottom of the table . He later had a spell as manager with Conference club Kettering Town .

= = Playing career = =

Born in Plaistow in east London , Stimson played for the Essex county representative football team and was on the books of Queens Park Rangers , before joining Tottenham Hotspur on an apprenticeship in July 1984 . A year later , he signed his first professional contract , at the age of 17 . He made his Football League debut against Everton in May 1987 , but struggled to gain a place in the first team , and was sent to Leyton Orient on loan in March 1988 , where he played ten times . During the following season , he was loaned out again , this time to Gillingham , whose manager , Keith Burkinshaw , had worked with him at Tottenham . Stimson made 18 appearances for the Kent @-@ based club and , although he was unable to help the team avoid relegation from the Third Division , his contribution impressed the fans , who voted him into second place in the club 's player of the year ballot .

At the end of the 1988 ? 89 season , Stimson was transferred to Newcastle United , then in the Second Division , for a fee of £ 200 @,@ 000 . He spent four years with the club and finally gained a regular first team place , making over 80 appearances . After Kevin Keegan took over as manager , however , Stimson found himself out of favour and he had a short spell on loan to Portsmouth in December 1992 , which led to a £ 100 @,@ 000 transfer at the end of that season . He made over fifty appearances for Portsmouth but was also loaned out again , this time to Barnet during the early part of the 1995 ? 96 season . In March 1996 , he was transferred to Southend United for a fee of £ 25 @,@ 000 . His first season at the club was affected by a long lay @-@ off due to injury , meaning that he did not play between August and November , but he ultimately made over 50 Football League appearances for the club . During his time at Roots Hall the club suffered two consecutive relegations , dropping from the First Division into the Second Division in 1997 and from there into the Third Division in 1998 . In March 1999 , having not played for Southend since the previous November , he returned to former club Leyton Orient on a free transfer . He played for the club in the semi @-@ finals of the play @-@ offs , but was restricted to an appearance as an unused substitute in the final , which Orient lost .

Prior to the 1999 ? 2000 season , Stimson spent a short period on trial at another of his former clubs , Gillingham , but manager Peter Taylor decided against offering him a contract and he instead joined Isthmian League club Canvey Island . He helped the " Gulls " win the FA Trophy in the 2000 ? 01 season , setting up the only goal and winning the man of the match award in Canvey 's 1 ? 0 defeat of Forest Green Rovers in the final . He was also selected to play for the England National Game XI , the national team for semi @-@ professional players , earning one cap against an equivalent team from the United States . He left Canvey in May 2002 to join Grays Athletic as player @-@ coach .

= = Managerial career = =

In September 2002 , Stimson took over as manager of Grays after the sacking of Craig Edwards , initially as caretaker manager , but after leading the team to its first victory of the season , he was quickly given the job on an ongoing basis . Despite the signing of a number of former top @-@ level players , such as Carl Leaburn and Jason Dozzell , the team escaped relegation by only one point . The following season , however , boosted by a switch to full @-@ time professional status and helped by the goals of Freddy Eastwood , Grays finished in 6th place , sufficient to gain a place in the newly formed Conference South for the 2004 ? 05 season . Grays won the Conference South at the first attempt by a margin of 23 points , thus achieving promotion to the Conference National , the top level of non @-@ league football , for the first time in their history . In the same season , Stimson also led Grays to the FA Trophy Final , where the team beat Hucknall Town in a penalty shoot @-@ out . Grays reached the FA Trophy Final again in the following season , and claimed a second successive win after a 2 ? 0 victory over Woking at Upton Park . In the Conference , Grays finished in third place and qualified for the play @-@ offs for promotion to the Football League , but lost to Halifax Town in the semi @-@ finals .

Citing his disappointment at failing to gain promotion , Stimson resigned from his post at Grays on 16 May 2006 . He stated that at the time he had received no firm job offers from other clubs , and acknowledged that he was taking a gamble with his career , but said that if he was unable to find a new job as a manager he would move into youth coaching or open his own football school . He was linked with the managerial vacancy at League Two Peterborough United , but eventually took over as manager of Stevenage Borough on 28 May , and led the club to an eighth @-@ place finish in the Conference National in his first season in charge . Stevenage also defeated Stimson 's former club Grays to reach the FA Trophy final , and beat Kidderminster Harriers 3 ? 2 at the new Wembley Stadium in the final , giving Stimson a third consecutive Trophy win as a manager .

In the early part of the 2007 ? 08 season , speculation began to mount that Stimson would be approached to take over as manager of a Football League club , with Gillingham , Port Vale and Millwall all alleged to be interested in his services . He was offered a new contract by Stevenage on 16 October 2007 , but resigned the following day . On 1 November , he was appointed as the new manager of Gillingham , and quickly moved to sign a number of Stevenage players , including Adam Miller and John Nutter . He was unable to recreate his previous success , however , and at the end of the 2007 ? 08 season Gillingham were relegated from League One . He was also criticised by departing player Aaron Brown , who acknowledged that Stimson had strong coaching skills but described his man @-@ management as " shocking " . The following season the Gills finished fifth in League Two and beat Shrewsbury Town 1 ? 0 in the play @-@ off Final at Wembley Stadium to gain promotion , but in the 2009 ? 10 season Gillingham were relegated back to League Two , after which Stimson 's contract was terminated " by mutual consent " on 10 May 2010 .

On 1 June , Stimson was appointed as the new manager of League Two club Barnet , but was sacked seven months later on 1 January 2011 due to a bad string of results which left the club near the bottom of the table . Towards the latter stages of the 2010 ? 11 season , Stimson accepted a coaching role at Dagenham & Redbridge . After a brief spell at Dagenham , he was appointed manager of Conference National club Kettering Town on 7 September 2011 . On 4 January 2012 , Stimson left Kettering with the team placed in the Conference relegation places . Four months later he was appointed manager of Thurrock following the club 's relegation to the Isthmian League .

= = Managerial statistics = =

As of 4 January 2012 .

= = Honours = =

= = = As a player = = =

2000 ? 01 : FA Trophy winner ? Canvey Island

= = = As a manager = = =

2004 ? 05 : Conference South champions ? Grays Athletic

2004 ? 05 : FA Trophy winners ? Grays Athletic

2005 ? 06 : FA Trophy winners ? Grays Athletic

2006 ? 07 : FA Trophy winners ? Stevenage Borough

2008 ? 09 : League Two play @-@ off winners ? Gillingham

= = Personal life = =

Stimson is married , and when he returned to former club Grays Athletic as manager of Stevenage Borough in 2007 , he and his wife were praised for visiting the clubhouse after the game to chat to home supporters . He has three children , including a son , Charlie , who in 2008 joined Gillingham 's youth team , but turned down the offer of a professional contract in 2010 after his father 's dismissal from the manager 's job . In 2000 , Stimson presented his Essex Senior Cup winner 's medal to a disabled Canvey Island fan , saying " it 's easy to forget the fans who come along and support us , often in pouring rain . "