



ST. MARY CRAY

CORONATION
SOUVENIR
Programme

QUEEN ELIZABETH II
JUNE 2nd, 1953

“**T**HE CRAYS are different, They retain a stubborn and defiant insistence on being villages which are not in the country, refusing to be anybody’s suburbs . . . your first is St. Mary’s. There is a desolation of industrial paraphernalia in the fields to the west, and a melancholy range of old weatherboarded cottages, butting on the very piers of the viaduct.

There is a paper mill and a chimney and a long too-narrow street. But it is a village, not an infection; not pretentious or jumped-up like many more complacent neighbours . . .”

From KENT (1950) by Reginald Turnor. Published by Paul Elek Publishers Ltd., 38 Hatton Grove, London, E.C.1.

(By kind permission of the Author.)

The Proceeds of the sale of this Programme will be devoted to supplementing the grant made by the Orpington Urban District Council for Coronation festivities. The balance will be devoted to the erection of a permanent Coronation Memorial.

The Committee wish to thank all those that have helped and are helping to make our Coronation Celebration which will live in our memories for many years to come.

Time Table of Coronation Celebrations

SUNDAY, MAY 31st, at 3 p.m.

UNITED SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

On St. Mary Cray Recreation Ground

SATURDAY JUNE 6th

A CARNIVAL PROCESSION will tour the Village in the morning.

Assemble : Decorated Lorries, and Tableaux, Decorated Cars, Decorated cycles and Mounted Riders at Star Lane at 10.45 a.m.

Children in Fancy Dress at Star Lane, at 11 a.m.

Children in Fancy Dress at Derry Downs, at 11.15 a.m.

Judging will take place on the Recreation Ground at 12 noon

2.30 p.m. ON THE RECREATION GROUND

GRAND ENTRY comprising representatives from every UNIT and Organisation in St. Mary Cray, led by our Guests of Honour,

SERGEANT ABRAHAMS, late Sussex Rgt.,
and

IN-PENSIONER HOVEY, late Royal Artillery
(By kind permission of the Commandant, Royal Hospital, Chelsea)

and the

SILVER BAND OF THE ORPINGTON AND CRAYS BRANCH OF THE
BRITISH LEGION

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Please bring Programmes and display the National Colours

CORONATION TEAS

- 3.30 p.m. Tea will be served for all children up to 7 years of age.
4 p.m. Tea will be served for children form 8 to 11 years of age.
4.30 p.m. Tea will be served for children form 12 to 15 years of age.
At the rear entrance to St. Mary Cray Primary School.
4 p.m. First sitting of Teas served to Old Age Pensioners.
5.15 p.m. Second sitting of Teas served to Old Age Pensioners.
At the Co-operative Hall High Street.

CHILDREN'S RACES

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|---|
| 2.40 p.m. | 60 yards Handicap.
Boys from 8 - 11 years of age. | 3.50 p.m. | 80 yards Handicap.
Girls from 12 to 15 years of age. |
| 3 p.m. | Girls from 8 - 11 years of age. | 4.15 p.m. | 40 yard Handicap
For Boys up to 7 years of age. |
| 3.30 p.m. | 80 yards Handicap.
Boys from 12 to 15 years of age. | 4.30 p.m. | For Girls up to 7 years of age. |

Prizes for every Entrant

TUG-OF-WAR — The Coronation Championship.

Heats at 3.40 p.m.

Final at 4.45 p.m.

During the afternoon there will be Displays by:

SERVICE UNITS

PRE-SERVICE UNITS

YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

THE SCHOLARS OF OUR SIX SCHOOLS

5 p.m. Presentation of Prizes for Carnival Procession and Children's Sports.
IN THE LATER AFTERNOON THERE WILL BE DISPLAYS OF BOXING

6 p.m. COMIC FOOTBALL MATCH—"SWEEPS v. BAKERS"

(Presented by Cray Wanderers Football Club, the oldest Football Club in Kent and second only to Sheffield United in all England.)

6.30 p.m. Presentation of Lucky Programme Number Prizes.

6.35 p.m. TALENT COMPETITION.

8 p.m. DANCING ON THE GREEN, to the Music of Ted Babbs and his Band, followed by Community Singing.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

DONKEY RIDES for the Juveniles
On "CANDY"
(by kind permission of J. M. Aitkin, Esq.)

"PUNCH & JUDY"
By Uncle Tom
at 3 p.m. and 5.45 p.m.

*Selections will be played throughout the afternoon and evening by the
British Legion Silver Band.*

Light Refreshments for Adults at moderate prices.

Walls Ice Cream by W. Hubbard.

Public Address Equipment by Central Electric (Orpington) Ltd.

The Orpington Branch of the British Red Cross Society will be on duty at the First Aid Tent.

ST. MARIE CRAI

A SHORT HISTORY OF ST. MARY CRAY

By the Rev. RAY F. GALER, M.A. (Vicar of St. Mary Cray from 1935 to 1950).

(Copyright)

TRULY those who reside in St. Mary Cray, if only they would realise it, their lot has fallen unto them in a fair ground and that they have and hold a goodly heritage in the history of this island of ours.

No matter how Cray Changes, no matter many houses, factories and roads are now covering the once open fields of agriculture—yet still they stand upon real Kentish historical soil, which yields the fruit of British, Roman, Saxon and Norman blood, a blood which runs through the veins of Kentish folk right up to the great age of Elizabeth the Second, this crowning of the good, young Queen Bess, this epoch. Therefore, we pray once again for a merrie and prosperous England.

There is an old legend which tells of our Kentish fore-fathers, whose bodies were laid to rest under the yew trees of the Churchyard so that its branches might bear still better, still stronger bows and arrows as used at Hastings, Crecy or Agincourt. Yes, gentle reader, Kentish soil, the ground on which your house is built and so the Kentish blood within your heart this very Coronation-tide.

St. Mary Cray has a very long and distinguished history—its records start from the earliest times and its results are with us today. It receives its name from Anglo-Saxon times. The little river which flows through the valley was called "CRAIG", which means a small stream and from which we get the word "Creek". During the period of the Roman Invasions a certain number of Romans built their villas along the banks, at FORDCROFT there has been proved a Roman Cemetery.

In the Domesday Book of William the Conqueror, St. Mary Cray went under the names of two Manors, those of OCKMERE and SENTLING, of which Sentling seems to have been the more important Manor and to have contained a Church, both Manors being held under the jurisdiction of ODO, that delightful half-brother of William, who lost the lot when he turned against the Conqueror.

The next holder of these Manors was Jeffrey de PEVEREL, who was appointed one of the eight Captains of Dover Castle, one of the highest honours granted by the King. During the reign of Edward I they passed to Gregory de RUXLIE (Ruxley), to whom Edward granted an annual statutory fair with a weekly market. These were held on Market Meadow. The Market House was blown down in A.D. 1703 by one of the worst storms ever experienced in England, since when both the annual fair and the weekly market have fallen into oblivion. In the reign of Edward VI these two Manors were joined together and became known as CRAI.

St. Mary Cray contained four or five Manors or estates of note: (a) The MOUNT (Mountfield Way), where Lord Stanhope lived Circa A.D. 1661. (b) The Manor of KEVINGTON where Hugo MANNING de CRAI settled in A.D. 1490. (c) Near the crossroads at Kevington stands that of WALDENS, A.D. 1662. In recent years this become the home of the celebrated "Buff Orpington" chickens, this before the days of rationing. (d) Behind the Waldens is EAST HALL, the seat of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, who lost both his head and this estate when he arranged the wedding of Ann of Cleves with that much married and adventuresome Henry VIII. (e) And then there is the Manor of HOCKENDEN, belonging to the STANGROVE family.

As to the estates or large residences there is the ROOKERY which changed to the HADDON family, who passed it on to Edward HODSOLL of SOUTH ASH in A.D. 1700. (Note the Hodsoll Chapel in St. Mary Cray Parish Church.) Opposite the Rookery is the old Cray water wheel—an heirloom which should be kept and repaired—once used for grinding the corn of the district in the original Corn Mill of Cray.

SPRING HALL, of some 400 years standing and still held by the family, is so named from the springs which feed the River Cray. In the garden of Spring Hall there stands a fine old Saxon Font, placed there when a new Font was presented to the Church. On the corner of Blacksmith's Lane, where the Vicarage now stands, there stood the famous Bell Foundry of the Hodson Brothers, Circa A.D. 1665. They made many a famous bell, including the TENOR BELL of Bow Church, that bell so dear to all free men of London and so dear to the children for the sake of "Oranges and Lemons". There are two bells of their making in Cray Church, dating A.D. 1663.

Opposite Blacksmith's Lane is "Little Essex", where the Cray Tannery stood. Near here was the Cray "Rope Walk". Here at the corner of Blacksmith's Lane stood the renowned "Blacksmith Tree" with the forge behind it. There is a legend, but only a legend, that the sight of this tree inspired the American poet Longfellow to write the celebrated poem "The Village Blacksmith". The original Blacksmith Tree is in America, but Longfellow did stay at

Kevington Manor—perhaps the sight of our tree did give him inspiration.

Near Kevington cross-roads stood the "Kevington Arms" dear to the Royalist cause in Manning's day — this is now a private residence called "Childs". Further along the road is the farmstead of "CROUCH", once the home of the Singing Monks.

Returning to the High Street, the "Black Boy" is an old posting and coaching Inn; a reference to it is found in the Parish records, A.D. 1790. Opposite the "Black Boy" is MARKET MEADOW (see above), where the May Pole was set up for a May Day festival which made Cray renowned.

As to the Churches—the Free Church folk are served well and faithfully at the well-known TEMPLE. Alas, flying bombs have made this centre unsafe, but a new TEMPLE will assuredly rise out of the ashes of the old. Bombs have also completely destroyed the Roman Catholic Church, but the faithful are undaunted. And, lastly, the Parish Church of St. Mary Cray—an architectural gem—a house of God which has seen many a Coronation, many a victory and also many a storm since A.D. 1250—with its early English pillars, its famous brasses, especially the AVERY and MANNING brass and the GREENWOOD, the most modern of the brasses. These have brought, and still bring, many a brass enthusiast to the Church. A 15th century Rood Screen, 14th and 13th century Windows, a Squint of outstanding interest—truly does St. Mary Cray Church give the history of the ages. Time marches on, customs change, the old giveth place to the new. On the past does the present build, but it will always be St. Mary Cray.

So once again the old Church bells ring out, once again a peal of joy, and this time for the young Queen who rightly takes her place and plays her part as Elizabeth the Second. St. Mary Cray, yes, it is in the soil, it is in the atmosphere—truly the lot has fallen unto the reader in a fair place—the historical heritage is a goodly one. And may the spirit of the past blend itself into the spirit of the present, making St. Mary Cray still a blessed plot of Kentish soil in England's green and pleasant land.

Historical Books on St. Mary Cray

By Ray F. Gayer, M.A.

"Romances of St. Mary Cray"

"Historical Sketches of St. Mary Cray"

"Travellers' Joy in St. Mary Cray"

Price 1s. 6d. By post 1s. 9d.

Copies can be obtained from mr. HARMAN, Newsagent, High Street, St. Mary Cray, and Mrs. GIBBS, 38 High Street, St. Mary Cray.