

Walks

around the Borough

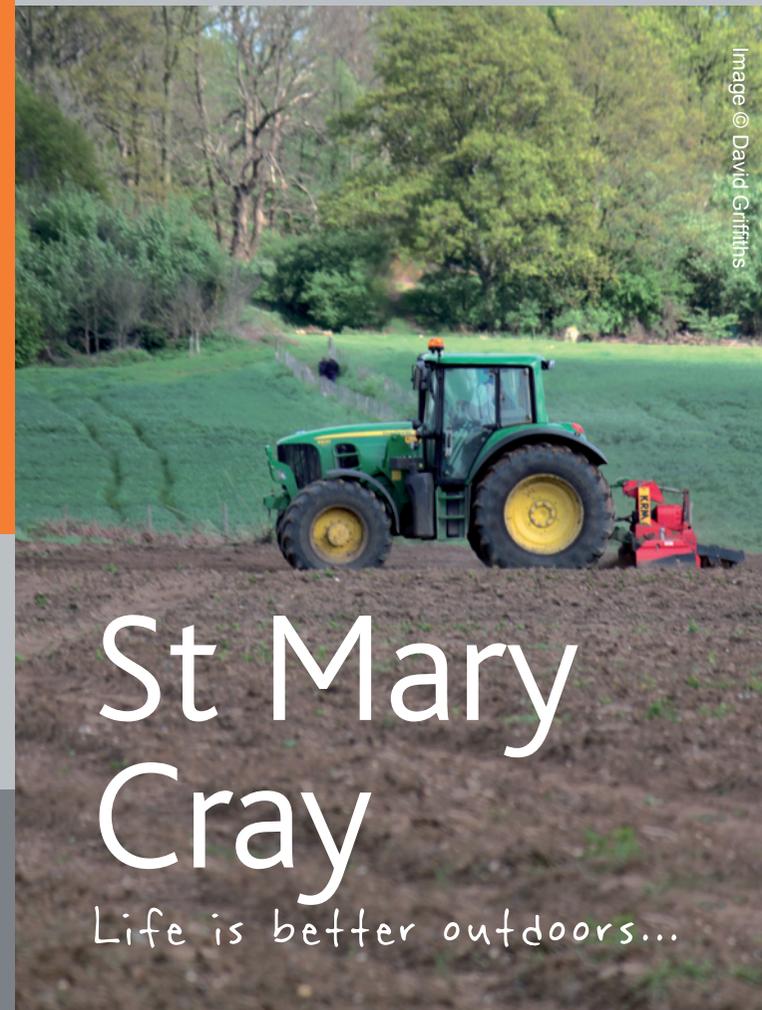


Image © David Griffiths

St Mary Cray

Life is better outdoors...

Starting point: St Mary Cray Recreation Ground, Rosecroft Close, St Mary Cray

Distance: 2.2 miles

Duration: 1.5 hours

How to get there...

BUSES:

R4 St Paul's Cray to Locksbottom
R6 Orpington to St Mary Cray
R3 Locksbottom to Chelsfield

TRAIN:

Nearest station: St Mary Cray

CAR:

Turn off Cray Avenue (A224) in to Kent Road. Head east until the road becomes Chelsfield Road and turn up Derry Downs, where the road turns into Rosecroft Close.

PARKING:

Some limited parking in Rosecroft Close and Derry Downs.

Please check: www.tfl.gov.uk for further details or call Traveline on 0871 200 22 33.

All details correct at time of printing (2013).

Additional Information...

Starting at St Mary Cray recreation ground, the walk passes through undulating farmland, conservation areas, the River Cray corridor and the market village of St Mary Cray.

There has been activity in the Cray river valley since prehistoric times and both Romans and Saxons have left their mark. The name Cray is derived from the Saxon 'crecca' and Welsh 'craie' meaning brook or fresh water. Before Edward I's reign and the parish dedication, the village was called South Cray. St Mary Cray was once a great market town in north west Kent surrounded by farms and orchards.

10 Continue along the High Street to the crossing point just before Blacksmiths Lane. (Here you may take a short diversion to the once market village of St Mary Cray. The village has a close knit character. You can see the 13th century knapped flint St Mary's Church and Lime Tree House also dating from the 13th century. Close by is the Village Green where the village sign, erected to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the St Mary Cray Action Group, stands).

To continue on the walk, cross the road, turn left and take the path on the right, a short way up the road. A large watermill and lodge once stood between Spring Hall and the stables. The lodge was formally the estate house of the Joynson family, benefactors of the village.

11 Follow the path beside the river, until you reach the paddling pool on your left. Here, take the right hand path at the junction and continue to follow it, keeping the river on your left. The Riverside Gardens were a part of a £3.5 million drainage improvement scheme and they form an important haven for wildlife. You may be lucky enough to see a kingfisher around the pond and willow areas. They often perch on a branch before diving vertically into the water to catch fish or water beetles. Walk on to Kent Road and turn left.

12 Continue on Kent Road, past the first mini roundabout and on to the second, at the junction with the High Street and Chelsfield Road. Cross the High Street and continue up Chelsfield Road, taking the next left into Derry Downs.

13 Derry Downs has a distinctive character, local houses dating from 19th century display yellow stock brick walls some with stucco and slate roofs. Continue to the end, cross over and turn left into Rosecroft Close.

St Mary Cray

1 Start at the entrance to the recreation ground, at the end of the alleyway on Rosecroft Close, off Derry Downs. Turn right at the end of the alleyway and follow the tarmac path all the way around the edge of the recreation ground towards the fields (ignoring the small right hand fork towards the houses).

2 At the path junction turn right and enter the field. Head diagonally right and take footpath 179 across the field towards Cockmannings Road. There are fine views towards Kynaston Wood. You may hear the skylarks overhead, they have a long unbroken warbling song and they often spend up to 15 minutes at a time in the sky.

3 At the field boundary turn left and walk up the grass path, parallel to the road towards the next path junction. Here turn right through the hedge, cross Cockmannings Road and turn left. Continue for 400m to Cockmannings Farm.

4 As you pass the junction for Waldens Road notice the old Kent highway sign set in the bank. Where the road narrows proceed carefully, Cockmannings Farm is on the right, at the junction of Cockmannings Lane. The Manning family held considerable property in the area and there was a cockpit in the vicinity during the 18th century, hence the name Cockmannings.

5 Cross the road opposite the houses, to a kissing gate leading to footpath 200. Head straight across the field to the tree line opposite and the junction with footpath 201. Continue straight on (bearing slightly left), along footpath 201, which crosses the next field and leads on to Waldens Road. (Walden Manor can be reached by turning right up footpath 180 for 300m, the manor was once the home of William Cook breeder of the Buff Orpington Chicken and other poultry).

6 Cross Waldens Road and go through the gap in the hedge, to the field opposite. Here, follow footpath 180 as it bears left beside the hedge and weaves down towards Kynaston Wood. This small woodland has a large stand of sweet chestnut, which traditionally would have been managed by coppicing. The coppiced timber would have many uses such as for fence posts and rails. As you enter the wood, take the path on the right where it forks and stay on this main path, down through the woodland, to the field.

7 Once out of the woods continue down the middle of the field along footpath 180 for 250m to the next footpath junction. Here turn right along footpath 179 towards Crockenhill Road. At the road turn left, walk 150m and turn left down Burrfield Drive. Follow the road round and take the next left down Ronfearn Avenue. At the T-junction turn left down Hodson Crescent. At number 55 turn right and enter the recreation ground.

8 Now turn left and walk on for 20m, notice the grey brown fissured bark of the poplar tree. At the path junction turn right and walk across the park to the youth centre in Park Road. Continue to follow this track (keeping the youth centre on your left) to the end of the road. At the road junction, turn right and continue along the High Street.

9 Walk on to the United Reformed Church. The red-brick building replaced the 1851 flint and stone church which suffered war damage. The earlier Moffat Hall and flint lodge survive. Opposite this site is the 18th Century Spring Hail, once home of John Carnell Snelling owner of the St Mary Cray Brewery. Local springs fed both the house and brewery.

