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ST PAULS GRAY CHURCH.
WEST END, AS SEEN FROM THE ROAD.

ST. PAUL'S CRAY CHURCH.

BY MAJOR ALFRED HEALES, F.S.A.

ST. PAUL'S CRAY CHURCH is one of the five ancient parish churches which take their name from the little stream, called by courtesy a river, the Cray, which rises in the parish of Orpington, and flowing along its own, the Cray, valley, for a few miles, unites with the Darent near the head of Dartford Creek, and the two together are soon after lost in the Thames.

The Cray is a clear, bright stream, found to be particularly valuable for paper-making and calico-printing, both of which facts afford a testimony to its excellence; and to the last it preserves its clear brightness. It has the distinction of which many, even great rivers, cannot boast, of giving a surname to five churches and parishes; viz., St. Mary's Cray, St. Paul's Cray, Foot's Cray, North Cray, and Crayford.

Looking first to *Domesday Book** for the earliest probable mention of these churches, we find that four Cray Manors are recorded, including Crayford then called Erde, and in addition to St. Mary's Cray, which was originally a chapelry to Orpington. As the rest are identified in a list of the churches in the Diocese of Rochester, written in the first half of the twelfth century, referred to in the *Textus Roffensis*,† it follows that the church which was then called Rodulfe's Craie must be that which is now, like Crayford, under the invocation of St. Paulinus of York.‡

We find the church mentioned as *Crēypaulin* in the taxation of Pope Nicholas IV., c. 1291, when it was assessed at the annual value of £7 6s. 8d.;§ and in the assessment by King Henry VIII., where it is called *Powle's Cray*, alias *Paul's Cray*, with the dedication of St. Paulinus, and the annual value was set down at £12 13s. 4d.|| We must, of course, bear in mind the changes in the value of money. In two records, dated respectively 1314 and 1315, it is called *Paulynes-craye*.¶

* Larking, *Kent Domesday*, p. 25.

† Hearne, *Textus Roffensis*, p. 230. All these churches were equally assessed for a payment of 9d. each. See also Hasted's *History of Kent*, folio, vol. i., 143.

‡ Of York, as distinguished from St. Paulinus of Treves. This St. Paulinus was the first Archbishop of York, and subsequently was translated to Rochester, and was buried in the Cathedral there. Godwin, *Catalogue of English Bishops*, p. 522.

§ *Taxation of Pope Nicholas IV.* Record Office Edition, p. 6a.

|| Bacon's *Liber Regis*, p. 852.

¶ *Pedes Finium*; see *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. XII., p. 506, and XIII., p. 289.

The church itself is very picturesquely situated on the east side of the road, from which and from the river flowing beside the road, the ground rises rather sharply, and the edifice is singularly rural of aspect; its west tower and spire gain size by their position at the end of the church, and dominate the approach; while the view of the interior, when seen through the open door and terminating in the bright glass of the east window is thoroughly effective and ecclesiastical. The orientation is 1° south of east.

The description of the building given by Ireland, the follower of Hasted as a County Historian, runs thus: "The church contains two aisles, and one chancel, with a pointed steeple at the west end."* This description certainly has the merit of brevity: and, with the explanation that the term *aisle* was formerly used somewhat indefinitely, is correct so far as it goes; but for the purposes of modern archæology some little expansion and precision are requisite. We may describe the church at the present time as consisting of a west tower, nave and south aisle, chancel, north vestry, and south chantry. There is no chancel arch, nor any indication that there ever was one.

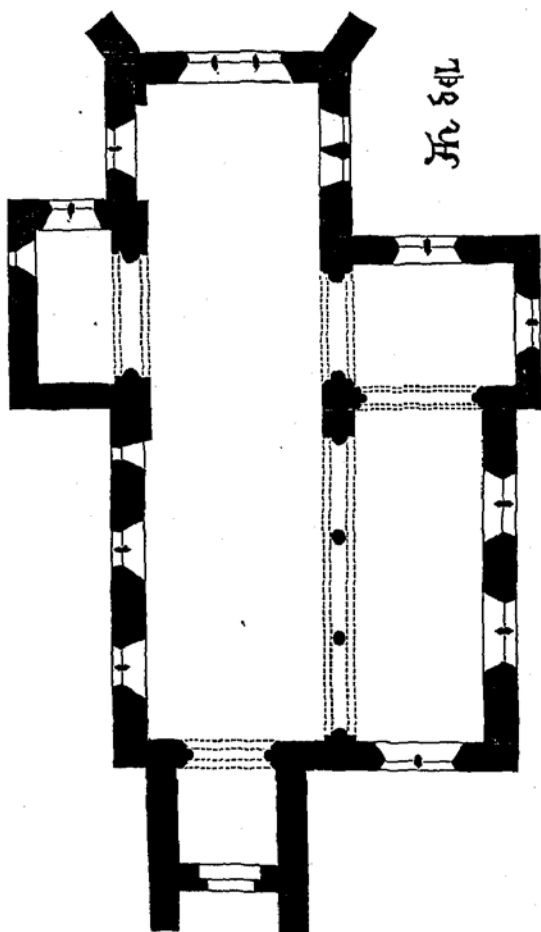
Rarely, indeed, are there any existing records of the foundation and construction of any early parish church, and even the history of very important city churches is generally wanting: we have, therefore, to construct their history as well as we can from what we can see and from what we can gather from comparison with other buildings; in fact, then, archæology is analagous to osteology, where the professor has but a few evident facts before him from which to construct in imagination the rest of the skeleton; and frequently it happens that old churches present us with problems which are either insoluble or of doubtful solution. St. Paul's Cray Church, however, though much different from its original appearance at the time of Domesday, when it is first mentioned, happily still furnishes us with a good deal of its own history.

The existing structure, which superseded that mentioned in Domesday, formerly consisted of a west tower, nave with north and south aisles, a remarkably well-developed chancel with a chantry adjoining it on the north and also opening into the aisle; the whole erected in the Early English period, and early in that style—say between the years 1200 and 1220; a south chantry was added probably towards the close of the same century. The material of the walls and exterior is flint, fairly faced, and the interior and dressing of clunch or stone; the walls throughout are of great thickness. The internal dimensions of the building, as we now see it, are, in feet and inches, as follows:—

Tower 9:7 × 9:5. Tower arch 3 feet deep. Nave 29:8 × 18:6. South aisle 34:10 × 14:11. Chancel 35:3 × 17:6. Vestry 15 × 9:6. South chantry 15 × 15:7. Extreme length 75:3. Extreme width 48:1.

The tower has no staircase, as often occurs in flint-built churches, since that material is singularly unsuitable for the purpose. The

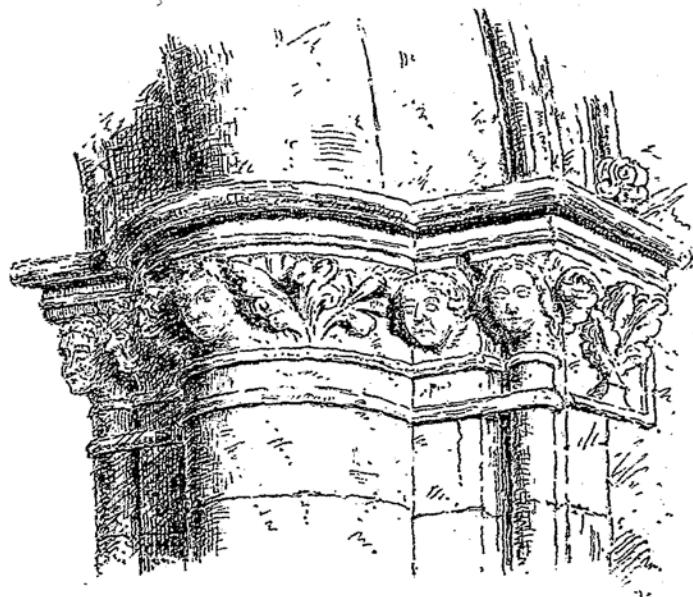
* Ireland, *History of the County of Kent*, iv., p. 522.



PLAN OF THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL[INU]S CRAY, KENT.

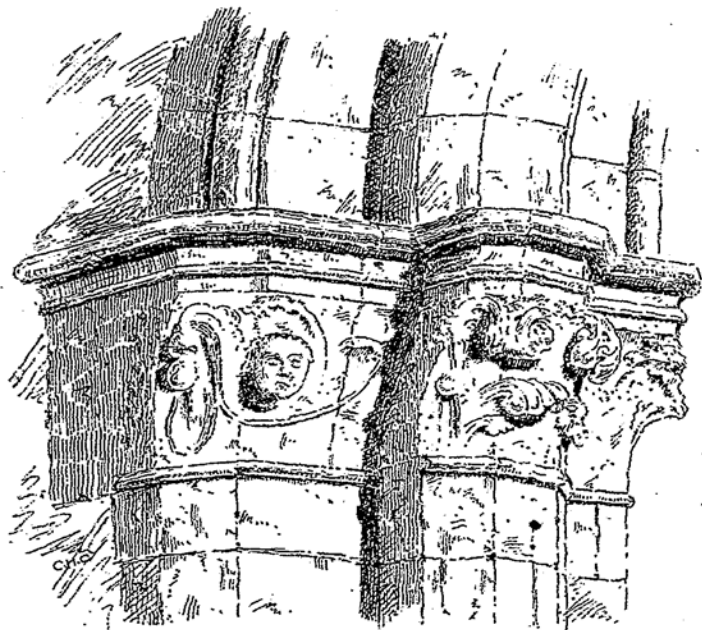
(Scale, 20 feet to 1 inch.)

S. Paul's Cray. No 1.



Nave Arcade Respond.

S. Paul's Cray. No 2.



À Respond

arcade between the nave and aisle will be noticed as being unusually good for a parish church like the present unpretending structure, and especially considering the want of stone fit for decorative purpose. The arches are rather lofty and finely proportioned, and have a semi-circular sub-arch, and on the aisle side a hood mould. The western respond has a well-moulded cap, extending across and including a small roll or shaft worked in either outer angle. The pillars are circular, and unusually slender; that to the west has a moulded cap similar to the western respond, but the other corresponds in style with the eastern respond, the caps being much richer, and carved with heads and foliage, rather rudely, perhaps, but with a strongly marked character in themselves, as well as definitely fixing their date. So rude is some part of the work, that without careful notice it may be taken as an example of inartistic touching up by rustic masons. The accompanying illustration representing the east respond will shew it better than any description.

On the opposite or North side are two arches of the destroyed arcade, blocked up, and now hidden by the growth of ivy.*

The South aisle is stated to have been rebuilt in 1839, wider than it was previously; which latter particular seems very probable since early aisles were generally narrow; previously it had a high-pitched gable, and at the East end a window of three lights which, of course, must have been an insertion in the original building.†

The caps of the arch between the chancel and north chantry, though somewhat damaged, afford excellent examples of Early English foliage, as will be seen by our illustration; the sub-arch is semi-octagonal. An arch on the west side of this chantry (now the vestry) appears to be almost semi-circular; it is built up. In the side of the same building is a lancet, 4 feet high, but only 8 inches wide, splayed internally to 3 feet 3 inches.

At the east end of the chancel was a triplet of lancets placed far apart; these were evidently blocked up and plastered over in the seventeenth century when a barbarous window was inserted and subsequently built up, which in its turn gave place, at the time of the "restoration" after mentioned, to the present window, in favour of which nothing can be said, though the stained glass with which it is filled, and which was presented by the Rev. G. L. Langdon, the Rector then and now, is bright, rich, and sparkling, and far superior to most modern glass. The outline of the original lancets, which became apparent when the east end was stripped of plaster, has, judiciously, been preserved for inspection; it is a pity the triplet was not re-opened instead of putting in the new window.

As to the date of the original south chantry we can only make a rough estimate from a coffin-lid. The chantry, which goes with the ownership of the mansion called St. Paul's Cray Hill, had fallen

* They are shewn in an engraving in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1841.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1841, vol. i., p. 362. An excellent description and account of the church in its then state by my good friend Mr. J. G. Waller and his late brother; an account which is very accurate and singularly in advance of the archaeology of nearly a half century ago.

into ruin, and the arches opening from it into the church had been built up or destroyed many years ago, and prior to the "restoration" of the church, which occurred in 1856 and 1861, when the chantry, at the suggestion of the Rector, was entirely rebuilt. In the course of digging foundations six stone coffin-lids were dug up; of these, one was selected and set upright against the west wall of the chapel, and the others were re-interred. The one which we see is certainly of early date.

A porch in front of the tower was built (so far as one may trust a non-professional drawing made more than half a century ago*) towards the latter part of the fifteenth century; it was removed at the "restoration" of the church, but the mark of its gable is visible on the tower wall.

About the same time, or rather earlier, was erected a wooden chancel screen of good design and workmanship, as we can see from the panels which, after subsequently forming part of the altar-rails,† now embellish the vestry door.

Then, in the sixteenth century, a holy-water stoup was formed on the south of the west doorway inside, of little interest in itself, as so frequently happens; and probably at the same time was constructed a staircase, leading to the rood-loft across the chancel, as shewn by the upper doorway visible at the entrance of the chancel on the south side.

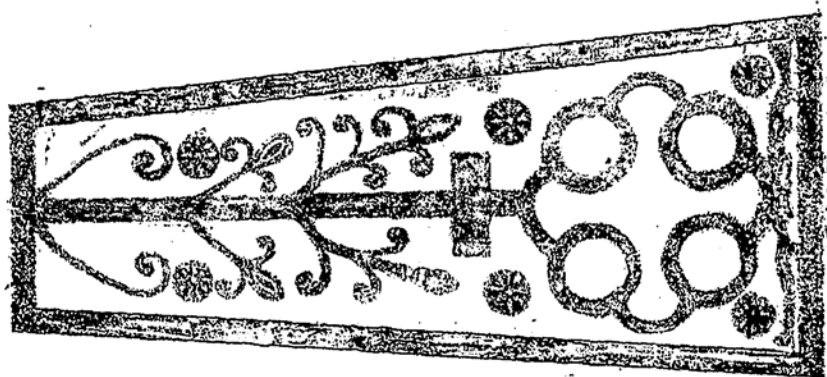
When the north aisle was destroyed is a matter of which we have no record, but considering that the windows in the present north wall of the nave, set in the masonry which blocks up the arches, are of the latest period of Gothic architecture, say towards the end of the sixteenth century, we may fairly conjecture that the destruction of the aisle took place at that date. A good many voussoirs of the nave arches are worked up casually in the construction of the re-erected south chapel.

Then came the "restoration" in 1856 and 1861, when, in addition to the works already referred to, the west doorway with foliated caps and dog-tooth moulding in Early English style, cut in rather coarse grit, was erected, as also the window over it, both being intended as a reproduction of what previously existed; the south aisle windows were put in, and much stained glass was presented; the south chapel was rebuilt of flint with stone dressings still glaringly white; a west gallery and the high pews were happily swept away. The floor levels have been altered, so that from west to east is nearly a continuous upward slope, avoiding steps as far as may be.

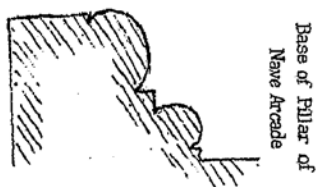
Prior to the "restoration" there existed what is described as "a vile altar-piece" with portraits of Moses and Aaron, and the Royal Arms, surmounted by a glaring crimson curtain. Moses and Aaron, in grisaille, may still be seen in the south chantry.

* Excellent *Lithographic Views of the Seven Churches on the River Cray*, by the Rev. E. Berens (afterwards Archdeacon of Berks), a member of the Berens family of Kington, St. Mary Cray, were published about the year 1823.

† Sir Stephen Glynne, *Churches of Kent*, p. 321.



Tower Arch



Base of Pillar of
Nave Arcade



West respond of
Nave Arcade



Arch from Chancel
to North Transept

ST. PAULS CRAY CHURCH.
Crossed Coffin Slab, and Sections of Mouldings.

The font is modern, and calls for no remark; the former font is described as of a plain barrel shape;* it was unfortunately destroyed in an attempt to remove it more than half a century ago.

On the west door the lock, enclosed in a huge wooden box, shoots two bolts together, and on it is roughly cut: "JOHN MOCK Mad this Lock 1637."

Although there is no record of the endowment of any chantry, we find that there was a small endowment for the maintenance of a lamp, which seems to have been the only thing seized by the Commissioners appointed by King Henry VIII. or by his successor; it remained in the hands of the Crown until the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Whether the lamp was to burn in honour of the patron Saint, or at what altar or before what statue, does not appear. All that we do learn is from the account rendered to the Queen by "Lancelot Lovelace, gent., collector for the County of Kent, of Rents of all Colleges, Chantries, Free Chapels, Fraternities, and Guilds whatsoever; together with all manors, lands, tenements, and other things situate in the said County, and lying and existing in divers parishes, viles and hamlets within the jurisdiction of the Court of the Lady the Queen, and the Duchy of Lancaster, which should come to her by the Act of Parliament passed on the 4th November of the first year of his Majesty King Edward VI. (1547), and the statute of Colleges and writings in accordance; and according to the tenor of the Commission of the said late King dated the 14th February in his second year" (1548). The account runs from the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel in the 15th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1573), for one whole year. After this preamble one expects to hear of some important property, but it only consists of a rent-charge of xii^d on a parcel of land called "Le Lampe Yarde,"† estimated at one-sixth of an acre.‡

The church possesses but one monument of much antiquity, which is the stone coffin-lid already adverted to as having been found in digging out the site for the re-erection of the south chapel. In form it narrows from 1 foot 10½ inches (bevelled to 1 foot 8½ inches at the head), to 1 foot 3 inches (bevelled to 1 foot 1 inch) at the lowest part remaining; for the lowest part is now either lost or under the pavement; the present remains being 4 feet long. Its moulded edges shew that it was intended to rise above the level of the pavement. On the upper surface is a cross with foliage in low relief. The excellent work of Dr. Cutts on *Monumental Slabs and Crosses*—the only work on the subject—has no design which at all corresponds with this.

Half a century ago there were in the nave a plain coffin-shaped stone and a slab despoiled of its inlaid brass.‡

Inventories of the Church goods here were taken by the Royal Commissioners appointed in the reign of King Edward VI. on two

* Glynne, *Churches of Kent*, p. 321.

† Minister's Accounts; Duchy of Lancaster, No. 1496, bundle 75.

‡ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1841, i., p. 365.

occasions, the first of which was in his third year, that is between the 28th January 1549 and the 27th January 1550, and the second occasion was on the 23rd November 1552, being in his sixth year. The first of these Inventories, as, indeed, is very generally the case with all such Inventories prior to the sixth year, cannot now be found, though their existence is frequently mentioned in the second set. In the interval between the two dates there had been stolen a chalice and paten of silver, parcel gilt, weighing 9 ounces; what vessels were used in the celebration of the Holy Sacrament after the disappearance we cannot tell, for there is no further mention of a chalice or paten in the later Inventory.

The second Inventory, which states that Thomas Tarbokk was parson, and Richard Lane and Richard Spencer were churchwardens, recites that it was reported to the Commissioners that in addition to the loss of the chalice and paten, there had been sold three brass candlesticks, twenty pewter bowls, and one pewter holy water stock, and the proceeds applied to the reparations of the church. The pewter bowls had held lights on the occasion of ecclesiastical festivities; four still remained, and their use is described in the Inventory.

It was also reported that in the same interval a vestment of blue satin* had been stolen; it is curious to note in a series of such Inventories the extraordinary number of things stated to have been stolen. The list of church goods here, in 1552, is larger than one would have anticipated as subsisting at the date; they comprised the following articles,† viz.:—

A vestment (*chasuble*) of crimson velvet, with cross of green silk and gold wire, with branches (*i.e.*, scroll-work) of white, yellow, and green; with amice, stole, and fanel to the same, complete.

A vestment of white silk, with cross of sanguine (crimson) silk, with branches of red and green silk; with amice, albe, stole, and fanel.

A vestment of black satin, with cross of changeable (shot) silk, with birds and flowers upon the cross; with amice, albe, stole, and fanel.

Three vestments of thread chequered work, with crosses of the same work.

A cope of crimson velvet with garters.

An old cope of thread chequered work, no doubt corresponding with the vestment so described.

Two corporaxes of linen cloth, good and bad.

A brass crysmatory.

Four lead cruets.

Four linen altar cloths, two towels of diaper, and one of linen.

Two linen surplices.

* The term *vestment* was frequently used as comprising the suit of Eucharistic vestments for priest, deacon, and subdeacon of corresponding pattern.

† Given at length in *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. X., p. 288; in an article on Church Goods, edited by Canon Scott Robertson.

A brass cross and a copper cross.

Four bowls of pewter and lead to set tapers on in the rood-loft.

A Bible of the largest volume, and the Paraphrasis of Erasmus.

BELLS.

The Inventory winds up with four bells in the steeple, and a Saints' bell, as remaining in 1552. Of course the Saints' (sanctus) bell has disappeared with its use, but of the others one is still happily subsisting; it is one of the thirty-six now remaining in the county which can claim an antiquity prior to the year 1400, and therefore holds a place in the leading rank of church bells of the county. The more definite date of this, and the others of a group of six, formed a problem to which the late Mr. Stahlschmidt* (one of our highest authorities on the subject) devoted great consideration; and no man was, from his study of the bells themselves, and from his singular research respecting them and their founders, more competent to solve it. So far as we can gather his opinion upon this group of bells, so modestly and cautiously expressed, to which with his care for exact accuracy he avoided affixing any precise date, and contented himself with placing the facts before the archæological world, after making it as clear as the light of his great research enabled him to;† and so far as we gather from the bell itself, the date appears to be prior to and certainly near the year 1400. The legend belongs to what he rightly terms the transitional period between the use of the Lombardic and black-letter type; the capitals are of the former character and the remainder of the latter. The stop is a peculiar form of cross inscribed on a diamond;‡ and for other ornamentation there is a shield bearing a chevron between three laver-pots, which appears four times over, above the legend on the shoulder of the bell; a stamp which occurs also three times on a bell at St. Paul's, Canterbury. Mr. Stahlschmidt inclines to the opinion that if the bells in this group were not the work of William Dawe (a great founder, 1385-1418), they can only be ascribed to William Wodeward, and as he survived William Dawe it is quite possible that some of the stamps belonging to the former may have passed into the possession of the latter; or that there may have been a partnership between them, which would account for a simultaneous use of the stamps. The painstaking research of our author discovered documents dated 1393, 1395, and 1418, in which William Dawe, Founder, is mentioned. It will be evident to all accustomed to inscriptions of this

* With great regret all interested in the subject will refer to him as late; he died last summer of consumption not long after his return from Madeira. Most careful, painstaking, and accurate as a campanologist and student of archæology, and the history and lives of founders; eminent in various ways; always courteous and pleasant. All who knew him personally, or from his works, must regret his loss.

† See *The Church Bells of Kent*, by J. C. L. Stahlschmidt, pp. 27-29.


‡ *Ibid.*, fig. 7, p. 23.

date that Lombardic capitals with black-letter text, are just what one would expect at the date attributed to these bells. The legend which is round the shoulder of the bell, runs thus:—

✠ Johannes Cristi Carr Dignare Pro Nobis Orare.


The initial cross is identical with that on a bell at Kemsing in this county, and in the work referred to it is fig. 7, p. 23. On the top of the bell, just above the legend, are four shields all alike, and each bearing the charge of a chevron between three laver-pots; it is also figured as No. 12, appearing at p. 28.*

Another bell bears the following inscription:—

BRYANVS ELDREDGE  ME FECIT, 1624.

Bryan Eldredge or Eldridge was one of a family who together and successively carried on the business of bell-founders during a century and a half. Bryan cast a very large number of bells in Surrey and the home counties; he died in 1640.†

The remaining bell bore the legend,—

PRAISE THE LORD  1597. A.W.

but was recast by Warner in 1859. The initials are those of Anthony Wakefield, an itinerant Sussex founder: in this county he cast bells for Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, as appears by the parish accounts.‡

With regard to the ancient church plate, we have already seen that the only chalice and paten which the church did possess had been stolen in the short interval between the visits of the two Commissions. The earliest now there is a chalice bearing this inscription: "The Communion Cup of St. Paul's Cray, to be Kept by the Minister for the time being. 1718. The gift of W^m Scrafton, Citizen and Salter of London." The Hall-marks are almost worn out; presumably the donor was the father of William Scrafton, A.M., then Rector.§ The rest of the plate is quite modern.

PARISH REGISTERS.

The Parish Registers commence in 1579, and the first volume comprises nearly two centuries. The first part up to the year 1600 is, as we so often find to be the case, evidently a transcript from the original notes, and incomplete; thus in the first and several other years there are but three or four entries of births, marriages, and deaths, which were made in one continuous record as the events

* The inscriptions and detail are taken from Stahlschmidt's work on *The Church Bells of Kent*, p. 247: The first bell, especially, is not easy of access, and is so hemmed in by the bell-frames in a cramped space, that I have trusted to that author's well-known accuracy, without full verification.

† *Surrey Bells and London Bell-Founders*, by Mr. Stahlschmidt; the will of Bryan is given at p. 113, and a pedigree of the family at p. 121.

‡ Stahlschmidt, *Church Bells of Kent*, p. 60 and 248.

§ The Register Book contains a note of his induction to the living by Mr. Wilson, Rector of Chislehurst, on 7 December 1703, and the entry of his burial 7 February 1740-1.

occurred; and in the entry of one marriage the particular date and the name of the woman are not stated. At the earlier periods the entries of baptisms give the names of Godparents.

From the commencement in 1579 down to the year 1600, the handwriting is very good, but the ink faded; from 1611 to the beginning of 1635, fine and minute; from the end of 1638 to the beginning of 1642, it is good; from 1678 to the end is beautiful; all the rest is more or less bad. Between the years 1642 and 1662 the usual difficulties occurred in consequence of the Parliamentary Act for the appointment of Civil Registrars; and there are notes that nothing was registered (*i.e.*, in the Church Register Book), from 1642 to 1654, and in 1660 "no register." Civil marriages are not referred to, but in 1662 are several entries of children, not as baptized but as born. The Great Plague does not seem to have extended to this parish. Burial in woollen, upon affidavit of the fact, is recorded from 1678.

The entries themselves relate to none but simple villagers, except that we find the baptism on 29 June 1611 of Anna, daughter of Lawrence Snelling, then parson here; and the baptisms of sundry children of John Ashley, spoken of as Minister or Rector, who became the Rector in 1662 and was buried 24 July 1703, aged 63, having been "Minister onwards of 41 years." Thomas Nott, parish clerk, was buried 1 January 1668, and John Chucks 26 June 1715. Of other noteworthy residents we find but one person so important as a knight; he was Sir Leonard Ferby; his daughter was buried in 1632, and he himself on 29 April 1679. Many members of the Ferby or Fereby family are recorded in the register from as early as 1594. A wedding by licence was a rare thing—even the titles Gent. or Mr. seldom occur. Statius Snelcker, marchant of the Stilliard of London, was buried 25 Nov. 1610; Mr. Thomas Fryth in 1688, and Mr. Thomas Gregory, Citizen of London, and Mr. Henery Frith in 1697, were buried in the chancel.

Some of the surnames are unusual, such as these during the earlier period: Stoneshed, Gellibrand, Chittendon or Chyttington, Baythoyte, Ferby or Fereby, Libbis, Elce and Baisden; early in the eighteenth century are Furlonger and Keeble; Everist in 1732 is a name which the Rector informs me is still surviving. The name of the family of Chapman occurs during a long period from at least 1676, from whom probably the Rev. E. W. Chapman, the present owner of St. Paul's Cray Hill, is a descendant. The estate was bought from Sir Leonard Ferby by one of the family, Richard Chapman, who in 1726 left to the parish £2 per annum towards a permanent endowment for the education of poor children.

The Christian names in this register are of the ordinary type; Joane is not uncommon; but Tamsyn occurs in 1587, and one Gideon Rigault was buried in 1712.

I cannot conclude this account of the Church and Registers without acknowledging the kind courtesy of the Rev. G. L. Langdon, the Rector, who has afforded me every facility for the examination of the Plate and Registers.