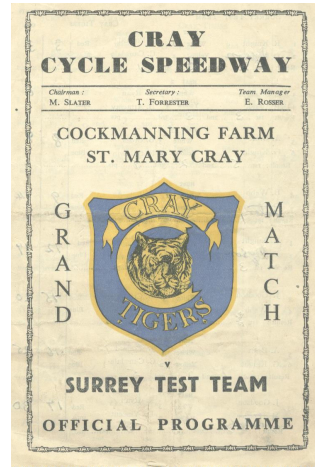


WHO WERE THE CRAY TIGERS?

Sometimes when we are sent old programmes or photographs of Cray Wanderers FC we find that some of them relate to the **Cray Tigers**. But, who were the Cray Tigers?

Cycle speedway racing was all the rage just after the war. The Cray Tigers, founded in 1949, were a popular and successful team in Orpington and the Crays. Large crowds went to watch the races at the Cockmannings Farm track, at the top of Chelsfield Road in St Mary Cray.



Mick Slater was the driving force behind organising and promoting the Cray Tigers. He took the team all around the Home Counties, and to Holland, and they couldn't be beaten.

Upon this sport going out of fashion, Mick switched his interest to football. In 1950 he bought a controlling interest in Cray Wanderers FC. At this time the Wands were struggling badly. But the ambitious and energetic Mick gave the Club a new lease of life and established them as a strong force again in Kent and London senior amateur football throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

We are grateful to Roy Oliver who kindly gave us the Cray Cycle Speedway programme (front cover seen above). The originals were printed on very flimsy paper that was all you could get in the immediate post-war years, but they have kept well. Opponents of the Cray Tigers included teams from Peckham, Southampton and Wimbledon. There was also an Orpington Eagles team that did well locally.

Jerry Dowlen