

# Blackheath North West

This panel is one of a series of storyboards about the Heath.

The Heath was originally about 304 hectares (500 acres) but encroachments or trespasses over the centuries have reduced this considerably.

The first major change was in 1432 when Duke Humphrey of Gloucester (1391-1447), brother of Henry V (1387-1422), fenced off 74 hectares (183 acres) for what became Greenwich Park.

The area known as Blackheath Hill and Maidenstone Hill, was bought from the Crown in 1699, by John Morden (1623-1708) a city merchant who founded Morden College.

During the mid-18th century, the trustees of the College authorised houses to be built on the edge of the 'highway waste' facing Blackheath Hill and Maidenstone Hill. This left clear a central plain of open space, providing wonderful prospects of London, known as The Point.

The Point and the Heath to the north of the A2 are owned by the Crown as manorial waste, but held in trust by the Royal Borough of Greenwich for the people of London in perpetuity.



View of the London skyline during the great storm of 1846

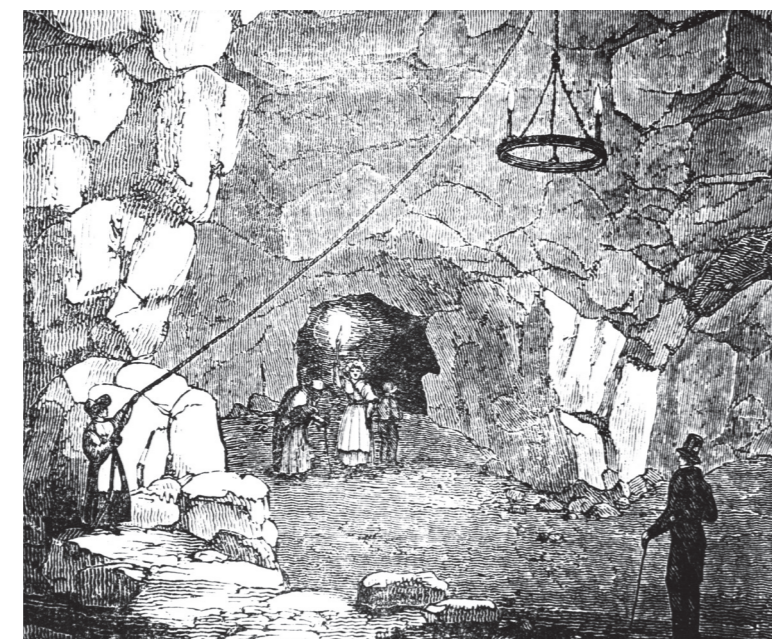


## 1 The Point

A chalk plateau at the edge of the London Clay Basin offers one of the best views of the London skyline. Take a short walk via Point Hill to visit the Viewpoint and also see the plaque to commemorate Flight Lieutenant Richard 'Dickie' Reynell who was killed near there in September 1940 during the Battle of Britain.

## 2 Underground caverns

Beneath The Point deposits of chalk were dug as early as the 10th century, but mostly in the 17th and 18th centuries, creating large underground caverns. Myths surrounding these caves include that they were known as Dene-holes where residents hid when the Danes invaded. The entrance on Maidenstone Hill was closed in the 1850s for safety reasons.



## 3 Site of Green Man Public House

A well known staging post and meeting place for 350 years, until it was demolished in 1970.

## 4 Former Bowling Green

Built over in 1854.

## 5 Horse trough

Trough and drinking fountain installed 1877.

## 6 Conduit head

Erected about 1710 on the corner of West Grove and Hyde Vale, this brick structure was an entrance to a series of brick tunnels which led from Blackheath down to Greenwich via Dartmouth Hill to the Heath to the Royal Seamen's Hospital.



## 7 Site of Chocolate House

A place of 'fashionable assembly' opened by Thomas and Grace Tozier in 1702, who claimed to be chocolate makers to the King. This building supposedly inspired Charles Dickens' 'Creakle's Academy' in 'David Copperfield', 1850. It was demolished in 1886.

## 8 Former Chocolate Pond

An important droving pond on Shooters Hill Road at the corner of Hyde Vale and West Grove. Once the largest on the Heath, known as Real (or Royal) Pond and eventually Chocolate Pond. The pond was foul and in 1878 the local Board of Works drained it having replaced it with a horse trough and drinking fountain in 1877. This painting by George Sidney Shepherd shows the Chocolate Pond in the foreground c.1815.



## 9 Chesterfield Walk

A formal avenue of Lime trees replanted in 1977 for HM Queen Elizabeth's 25th Anniversary of Accession.

## 10 Local Wildlife

The grassland and scrub of Hyde Vale's "butterfly bank" and adjacent meadow areas are home to a rich variety of wildlife such as mining bees, digger wasps, grasshoppers and butterflies.

Here you may see a Green Woodpecker hunting for ants on the ground, the chequered pattern of the Marbled White butterfly, the impressive Bee Wolf (a solitary wasp) or the scarlet and green Six-Spot Burnet moth (photograph).



Image: Joe Beale 2016

## 11 Rangers House

One of Blackheath's outstanding Grade I mansions built for Captain (later Vice-Admiral) Francis Hosier in 1699.

In 1748 the house passed to Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield. In 1815 the Crown took the property as a residence for the Royal Office of the Ranger of Greenwich Park until the 1890s. In 1974 the gallery was restored by English Heritage.

Since 2002 Rangers House has been the home of the Wernher Collection; valuables acquired by diamond merchant Sir Julius Charles Wernher (1850-1912).

This drawing shows cricket being played in front of the Rangers House c.1840.



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## Agincourt

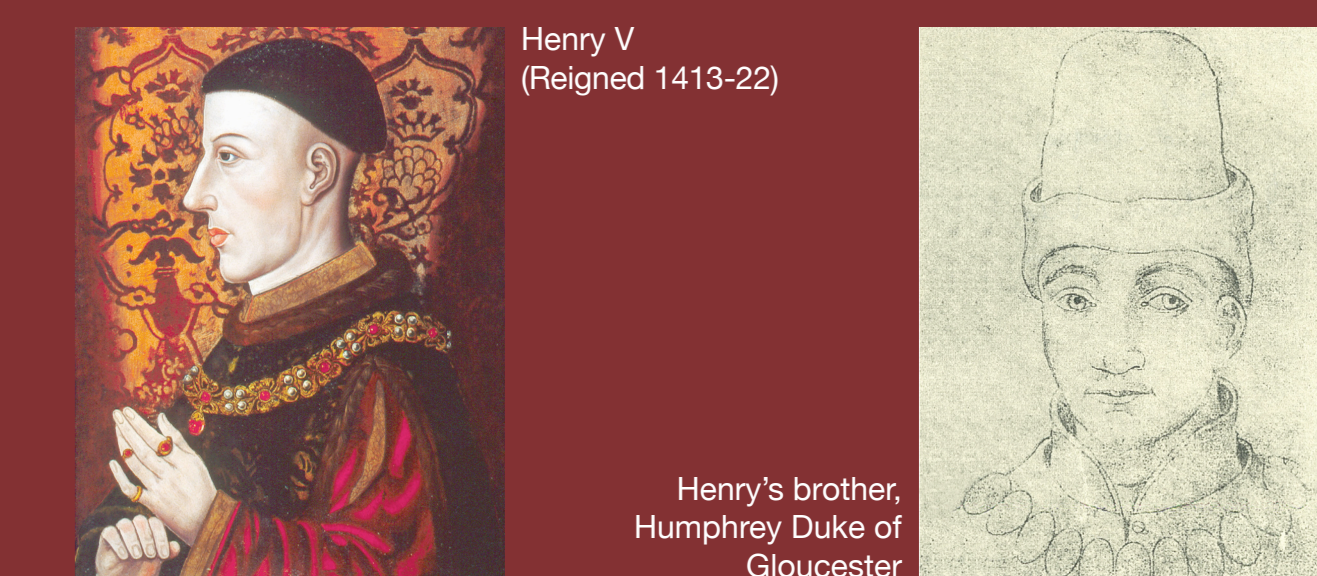


15th century Miniature, Enguerrand de Monstrelet

On 23 November 1415, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of London packed Blackheath to welcome Henry V home from his victory at Agincourt. Henry returned to a hero's welcome, with the Londoners riding out to receive him formally at Blackheath and escorting him for five hours to London Bridge. In London, Henry was treated to a lavish pageant which celebrated the city itself, as well as his own triumph.

The Battle of Agincourt was a major English victory in the Hundred Years War. The battle took place on 25 October 1415 near modern day Azincourt in northern France.

The victory against a larger French army encouraged Henry V to invade again. Conquering Normandy, he exploited French disarray to negotiate a treaty in May 1420, in which King Charles VI recognised him as heir to the French crown. He also married Charles's daughter, Princess Catherine.



Henry V (Reigned 1413-22)

Henry's brother, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester

"Cry 'God for Harry! England and Saint George!'"

Quote from Henry V, Act III (1598) by William Shakespeare