

1. St James' Hill

This is an outlying spur of Mousehold Heath, giving wonderful views of Norwich and the Wensum Valley. The valley first began to take its present shape at the end of the Anglian glacial period, some 425,000 years ago. At this time, the land surface was covered by a thick layer of glacial deposits, which included Mousehold Heath. The river has since cut down to expose the underlying chalk bedrock, which now outcrops along the valley sides.



The chalk was once exploited in a series of big pits along the valley between Mousehold and Thorpe St Andrew. One of them known as Lollard's Pit was dug in the Middle Ages, and now contains a gasworks, which you can see from the hill top.



St James' Hill is one of the best places to appreciate the dry valley landforms of Mousehold Heath. Dry valleys may be found in Norfolk on chalky or sandy land which does not usually hold streams. Here the soil is sandy. They are thought to have formed during the Ice Age, under different climatic conditions from those of today. Some people think that they formed when climate was wetter and ground-water levels were higher so springs were active in the valleys; others think they formed in permafrost conditions when the ground was frozen, so could be eroded by meltwaters. What do you think?

The higher parts of St James' Hill near Britannia Barracks were the site of a gravel pit in the 19th century. There are no visible signs today. There would have been no shortage of material here, as a borehole near the Barracks c.1895 recorded sand, gravel and 'large stones' to a depth of 32.6 m (107 ft) overlying chalk.



3. St James' Hill in 1885. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map 1:25,000 1885.

The dry, sandy soils of St James' Hill support heathland wildlife. The Mousehold Heath Conservators are helping to control gorse and bramble scrub here to encourage heathland species to flourish. Interesting bee and wasp species have been recorded from St James' Hill, including the Beewolf *Philanthus triangulum*. The Hill is designated as part of the Mousehold Heath County Wildlife Site.



4. The Beewolf is a large ground-nesting wasp which hunts bees to provision its nest. Seen here carrying a honey bee *Apis mellifera*.



5. Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella* is a typical heathland species, seen here with Cypress-leaved Plait-moss, *Hypnum cupressiforme*.

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