

## Richard Molyneux



No Picture Available

Born: 1422 Sefton, ENG

Married: Elizabeth Stanley

Died: 23 Sep 1459 Battle of Blore Heath

Parents: Richard Molyneux & Joan Haydock

**Sir Richard Molyneux, Knight**, eldest son and heir of **Sir Richard Molyneux of Sefton**, married **Elizabeth**, eldest daughter of Thomas, Lord **Stanley**, of Lathom, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Comptroller of the Household and Chamberlain to Henry VI. She was sister to Thomas, first Earl of Derby. Sir Richard was appointed, 13 November, 1453, one of the Gentlemen Ushers of the Privy Chamber to Henry VI, and was high in the favour of that monarch. He fell fighting under the Lancastrian banner at the battle of Blore Heath, Staffordshire, on 23 September 1459, having previously, with Sir Hugh Venables and others, received the young Prince's Livery of the Swans, and was succeeded by his eldest son, **Thomas**, who married **Anna**, daughter of Thomas **Dutton**, of Dutton, and who was in arms for Edward IV, under Richard, Duke of Gloucester, for the recovery of Berwick from the Scots, and was made a Knight Banneret; his son and heir, **Sir William Molyneux, Knight Banneret**, distinguished himself at the battle of Flodden Field, fought 9 September 1513, in which engagement he, with Sir Edward Stanley, commanded the rear.

**\*Richard Molyneux, P-1302, Thomas Dutton, P-1304, and James Touchet (Lord Audley), P-1312, all died the same day at the Battle of Blore Heath, 23 Sept 1459**  
Information from online research at: Ancestry.com

Sir Richard Molyneux was in such high favor at court that in the act of resumption passed in the 36 Henry VI, we find this provisional clause, "Provided always that this act extend not, nor in ways be prejudicially unto Richard Molyneux, Esq.; of Sefton, one of the ushers of our privy chamber, in the Constablenesship of our Castle of Liverpool," &c. He fell fighting under Lancasteral banner at Bloore Heath (1459). He m. Elizabeth, 2d dau. of Sir Thomas Stanley, 5th Earl of Derby. Sir Richard had also the stewardship of West Deryshire, the forrestship of our forest of Symonds Wood, and our parks of Croxteth, &c. He was afterwards knighted, and was slain at the battle of Bloore Heath, war of Roses, Sept. 23, 1459. He m. 2d, Jane Molyneux.

Information from the book, "History Genealogical and Biographical of the Molyneux Families (1904)" by Nellie Rice Molyneux pg 39.

After the First Battle of St Albans in 1455, an uneasy peace held in England. Attempts at reconciliation between the houses of Lancaster and York enjoyed marginal success. However, both sides became increasingly wary of each other and by 1459 were actively recruiting armed supporters. The Queen (Margaret of Anjou) continued to raise support for the King (Henry VI) amongst noblemen, distributing an emblem of a silver swan to her supporters, whilst the Yorkist command under the Duke of York was finding plenty of anti-royal support despite the severe punishment for raising arms against the King.

The Yorkist force based at Middleham Castle in Yorkshire (led by the Earl of Salisbury) needed to link up with the main Yorkist army at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire. As Salisbury marched south-west through the Midlands the Queen ordered Lord Audley to raise a force to intercept them.

Audley chose the barren heathland of Blore Heath<sup>[2]</sup> to set up an ambush. On the morning of the 23 September 1459 ([Saint Thecla's](#) day), a force of some 6-12,000 men took up a defensive position behind a 'great [hedge](#)' on the south-western edge of Blore Heath facing the direction of [Newcastle-under-Lyme](#) to the north-east, the direction from which Salisbury was approaching.

Yorkist scouts spotted Lancastrian banners visible over the top of a hedge and immediately warned Salisbury. As they emerged from the woodland, the Yorkist force of some 3-6,000 men realized that a much larger enemy force was awaiting their arrival. Salisbury immediately arranged his men into battle order, just out of range of the Lancastrian archers. To secure his right flank, he arranged the supply wagons in a defensive [laager](#), a circular formation to provide cover to the men on that flank. Fearing a rout, Yorkist soldiers are reported to have kissed the ground beneath them, supposing that this would be the ground on which they would meet their deaths.

The two armies were separated by about 300 metres on the barren heathland. A steep-sided, wide and fast-flowing brook flowed between them. The brook made Audley's position seemingly impenetrable.

Initially, both leaders sought to [parley](#) in a futile attempt to avoid bloodshed. In keeping with many late [medieval](#) battles, the conflict opened with an archery duel between the [longbows](#) of both armies. At Blore Heath, this proved inconclusive because of the distance between the two sides.

Salisbury, aware that any attack across the brook would be suicidal, employed a ruse to encourage the enemy to attack him. He withdrew some of his middle-order just far enough that the Lancastrians believed them to be retreating. The Lancastrians launched a cavalry charge. After they had committed themselves, Salisbury ordered his men to turn back and catch the Lancastrians as they attempted to cross the brook. It is possible that the order for this Lancastrian charge was not given by Audley but it had the effect of turning the balance in favour of Salisbury. The charge resulted in heavy casualties for the Lancastrians.

The Lancastrians withdrew, and then made a second assault, possibly attempting to rescue casualties. This second attack was more successful with many Lancastrians crossing the brook. This led to a period of intense fighting in which Audley himself was killed, possibly by [Sir Roger Kynaston](#) of Stocks near [Ellesmere](#).

The death of Audley meant that Lancastrian command devolved on to the second-in-command [Lord Dudley](#) who ordered an attack on foot with some 4,000 men. As this attack also failed, some 500 Lancastrians joined the enemy and began attacking their own side. At this, any remaining Lancastrian resistance collapsed and the Yorkists only had to advance to complete the [rout](#).

The rout continued through the night, with the Yorkists pursuing the fleeing enemy for miles across the countryside.

It is believed that at least 3,000 men died in the battle, with at least 2,000 of these from the Lancastrian side. Local legend says that [Hempmill Brook](#) flowed with blood for 3 days after the battle.