

RESEARCH HANDBOOK



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 THE SITE	3
2. GETTING STARTED	4
3. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS	4
3.1 REGULATIONS	4
3.2 RISK ASSESSMENT	5
3.3 COMPARTMENT MAP	6
4. CONDUCTING RESEARCH RESPONSIBLY	7
5. THE WYTHAM CHALET	7
5.1. FACILITIES	7
5.2. THE CHALET USER GUIDE	8
6. USING YOUR RESEARCH	9
7. CONTACT INFORMATION	10

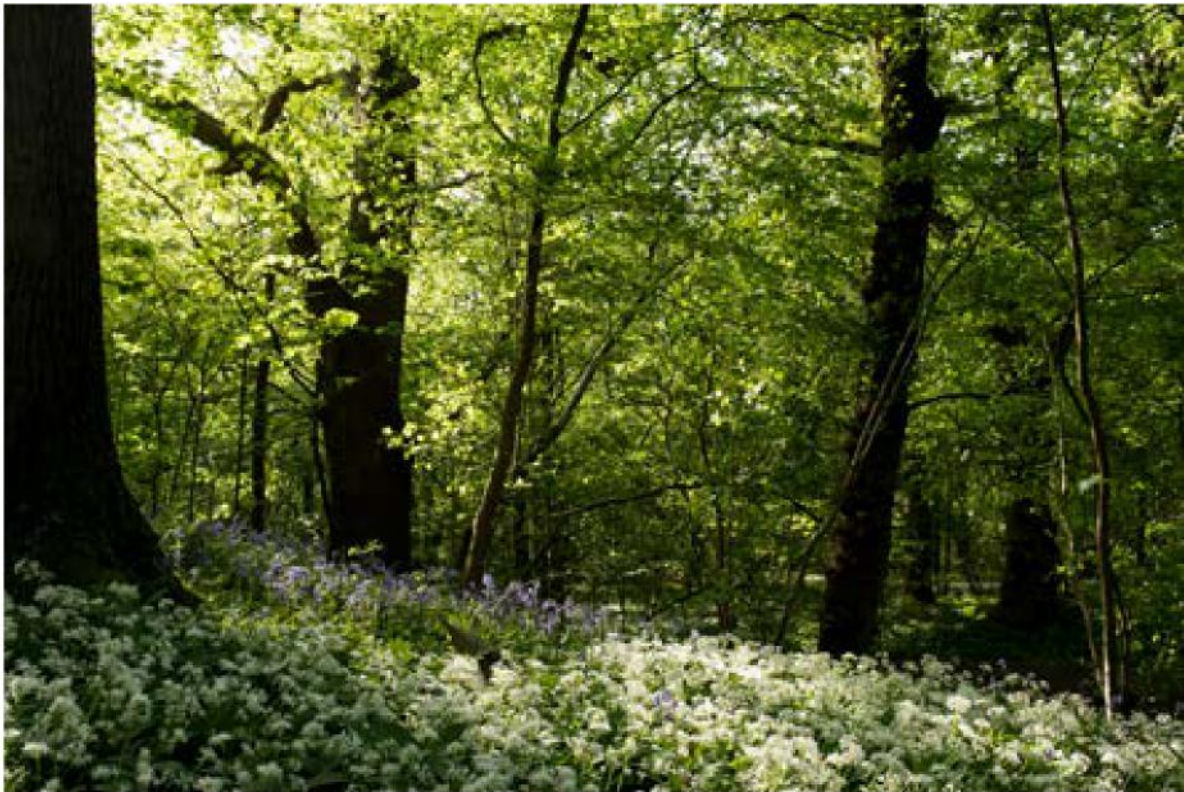
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE SITE

Wytham Woods is an ancient semi-natural woodland, which has been owned and maintained by the University of Oxford since 1942. Its 1000 acres are a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and are one of the most researched areas of woodland in the world. It is exceptionally rich in flora and fauna, with over 500 species of plants, a wealth of woodland habitats, and 800 species of butterflies and moths.

The Woods can be divided into four main habitats. The forested area is a simple three-way split between ancient semi-natural woodland, secondary woodland and modern plantations. The fourth key habitat is the limestone grassland found at the top of the hill. Other smaller habitats include a valley-side mire and a series of ponds. The ancient woods date back to the last Ice Age, while the secondary woodland dates to the seventeenth century and the plantations to the 1950s and 1960s.

The Woods are enjoyed by walkers, wildlife enthusiasts, and school children, and are used by researchers from both the University of Oxford and other institutions around the world for wildlife and environmental research, some of which provides data going back several decades.



2. GETTING STARTED

Once the logistical and scientific framework of your research project has been thought over, an initial consultation with Nigel Fisher, Conservator of the Woods, should be arranged. During the consultation the feasibility of the project will be discussed, and any initial questions you may have can hopefully be answered. If you are a member of the University of Oxford you may also have to consult with the head of a relevant research group within the university.

In addition, your research and findings may be beneficial for other projects therefore sharing results is encouraged. Contact information for those involved with various research projects can be obtained from the staff at the Conservator's office in the Sawmill Yard.

Projects that incur costs for the University of Oxford must be thoroughly planned and budgeted to ensure no unforeseen costs are encountered.

Once all logistics are ironed out a research project proposal must be submitted to Nigel Fisher for approval. Upon approval it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure the relevant research permit and vehicle permit is obtained.

Research permit applications can be submitted at www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk/application.

3. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

3.1 REGULATIONS

The following regulations must be adhered to throughout the research process:

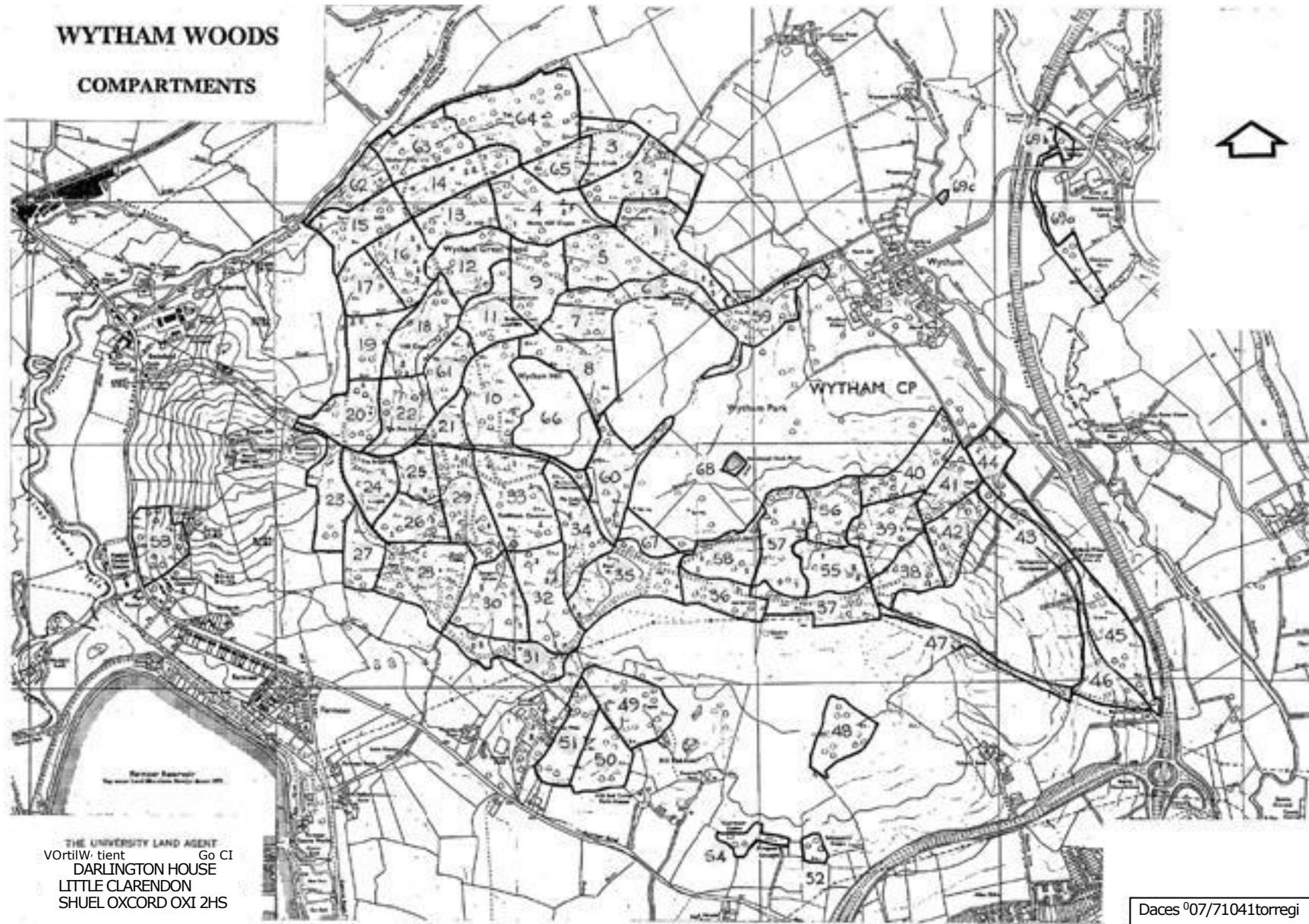
- A valid research permit must be obtained before work starts, and must be held at all times when working on site (see page 9).
- A valid parking permit must be displayed in any vehicle on site. This can be obtained from staff at the Conservator's office.
- All individuals involved with fieldwork on site during your project must read the risk assessment before starting.
- Any new elements or extensions to your research not originally stated on your application must be discussed with staff and approved.
- Completion of your project must be reported to the Conservator, and a copy of your findings should be submitted to the Wytham Database.
- A GPS coordinate must be provided for your key research sites and equipment. If you change your study site the Conservator must be notified and a new GPS coordinate given.
- All research equipment should be marked so that staff know to whom it belongs.

3.2 RISK ASSESSMENT

Please read through the following risk assessment before starting your research.

HAZARD	RISK	MEASURES REQUIRED
Uneven, unstable, rough or sloping terrain	Slips, trips and falls Strains and sprains	Choose sensible footpaths/route. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear.
Dense, spiny vegetation	Cuts, grazes, splinters, stings	Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Avoid entering dense vegetation where possible.
Water - ponds, ditches, streams, flowing water	Waterborne diseases Hypothermia Drowning	Avoid contact with water sources. Thoroughly wash hands before eating. Exercise care if navigation of water if necessary.
Lone working	Lack of aid in event of injury	Use lone working system to ensure whereabouts are known in case of emergency.
Adverse weather - heavy, sudden rainfall, gales, lightning, extreme heat	Hypothermia, slips, falling debris, injury, burns, death, dehydration	Check the weather forecast, avoid working in these conditions, take adequate supplies such as water and extra layers. Don't shelter under lone trees. Join the 'Woods Weather' WhatsApp group to keep up to date with adverse conditions.
Dead animals, animal faeces	Diseases such as leptospirosis, Weil's Disease	Avoid contact. Cover existing wounds or abrasions to minimise risk of infection. Wash hands before eating.
Ticks	Lyme Disease	Wear protective clothing. Check for ticks after visits. Remove ticks correctly. Monitor symptoms if bitten.
Mosquitoes, horse flies, other biting or stinging invertebrates	Bites, stings, rashes, allergic reaction	Carry insect repellent. Wear protective clothing. Carry medication for known allergies.
Hostile individuals	Verbal and physical abuse	Avoid confrontation. Withdraw from the situation if threatened. Contact site staff for support.
Vehicles and machinery	Injury and death	Be vigilant when working close to vehicles and machinery. Drive slowly around site to prevent injury of pedestrians. Stay on roads and rides.
Dangerous or concealed equipment	Injury	Avoid contact with unknown equipment. Be aware of others' equipment.

**WYTHAM WOODS
COMPARTMENTS**



THE UNIVERSITY LAND AGENT
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DARLINGTON HOUSE
LITTLE CLARENDON
SHUEL OXCORD OXI 2HS

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4. CONDUCTING RESEARCH RESPONSIBLY

Below are the key points to consider when conducting research to ensure your safety and compliance with site regulations.

- No dogs are allowed on site.
- Iron nails must not be used in trees.
- Stick to the rides when making your way to your study site.
- Vehicles are not allowed off the rides unless permission is given by the Conservator or forestry staff.
- Sign in and out using the whiteboard located in the Sawmill Barn if you are using the Woods out of office hours.
- Do not touch other people's equipment.
- All key research areas should be marked with a tag listing your contact information.

5. THE WYTHAM CHALET

5.1. FACILITIES

The Chalet is available for use by researchers within the Woods. Basic facilities such as toilets and a kitchen are readily available. Other amenities such as accommodation, research rooms and meeting spaces are available upon request, and have associated costs. Booking and enquiries should be directed to Debbie Steyl (see Section 7). Entrance to the Chalet and its rooms are controlled by swipe card and access codes. The external door code may be provided upon acknowledgement of your research application, and thereafter any code changes will be communicated by an email to the Research Mailing List. Interior door codes are changed regularly and will be communicated with any room bookings you make.

Any issues with the building should be reported to Debbie.

If you do not have eduroam access and therefore require a guest WiFi account, please contact Debbie.



5.2. THE CHALET USER GUIDE

General Rules

Respect other Chalet users. There are often other researchers or visiting groups staying overnight in rooms on all floors. If using the building at night, please keep noise to a minimum, wherever you are in the building.

Kitchen

The kitchen is available to all researchers using the Woods, for the purpose of making refreshments. Sole use of the kitchen as a meeting space is not permitted – a suitable room must be booked for this purpose, or the breakout room may be used if available.

The fridge unit in the kitchen is a shared facility. Please label your items clearly, and be aware that all out of date items left in the fridge will be thrown away.

You are responsible for your own washing up, drying, and putting clean items away.

Toilets

Toilets within the Wytham Chalet are available to all researchers using the Woods. Please leave the toilets in the state in which you would like to find them.

There are two disabled toilets, one by the front door, and one by the back door. In addition, there is a unisex toilet on both floors.

Laboratories

The Hazel Laboratory at the rear of the Chalet is for the use of Wytham Woods researchers. If you are not an active researcher please do not enter the lab space. The refrigeration room accessed via the Hazel Lab is for the sole purpose of temporarily storing lab samples. Space in the Hazel Lab can be booked by contacting Debbie Steyl or by writing on the noticeboard on the door to the lab. More than 50% of the lab cannot be booked by any one research group at any one time.

List of Rooms

Ground Floor:

The Hope Room
The Weigall Room
The Kitchen
The Hazel Laboratory
The William Room (Chalet Office)
The Ellen Room (Research Lab 1)
The Vera Room (Research Lab 2)

First Floor:

The Raymond Room (Seminar Room)
The Schumacher Room (Single bunk)
Ffennell Bunkroom 1
Ffennell Bunkroom 2

Second Floor:

The Attic Meeting Room
The Attic Kitchen

6. USING YOUR RESEARCH

We frequently use the variety of research projects conducted within the Woods for community outreach events, helping to heighten the public's awareness of what goes on at Wytham. Previous examples of these outreach events include an exhibition at the Maths Institute showcasing current research, photographic and art exhibitions at St John's College, and open days with demonstrations of the work involved in different projects.

In addition, we share information about current projects on our website, as well as the Wytham Woods social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and X (Twitter). We also produce a series of short films titled *The Laboratory With Leaves*, which can be found on the University of Oxford's YouTube channel. It is possible that you may be approached by our filmmakers to take part in future videos.

Publications and reports that have resulted from research at Wytham Woods are also listed on our website, and we are currently building up more information on our Research pages to fully represent the projects taking place within the Woods and the wider Estate.

When you register for your Research Permit you will be asked to agree to sharing your data with us to be safely stored within the new Wytham Database. Please make sure that you send in your results at the appropriate time.



7. CONTACT INFORMATION

Initial points of contact for members of staff at Wytham Woods are provided below. Staff are normally in during the week from 7.30am until 4.30pm. In most cases, your first point of contact should be Nigel Fisher, the Conservator of the Woods - especially after hours.

The Woods are open to the public from 10am until dusk on weekdays, and dawn until dusk on weekends.

For research purposes the Woods are usually open 24 hours a day, every day, however the Woods may be shut and therefore off limits to everyone if woodland management needs to take place. Research cannot be carried out on these days. Prior notice will be given via text or email depending on the contact details which you have provided. There is also a WhatsApp group including the forestry staff where researchers can be notified when shooting will be taking place, and which areas of the Estate should therefore be avoided.

Name	Role	Contact
Nigel Fisher	Conservator	nigel.fisher@admin.ox.ac.uk +447774 627305
Debbie Steyl	Administration (Chalet / General)	deborah.steyl@admin.ox.ac.uk +447774 336064
Tess Evans	Research Coordinator	oge@admin.ox.ac.uk +44774 491616
Kevin Crawford	Forester (Research Liaison)	kevin.crawford@admin.ox.ac.uk +447721 365672
Nick Ewart	Forester (Deer management)	nick.ewart@admin.ox.ac.uk +447714 099524

The Conservator's Office: 01865 614459 or 01865 614460

The Chalet Office: 01865 619023

The Foresters' Office: 01865 613650

Emergency number for the University Security Services: 01865 289999

Estates Services
WYTHAM WOODS

T: 01865 614459
E: wytham.woods@admin.ox.ac.uk
www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk

