

## Job Description

<b>Job title</b>	Community History Internships: Wytham Project x 4 (one for each key project theme)
<b>Division</b>	Humanities
<b>Department</b>	History Faculty
<b>Location</b>	Multiple locations across Oxfordshire
<b>Casual Spine Point</b>	Spine Point 20 £15.15 per hour plus 12.07% in lieu of holiday
<b>Hours</b>	Variable but a minimum 7 hours per week
<b>Contract type</b>	Casual engagement (12-week duration)
<b>Start date</b>	January 2024

## The Project

In November 2020, the History Faculty began the work of growing a new ‘community history’ initiative: to strengthen the Faculty’s relationships with local historians and community groups throughout Oxford and Oxfordshire, and to enhance its work in the field of local and community history. The new initiative is grounded in an ethos of putting ethical, equitable working relationships at the heart of these endeavours to engage more deeply with community history research and public engagement, and particularly to create more space for local historians and community groups to set these ongoing agendas.

The Wytham Estate was acquired by the University of Oxford in 1942, mainly as a gift, and is a site of exceptional scientific interest and biodiversity. It encompasses precious ancient woodland and other key habitats, and is home to 500 species of plant and 800 species of moths and butterflies. It has inspired and nurtured ecological projects over many decades. But the importance of Wytham goes beyond the natural ‘communities’ to which it is home: it has a rich social, economic, and architectural history, too. For all its close associations to Oxford, Wytham was part of Berkshire until as late as 1974: a settlement of ordinary people by the time of the Domesday Book with a church built originally by the early twelfth century. The wealthy and important abbey of Abingdon owned most of the lands here, and there were connections with the neighbouring nunnery of Godstow. The stone manor house was built in the sixteenth century and became the residence of lords of the manor, the lords Norreys and the earls of Abingdon, who in the 19th century redesigned the house, calling it Wytham Abbey, and landscaped the surrounding parkland. After World War One the earls sold the estate to the ffennell family who used it, with the riches they had amassed from gold-mining in South Africa, to fulfil a range of philanthropic activities, most notably the ideal of giving children from communities in Oxford and from London’s East End the chance to experience the countryside and the outdoors. That tradition continues at the Hill End site on the estate, beloved of many schoolchildren.



The Wytham estate is one of the Oxford area's greatest treasures. Yet much of its history has still to be researched and written. This project, conceived as part of a wider University community history programme, will enhance knowledge and understanding of the history, buildings, and natural environment of this remarkable place. The envisioned outcomes include a series of public events and eventually a book.

## The Role

We are seeking a number of Community History Interns to contribute towards a new study on the history of the Wytham estate. This study is jointly run as a partnership project between [Wytham Woods](#) and the new [Community History Hub](#) at Oxford's Faculty of History.

As a Community History Intern you will work closely with various historians and members of the Wytham Woods team, as well as the Faculty's Community History Fellow, to conduct primary and secondary research into one of the four key themes detailed below. Relevant training will be provided by your research supervisor, and these internships are intended to act as a valuable learning and skills development opportunities for candidates keen to develop experience and knowledge in historical research and communications. We welcome applications from candidates of diverse backgrounds, and from anyone with prior knowledge and interest in local history, to contribute towards shaping this new and exciting research initiative.

Four research themes have been identified in the current first phase of the project (outlined below) – candidates are invited to specify which of these they would be interested in working on via their applications. All involve engagement with various historical sources: some of them available online, others at local repositories (especially the Bodleian Libraries and Oxfordshire History Centre). There will also be scope to become better acquainted with Wytham, with access to the Woods and the Chalet, a resource centre located at their heart. The logistics and location of your workplace will be arranged through discussion with you.

### 1/ Medieval Wytham

Supervisor - Elizabeth Gemmill: <https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/people/dr-elizabeth-gemmill>

Medieval Wytham has been very little studied. In order to understand it better, we need to create a catalogue of medieval documentary records relating to Wytham. This would include transcribing the rather small number of unpublished documents relating to Wytham itself, and if time permitted extending that to investigating those for adjacent areas – such as the accounts and court rolls for Godstow. The purpose, in the community history context, would be to show the nature of the medieval documents that are likely to survive, why they were made, why they are where they are, and the ways in which they might be used to shed light on the lives of people in the past. Some knowledge of Latin required, but the task could mainly be accomplished through English.

### 2/ History of the Wytham estate

Supervisor - Robert Evans: <https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/people/professor-robert-evans>

For centuries Wytham belonged to the earls of Abingdon and was run as a typical estate, part of the family's wider landed holdings in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and beyond. Most suitable for research is the nineteenth century, when the family became resident at Wytham and the land of the village was enclosed, thus establishing new kinds of agricultural, social and cultural management. Themes would be conservative versus progressive aspects of this regime, including where appropriate comparisons with

other local estates (e.g Buscot, Pusey, and Radley), and the impact of national trends, as well as the public role of the earls themselves. A range of source materials is available online, in the Bodleian, the Oxfordshire History Centre and the Berkshire Record Office in Reading.

### 3/ Outdoor education at Wytham

Supervisor - Georgina Montgomery: <https://www.hsmt.ox.ac.uk/people/dr-georgina-montgomery>

Researching the history of the outdoor education aspect of Wytham Woods and Hill End Camp, and establishing a context for it within a broader historiography concerning the history of education in Britain. What were the reasons for its emergence at Wytham and elsewhere in the 1920s? How and why did it evolve towards its priorities of today? There is a wealth of documentation, some of it held at Wytham, and scope for oral history.

### 4/ Historical Mapping of Wytham

Supervisor - Keith Kirby: <https://www.biology.ox.ac.uk/people/dr-keith-kirby> >

The task would be to create a historical GIS (Geographic Information System) map of the Wytham area. A starting point is A.J Grayson and E.W Jones, *Notes on the History of Wytham Estate* (1955: copy supplied) plus more recent work; and the technique is to put all the elements that can be linked to a particular place as different layers. Examples would be: archaeological finds; the possible boundaries of the Anglo Saxon Charter; references to sales of wood; map boundaries, such as those from 1760 and details from successive historic Ordnance Survey maps; and evidence of woodbanks and other physical features derived from lidar, the Wytham Atlas, and field walking. It would need someone with some basic GIS skill; but that is relatively quick to pick up and could be acquired locally.

## Responsibilities

- To carry out research under the guidance of the supervisor
- To complete assignments as agreed in advance with the supervisor
- To prepare written and other materials, which may be used (with full acknowledgment) in publications and other outcomes of the project
- To help promote the project in any appropriate ways, including such public engagement as may take place from time to time.

## Selection criteria

### Essential selection criteria

- Educated to A level standard with GCSE (grade A-C) level English and Maths, or equivalent
- Strong attention to detail and accurately able to read and comprehend a variety of historical source material
- The ability and willingness to learn quickly, assimilate complex information and to provide accurate and coherent information when required
- Good interpersonal skills to develop effective and collaborative working relationships with other research assistants, archivists, librarians, and staff at the Wytham estate and History Faculty.
- Ability to work independently and flexibly in managing own research and administrative activities
- Strong organisational ability, able to work to set deadlines
- Be flexible and able to work in dynamic and new environments (including archives, libraries and museums)
- An interest in the history of Oxford and Oxfordshire

## Desirable selection criteria

- Experience in studying or analysing historical source material

## How to apply

Please submit the following documents to [casual.admin@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:casual.admin@history.ox.ac.uk) by noon on Wednesday 3 January 2024:

- A brief statement of interest (no longer than 400 words) explaining which of the 4 key research themes you would be interested in working on (one or more is fine), giving your reasons why and what relevant skills, interests, and knowledge you may be able to bring to the project.
- Please also include a CV indicating any academic and other appropriate qualifications and relevant experience (of no more than 2 pages in length).

Informal discussions will take place over Microsoft Teams in early January, with prior arrangement.

## Further Information

### Faculty of History

The Faculty of History in Oxford is the largest in the United Kingdom and one of the largest in the world. It has a very strong international reputation for its scholarship and its teaching of undergraduate and graduate students, with particular strengths in the history of the British Isles, continental Europe, imperial and global history, the United States, economic and social history, intellectual history and the history of science, medicine and technology. Within the Faculty there is also a department for the History of Art and a number of dedicated research centres.

The Faculty is located in the Old Boys' High School, George Street. This is a very central location, less than 10 minutes' walk from the rail station, and very close to bus station, shops and other University locations. The premises house a community of around 20 administrative staff and up to 30 other users, comprising doctoral students, researchers, and academics and professors. The building is also used for teaching and seminars. More information about the Faculty can be found at: [www.history.ox.ac.uk](http://www.history.ox.ac.uk)

The Faculty holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

### The Humanities Division

The Humanities Division is one of four academic divisions in the University of Oxford, bringing together the faculties of Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Oriental Studies; Philosophy; and Theology and Religion, as well as the Ruskin School of Art. The Division has more than 500 members of academic staff, approximately 4,100 undergraduates (more than a third of the total undergraduate population of the University), 1,000 postgraduate research students and 720 students on postgraduate taught courses.

The Division offers world-class teaching and research, backed by the superb resources of the University's libraries and museums, including the famous Bodleian Libraries, with their 11 million volumes and priceless early book and manuscript collections, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Such historic resources are linked to innovative agendas in research and teaching, with an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary study. Our faculties are among the largest in the world, enabling Oxford to

offer an education in Arts and Humanities unparalleled in its range of subjects, from music and fine art to ancient and modern languages.

For more information please visit: [www.humanities.ox.ac.uk](http://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk)

