45 years of change in Wytham Woods, near Oxford

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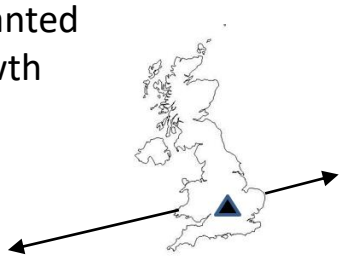
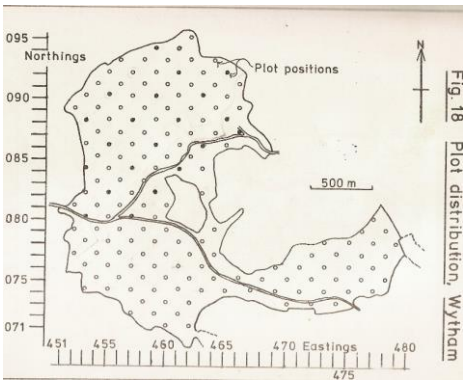
c.400 ha mixed ash-oak-hazel wood

- Part ancient, part recent
- Part semi-natural, part planted
- Veteran trees, young growth





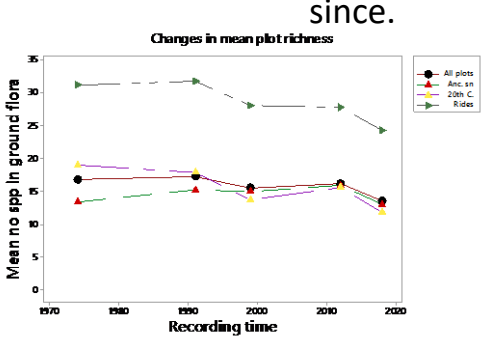
Long-term vegetation recording

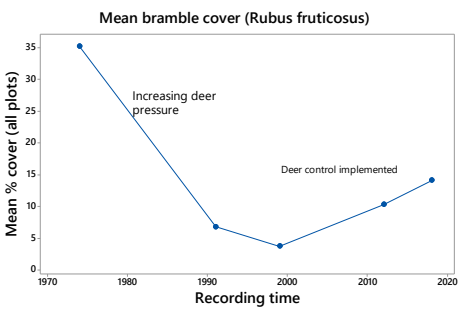
- Grid of 164 permanent 10x10m plots
- Established 1974 by Dawkins and Field
- Corners marked by underground metal markers
- Re-recorded 1991, 1999, 2012, 2018
- Measures of tree and shrub cover, ground flora

What have we found?

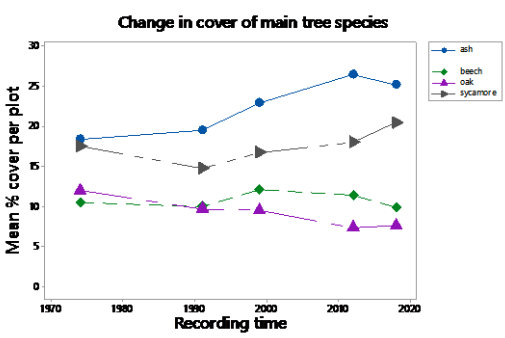
The results illustrate the impact of historical events on current conditions (planting decisions, herbivore level changes, successional effects, eutrophication) and will be used to follow the impact of Ash Dieback over the coming decade.

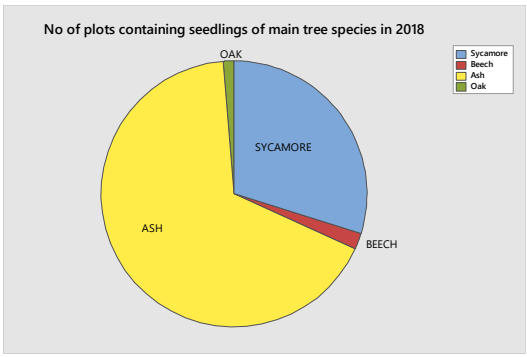
Plant richness per plot has shown little change over the Woods as a whole or in ancient semi-natural woodland (29 plots) but rides (17 plots) and 20th century plantations (15 plots) have tended to become less rich. The ground flora shifted from bramble dominance in 1974 to grass-dominance in the 1990s, with a shift back since.





Ash had looked like being the tree of the future…… until now…





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