# GROBY OLD HALL, <br> MARKFIELD ROAD, GROBY, LEICESTERSHIRE TREE-RING ANALYSIS OFTIMBERS 

## SCIENTIFIC DATING REPORT

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard


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# TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS 

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard

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## SUMMARY

Dendrochronological analysis undertaken on samples from within this complex building resulted in the construction of two site sequences, only one of which could be dated. Site sequence GROBSQ01 contains 45 samples and spans the period AD 1321-1516. Two further samples were individually dated to AD 1400-62 and AD 1577-1668.

The dated samples are from a number of ranges or areas and include some apparently reused timbers. All but one of the dated timbers appear to have been felled during the latter half of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century. The exception to this is a door lintel from tower 2 which dates to the final quarter of the seventeenth century or the very early eighteenth century.

CONTRIBUTORS
Alison Arnold and Robert Howard

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## ARCHIVE LOCATION

Leicestershire \& Rutland SMR
Historic \& Natural Environment Team
Leicestershire County Council
Room 500, County Hall
Leicester Road, Glenfield
Leicestershire LE3 8TE
DATE OF INVESTIGATION
2011-12

## CONTACT DETAILS

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard
Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory
20 Hillcrest Grove
Sherwood
Nottingham NG5 1FT
roberthoward@tree-ringdating.co.uk
alisonarnold@tree-ringdating.co.uk

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## INTRODUCTION

Groby Old Hall is a Grade II* listed building located in the village of Groby, just to the north-west of Leicester (Figs 1-3). The Old Hall forms part of an extensive complex with origins in the pre-Conquest period. However, with the exception of some reused stonework and perhaps a boundary wall, there are no remains within the extant building which are thought to pre-date the fifteenth century. There have been numerous alterations and additions since the fifteenth century which have resulted in the building as seen today (Fig 4).

The manor of Groby was granted to Hugh de Grentmesnil by William I at the Norman Conquest. After several owners, it passed to the Ferrers family who held it from AD 1279 to AD 1445. The marriage of Elizabeth Ferrers and Edward Grey (later made Lord Ferrers and Baron Grey of Groby) passed the manor to the Grey family. Thomas Grey (AD 1451-1501) undertook a major building campaign at Groby but abandoned his plans to concentrate on the nearby Bradgate House, where the family seat was eventually relocated in the early sixteenth century, and after which Groby declined in importance.

## Range A (former open hall)

At the core of the extant building are the remains of a former open hall, believed to be fifteenth century in date (Figs 5 and 6). Only one bay survives, but it is thought likely that the hall originally extended to the north-west by at least one further bay. A single truss survives, at the junction between this range and the adjacent cross-wing. This truss consists of principal rafters, collar, and tiebeam and is studded above and below the collar (Fig 5). The purlins are clasped between the collar and principal rafters; the existing purlins are thought to be replacements.

Both the timbers of the truss and a number of those common rafters considered to be primary are smoke blackened indicating that the hall was originally open from the ground floor. Other common rafters show signs of previous use.

## Range G (cross-wing)

To the south-west of the hall is the cross-wing; a two-storey, plus attics, range believed to date to the late-sixteenth century (Pevsner and Williamson 1992). It is divided on all floors into two main rooms. The roof is of four bays and five trusses originally, although that at the south-east end has been removed and the gable rebuilt in brick. Each surviving truss consists of principal rafters, with collar and tiebeam (Fig 7). The timbers are well finished with chamfered edges and the principal rafters have a slight camber to their underside. There are also windbraces between the principal rafters and purlins, and a repair to one of the principal rafters of truss 1 is thought to be an original purlin (Fig 8). The centre truss (truss 2 ) is closed forming two separate attic rooms.

## Range E

To the south-west of the cross-wing is another two-storey, plus attic, range. Although access to this range is now via the cross-wing, the presence of a blocked doorway at firstfloor level indicates that there was once access from a since demolished wing to the north-west. Differences in floor height at each level between this range and the crosswing suggest they were built at different times, with this range thought to pre-date the cross-wing.

The roof over this range is very simple, of common-rafter type, with no collars and a single purlin to each side (Fig 9). A large number of the timbers show signs of reuse.

## Range $F$

In the south-east angle between the former open hall and the cross-wing is a small, square range. Its lower portion is of brick and may represent the remains of a tower; above which it is mostly stone built. Some of the masonry used in the construction of this range is obviously reused, perhaps from an earlier structure on the site. There are blocked windows in the gable end at all levels.

The roof consists of a single principal rafter truss (Fig 10). The curved principal rafters are tenoned into the tiebeam and halved at the apex to carry the ridgebeam. There are raking struts nailed into position which carry the purlins. Stylistically this roof could be either sixteenth or seventeenth century, however within the overall development sequence it is suggested it may be late-sixteenth century (Finn et a/ 2009). A number of the timbers within the roof itself show obvious signs of reuse.

## Range H (stair tower)

In the northern angle between the cross-wing and the former open hall is another small, near-square range which houses the staircase. The roof of this range is identical to that of Range F, consisting of a single truss of principal rafters tenoned into a tiebeam and halved at the apex to carry a ridgebeam (Fig 11). As with Range $F$ it is also stylistically thought to be either sixteenth or seventeenth century, but again a sixteenth-century date seems likely (Finn et a/ 2009). This roof contains a number of timbers which appear to be reused.

Range $B$ (tower I)
This tower, the furthest away from the house, is three storeys high above a brick-vaulted undercroft (Fig 12). It is possible that there is more than one building phase represented within this structure but it is generally accepted to be the work of Thomas Grey undertaken between about AD 1488 and AD 1492. There are few internal features remaining except lintels (Fig 13) and a fragment of the first-floor structure (Fig 14). The tower had been converted into a dovecote by the early nineteenth century.

## Range C (tower 2)

This second tower is narrower and shorter than tower 1 and the lower portion of it was destroyed in the twentieth century to form a garage (Fig 15). The lower of the two openings in the south-east elevation are thought to be nineteenth-century insertions (Figs 15 and 16). There is access between this tower and adjacent structure to the south-west (Fig 17). This tower is also thought to be the work of Thomas Grey, dating to the last decades of the fifteenth century.

## Range D

This was a three-storey range, aligned northeast-southwest but all that remains now is its south-east wall. This runs from tower 1 (Range B) to the cross-wing, although part of it was lost when the garage incorporating the bottom of tower 2 (Range C) was constructed. The splayed opening of the remaining first-floor window can be seen from the north-west, above which is a timber lintel (Fig 18). The lower section of the wall is stone built, with fifteenth-century brick above. It may be that the stone-built element represents an earlier boundary wall incorporated into the late fifteenth-century structure.

## SAMPLING

Sampling was requested by Tim Allen, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments, to complete a programme of investigative work as part of repairs to the building. It was hoped that successful tree-ring analysis would provide independent dating evidence for the different areas under investigation and hence clarify their relationship to each other.

A total of 65 timbers was sampled by coring. Each sample was given the code GRO-B (for Groby, site ' $B$ ') and numbered 01-65. Fifteen of these are from the hall roof (GRO-B01-15), 12 from the cross-wing roof (GRO-B16-27), six from the range E roof (GRO-B28-33), 12 from the range F roof (GRO-B34-45), 12 from the range H roof (GRO-B4657), three from tower 1 (GRO-B58-60), one from the lintel of the 'lost' range D (GROB61), and four from tower 2 (GRO-62-5). The location of samples was noted at the time of sampling and has been marked on Figures 16-22. Further details relating to the samples
can be found in Table 1. The buildings lie on a northeast-southwest alignment but for the purpose of this report a site-north has been assigned with Range $A$ at the north end and Range $B$ at the south end.

Sampling of the staircase in Range H was not conducted because the softwood spindles are turned which would have removed all sapwood and they are of relatively small scantling which coring would have resulted in unacceptable visual impact. Other components are of fast-grown oak and hence unsuitable for analysis.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

It was seen that nine of the samples (two from the former open hall, two from the crosswing, two from range F , one from range H , one from tower 1 , and one from tower 2) had too few rings to make secure dating a possibility and these samples were discarded prior to measurement. The remaining 56 samples were prepared by sanding and polishing and their growth-ring widths measured; the data of these measurements are given at the end of the report. These samples were compared with each other by the Litton/Zainodin grouping procedure (see Appendix), resulting in the formation of two groups.

Firstly, 45 samples matched each other and were combined to form GROBSQ01, a site sequence of 196 rings (Fig 23). This was compared against a series of relevant reference chronologies where it was found to span the period AD 1321-1516. The evidence for this dating is given in the $t$-values in Table 2.

Three further samples grouped to form GROBSQ02, a site sequence of 71 rings (Fig 24). Attempts to date this site sequence by comparing it against the reference chronologies were unsuccessful and it remains undated.

Attempts to date the remaining ungrouped samples by comparing them individually against the reference chronologies resulted in sample GRO-B40 being found to span the period AD 1400-62 and sample GRO-B62 the period AD 1577-1668. The evidence for this dating is given by the $t$-values in Tables 3 and 4. The remaining samples are undated.

## INTERPRETATION

Tree-ring analysis of samples taken from timbers in different ranges of this building has resulted in the successful dating of 47 samples. To aid interpretation the dated samples (Fig 25 ) from each area have been dealt with section by section below. All felling date ranges have been calculated using the estimate that mature oak trees from this region have between 15 and 40 sapwood rings.

## Range A (former open hall)

Ten of the samples taken from this part of the building have been successfully dated; seven from the closed truss, two common rafters, and a wall plate: the latter three thought to be reused at the time of sampling. Six of these have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring; five of which, including the wall plate and one of the two common rafters, are broadly contemporary and suggestive of a single felling. The average of these is AD 1479, allowing an estimated felling date to be calculated for the timbers represented of AD 1494-1519. The sixth sample (GRO-B13) has a slightly earlier heartwood/sapwood boundary of AD 1453, giving the timber represented, the other common rafter, a felling date range of AD 1468-93.

The other four samples without the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring (GRO-B05, GRO-B06, GRO-B07, and GRO-B08), all taken from stud posts of the truss, have lastmeasured heartwood ring dates which make it possible that they were felled in either of the two calculated felling date ranges. However, the level at which these four samples match each other and the rest of the dated samples from this range suggests they should belong to the AD 1494-1519 felling. Sample GRO-B05 matches samples GRO-B06 and GRO-B07 at the high values of $t=13.6$ and 10.3, respectively. This is of a level which might suggest timbers cut from the same tree; both samples GRO-B05 and GRO-B06 match GRO-B08 at levels in excess of $t=6.0$. Additionally, sample GRO-B08 matches GRO-B09, also taken from a stud post, at the value of $t=11.2$. This is again of a level which might suggest both beams were cut from the same tree and so felled at the same time. Sample GRO-B09 belongs to the later felling group, dating to AD 1494-1519.

## Range G (cross-wing)

Nine of the samples taken from the roof of this range were successfully dated. Six of these have the heartwood/sapwood boundary, which in all cases is broadly contemporary and suggestive of a single felling. The average of these is AD 1510 which allows an estimated felling date to be calculated for the timbers represented of AD 1525-50. The other three dated cross-wing samples have last-measured ring dates which make it possible that they were also felled in AD 1525-50.

## Range E

All six of the samples taken from this range were successfully dated, two of which have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring, the dates of which suggests at least two different fellings. A common rafter has the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1463, giving an estimated felling date range of AD 1489-1503. This felling date range allows for sample GRO-B31 having a last-measured ring date of AD 1488 with incomplete sapwood. Another common rafter has AD 1493 for its heartwood/sapwood boundary
ring date and the estimated felling date of AD 1508-33. The four samples without the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date have last-heartwood ring dates which give terminus post quem dates of AD 1450 (GRO-B32), AD 1451 (GRO-B33), AD 1459 (GRO-B30), and AD 1477 (GRO-B28). All of these samples were taken from timbers which showed signs of reuse.

## Range F

During sampling of this range attempts were made to separate those beams which were thought to be primary from those which were believed to be reused (Table 1). Nine of these samples have been successfully dated, four from timbers thought to be primary and five from those with signs of reuse. Five have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date which suggests possibly three different fellings. Two samples, one believed primary and one reused, have similar heartwood/sapwood boundary ring dates, the average of which is AD 1456, giving an estimated felling date range for the two timbers (GRO-B38 and GRO-B41) represented of AD 1471-96. Another two (GRO-B39 and GRO-B42), again one thought primary and one reused, have the average heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1480 and the estimated felling date range of AD 1495-1520. Finally, sample GRO-B45, from a 'reused' timber has the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1499 which allows an estimated felling date to be calculated of AD 1514-39. The last-measured heartwood ring dates of the other dated samples from this roof range from AD 1451 (GRO-B43) to AD 1490 (GRO-B44), all of which could fit into one or more of the estimated felling date ranges calculated or could indeed represent totally different felling/s. It can be seen that the felling dates gained do not reflect the 'primary' or 'reused' status as might have been expected.

## Range H (stair tower)

Eight of these samples were dated, three thought to be primary and five reused (Table 1); five of these dated samples have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date. One of these, GRO-B56, taken from a beam thought to be reused, has a slightly earlier than the rest at AD 1453, giving an estimated felling date range of AD 1468-93. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date for the other four (one which was thought to be primary and three reused) is AD 1466, giving an estimated felling date range of AD 14811506. The other three samples (a mixture of reused and primary beams) have lastmeasured heartwood ring dates which make it possible that they were felled in either of the felling date ranges or represent totally different felling/s. It can be seen that in the same way as with the dates from range F, we have primary and reused timbers with the same felling date.

The two floor beams were successfully dated; one to a last-measured ring date of AD 1450 and the other to a last-measured ring date of AD 1481. Neither of these samples have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date and so estimated felling date ranges cannot be calculated for them except that this would be estimated to be at the earliest AD 1466 and AD 1497 respectively. These make it possible that both beams were felled at the same time or alternatively they could have been felled at totally different times.

## Range C (tower 2)

One of the door lintels and one of the window lintels were successfully dated. The door lintel (GRO-B62) has the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1662, allowing an estimated felling date to be calculated for the timber represented of AD 1677-1702. The other sample (GRO-B65), taken from a window lintel, does not have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring, but the last-measured heartwood ring date of AD 1478, gives the timber represented a terminus post quem of AD 1493.

## Range D

The exterior lintel sampled from the remains of this range has been dated to a lastmeasured ring date of AD 1468. Without the heartwood/sapwood boundary it is not possible to estimate a felling date for this timber, except to give it a terminus post quem of AD 1483.

## DISCUSSION

Prior to tree-ring analysis being undertaken at Groby Old Hall the former open hall was believed to be the oldest surviving part of the complex, thought to date to the fifteenth century. Subsequent alterations and additions were made to the building during the following centuries, with Thomas Grey credited with undertaking significant work during the period AD 1488-92.

The earliest dated timber from the former open hall is a common rafter, thought to be reused, which is now known to have been felled in AD 1468-93. However, the majority of the dated timber from this part of the building appears to have been felled in $A D$ 1494-1519. This felling date range is represented by timbers of the truss, a common rafter, and a wall plate. These latter two timbers were believed, at the time of sampling, to have been reused, due to the presence of redundant mortices. It may be that all of these timbers are reused or, perhaps more likely, that the roof has undergone some reorganisation/repair resulting in the empty mortices.

It is unfortunate that site sequence GROBSQ02, containing three further hall samples including both principal rafters, could not be dated. This is most likely due to a series of re-occurring bands of narrow rings seen on each of these samples. These periods of restricted growth may relate to a particular woodland management regime or other nonclimatic influence which has interrupted the climatic signal necessary for successful matching.

Range E was thought to predate the cross-wing on the basis of constructional details. Unfortunately, none of the apparently primary timbers of the roof were suitable for treering dating but a number of the reused ones have been dated. These demonstrate that it contains timber from at least two separate fellings as indicated by two common rafters that have felling date ranges of AD 1489-1503 and AD 1508-33. For these to have been incorporated into the structure (unless they are replacements or repairs), construction must have occurred sometime after the latest felling date range.

Range F contains timber from at least three separate fellings. The earliest of these relate to a common rafter and a strut, dated to AD 1471-96. The lintel of the blocked window and a common rafter date to AD 1495-1520, whilst a reused collar has a felling date range of AD 1514-39.

The majority of the timbers from the Stairway roof have been dated to a felling of AD 1481-1506, with just one reused common rafter having the potentially earlier felling of AD 1468-93.

These two roofs are thought to be contemporary being of identical construction technique; both believed to date to the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The dated samples came from a mixture of primary and apparently reused timbers and with such a range of dates it is difficult to interpret them confidently. The majority of the timber was felled in the last decades of the fifteenth and the early decades of the sixteenth century, although a number of these timbers were thought to be reused at the time of sampling. The inclusion of a reused collar of AD 1514-39, demonstrates work being undertaken after this time, although it is possible that this timber is a later replacement, added to strengthen the roof. It is unfortunate, that the timbers which could have been more confidently identified as primary, the tiebeams and principal rafters were either unsuitable or are undated.

The two first-floor frame beams which survive in tower 1 have been dated to after AD 1465 and after AD 1496, although unfortunately, it is not possible to say how long after. This suggests construction of the floor at least, and possibly the tower itself also took place sometime after AD 1496.

One of the window lintels in tower 2 has been dated to after AD 1493, although again it is not possible to say how long after. One of the door lintels, over the access from the adjacent building to this tower is now known to have been felled in AD 1677-1702.

It had been suggested that these towers were erected by Thomas Grey during the period of his great rebuilding. The dates gained would suggest that if Thomas Grey was the architect of this work then he continued with his modifications and plans for slightly longer than previously thought.

The lintel seen in the exterior wall of the remains of the 'lost' range D is now known to have been felled after AD 1483.

The cross-wing roof had been dated stylistically to the sixteenth century. This has now been further refined by the dendrochronological dating of several of the timbers used in its construction to AD 1525-50. It had been suggested (Finn pers comm) that an original purlin had been used to repair one of the principal rafters of truss 1. This has now been confirmed with the timber under discussion (GRO-B16) dating to the second quarter of the sixteenth century with the rest of the dated timber from this range. Furthermore, this sample matches against one taken from another purlin (GRO-B23) at the high value of $t=16.9$ making it likely that these two timbers were cut from the same tree.

The potential same tree matches seen amongst the samples taken from the studs of the former open hall truss have been mentioned above. Additionally, high $t$-value matches have been noted between samples from different areas; sample GRO-B43, taken from a 'reused' timber within the roof of Range F matches GRO-B13 from the former open hall at a value of $t=13.5$.

It may be significant that the majority of the felling date ranges outlined above do encompass the period AD 1488-92, supporting the suggestion that this was a period of much activity at Groby Old Hall although how many of these timbers are still in their primary positions is unclear.

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## TABLES

Table I：Details of tree－ring samples from Groby Hall，Groby，Leicestershire

| Sample number | Sample location | Total rings＊ | Sapwood rings＊＊ | First measured ring date（AD） | Last heartwood ring date（AD） | Last measured ring date（AD） |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Range A（former open hall） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B01 | Tiebeam | 86 | h／s | 1397 | 1482 | 1482 |
| GRO－B02 | East principal rafter | 56 | h／s | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B03 | West principal rafter | 67 | h／s | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B04 | Collar | 62 | h／s | 1418 | 1479 | 1479 |
| GRO－B05 | Stud（middle above collar） | 74 | －－ | 1360 | －－－－ | 1433 |
| GRO－B06 | Stud | 93 | －－ | 1349 | －－－－ | 1441 |
| GRO－B07 | Stud | 92 | －－ | 1352 | －－－－ | 1443 |
| GRO－B08 | Stud 8 （from east） | 94 | －－ | 1362 | －－－－ | 1455 |
| GRO－B09 | Stud 1 （from east） | 115 | h／s | 1357 | 1471 | 1471 |
| GRO－B10 | West common rafter 4 （smoke blackened） | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B11 | West common rafter 5 （smoke blackened） | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B12 | East common rafter 8 （smoke blackened） | 64 | h／s | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B13 | East common rafter 11 （reused） | 99 | 07 | 1362 | 1453 | 1460 |
| GRO－B14 | East common rafter 12 （reused） | 107 | h／s | 1376 | 1482 | 1482 |
| GRO－B15 | East wallplate（reused） | 86 | h／s | 1394 | 1479 | 1479 |
| Range G（cross－wing） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B16 | North principal rafter，truss 1 （repair） | 101 | h／s | 1408 | 1508 | 1508 |
| GRO－B17 | North principal rafter，truss 1 | 61 | h／s | 1451 | 1511 | 1511 |
| GRO－B18 | South principal rafter，truss 1 | 110 | h／s | 1399 | 1508 | 1508 |
| GRO－B19 | North principal rafter，truss 2 | 57 | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B20 | South principal rafter，truss 2 | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B21 | South principal rafter，truss 3 | 105 | h／s | 1407 | 1511 | 1511 |
| GRO－B22 | North purlin，truss 1－2 | 144 | －－ | 1321 | －－－－ | 1464 |
| GRO－B23 | North purlin，truss 2－3 | 100 | －－ | 1395 | －－－－ | 1494 |
| GRO－B24 | South purlin，east gable truss 1 | 139 | h／s | 1378 | 1516 | 1516 |


| GRO－B25 | South purlin，truss 1－2 | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| GRO－B26 | South purlin，truss 2－3 | 88 | －－ | 1349 | －－－－ | 1436 |
| GRO－B27 | South purlin，truss 3－4 | 140 | h／s | 1366 | 1505 | 1505 |
| Range E（reused） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B28 | East common rafter 3 | 94 | －－ | 1369 | －－－－ | 1462 |
| GRO－B29 | East common rafter 5 | 58 | h／s | 1436 | 1493 | 1493 |
| GRO－B30 | East common rafter 6 | 75 | －－ | 1370 | －－－－ | 1444 |
| GRO－B31 | West common rafter 2 | 83 | 25 | 1406 | 1463 | 1488 |
| GRO－B32 | East wallplate | 92 | －－ | 1344 | －－－－ | 1435 |
| GRO－B33 | West wallplate | 63 | －－ | 1374 | －－－－ | 1436 |
| Range F（primary） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B34 | Tiebeam | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B35 | North principal rafter | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B36 | South principal rafter | 47 | 10 | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B37 | North strut | 69 | －－ | 1419 | －－－－ | 1487 |
| GRO－B38 | South strut | 71 | 01 | 1388 | 1457 | 1458 |
| GRO－B39 | Lintel | 126 | h／s | 1353 | 1478 | 1478 |
| GRO－B40 | Collar，frame 1 | 63 | －－ | 1400 | －－－－ | 1462 |
| Range F（reused） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B41 | South common rafter 6 | 74 | 02 | 1383 | 1454 | 1456 |
| GRO－B42 | South common rafter 7 | 103 | h／s | 1379 | 1481 | 1481 |
| GRO－B43 | South common rafter 9 | 99 | －－ | 1353 | －－－－ | 1451 |
| GRO－B44 | South common rafter 11 | 57 | －－ | 1434 | －－－－ | 1490 |
| GRO－B45 | Collar，frame 4 | 167 | h／s | 1333 | 1499 | 1499 |
| Range H（stair tower）（primary） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B46 | Tiebeam | 56 | 15＋6 | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B47 | North principal rafter | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B48 | South principal rafter | 48 | 09＋3 | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B49 | North common rafter 2 | 84 | －－ | 1323 | －－－－ | 1406 |
| GRO－B50 | North common rafter 8 | 92 | $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | 1379 | 1470 | 1470 |
| GRO－B51 | South common rafter 5 | 124 | －－ | 1338 | －－－－ | 1461 |


| Range H（stair tower）（reused） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| GRO－B52 | North common rafter 5 | 75 | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B53 | North common rafter 7 | 85 | h／s | 1381 | 1465 | 1465 |
| GRO－B54 | South common rafter 3 | 62 | $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | 1404 | 1465 | 1465 |
| GRO－B55 | South common rafter 7 | 103 | h／s | 1362 | 1464 | 1464 |
| GRO－B56 | South common rafter 9 | 81 | h／s | 1373 | 1453 | 1453 |
| GRO－B57 | South common rafter 10 | 65 | －－ | 1357 | －－－－ | 1421 |
| Range B（tower 1） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B58 | North beam，first floor | 102 | －－ | 1380 | －－－－ | 1481 |
| GRO－B59 | South beam，first floor | 93 | －－ | 1358 | －－－－ | 1450 |
| GRO－B60 | Door lintel | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| Range D |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B61 | External lintel | 140 | －－ | 1329 | －－－－ | 1468 |
| Range C（tower 2） |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRO－B62 | South lintel | 92 | 06 | 1577 | 1662 | 1668 |
| GRO－B63 | Mid south lintel | NM | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B64 | First floor window lintel | 84 | －－ | －－－－ | －－－－ | －－－－ |
| GRO－B65 | Second floor window lintel | 91 | －－ | 1388 | －－－－ | 1478 |

Table 2：Results of the cross－matching of site sequence GROBSQO I and relevant reference chronologies when the first－ring date is $A D / 32$ I and the last－ring date is AD 1436

| Reference chronology | $t$－value | Span of chronology | Reference |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Thatched Cottage，Melbourne，Derbyshire | 10.4 | AD 1372－1530 | Howard et a／1997 |
| Stoneleigh Abbey，Stoneleigh，Warwickshire | 10.4 | AD 1398－1658 | AD 1391－1590 |
| Gotham Manor，Nottinghamshire | 9.5 | AD 1343－1443 | Howard et a／2000 |
| April Cottage，Rothley，Leicestershire | 9.1 | AD 1336－1533 | Howard et a／1991 |
| Hagworthingham Church，Lincolnshire | 9.0 | Alcock et a／1990 |  |
| Aisled barn，Newark，Nottinghamshire | 8.7 | AD 1249－1399 | Laxton et a／1984 |
| Ulverscroft Priory，Charnwood Forest，Leicestershire | 8.3 | Laxton et a／1984 |  |

Table 3：Results of the cross－matching of sample GRO－B40 and relevant reference chronologies when the first－ring date is AD I400 and the last－ring date is AD 1462

| Reference chronology | $t$－value | Span of chronology | Reference |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1－3 Northgate，Newark，Nottinghamshire | 5.7 | AD 1339－1523 | Arnold and Howard 2009a |
| The Old Rectory，Blakeney，Norfolk | 5.6 | AD 1339－1518 | Arnold and Howard 2012 |
| Pembridge bell tower，Herefordshire | 5.4 | AD 1382－1471 | Tyers 2004 |
| Governor＇s House，Newark，Nottinghamshire | 5.3 | AD 1355－1503 | Howard et a／1986 |
| Chalgrove Manor，Chalgrove，Oxfordshire | 5.2 | AD 1346－1581 | Arnold et a／2008b |
| Westernhanger Barn／Castle，Dover，Kent | 5.0 | AD 1373－1506 | Arnold and Howard 2009b unpubl |
| New House Grange Barn，Sheepy Magna，Leicestershire | 5.0 | Tyers 2001 |  |

Table 4: Results of the cross-matching of sample GRO-B62 and relevant reference chronologies when the first-ring date is AD 1577 and the last-ring date is AD 1668

| Reference chronology | t-value | Span of chronology | Reference |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Wheatsheaf, Cropwell Bishop, Nottinghamshire | 6.6 | AD 1604-1703 | Arnold et a/2008b |
| Pontefract Castle, Pontefract | 6.3 | AD 1507-1656 | AD 1538-1671 |
| 13 Hallgate, Diseworth, Leicestershire | 6.1 | AD 1583-1720 | Arnold et a/ 2005 |
| Castle House, Melbourne, Derbyshire | 5.9 | AD 1562-1655 |  |
| Oak House Barn, West Bromwich, West Midlands | 5.6 | AD 1571-1727 | Arnold and Howard 2009c unpubl |
| Rufford Mill, Nottinghamshire | 5.6 | AD 1603-1676 | Howard et a/ 1991 |
| Walnut Cottage, Hoveringham, Nottinghamshire | 5.6 | Laxton et a/ 1984 |  |

## FIGURES



Figure I: Map to show the general location of Groby, Leicestershire, circled. © Crown Copyright and database right 2014. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900


Figure 2: Map to show the general location of Groby Old Hall, Groby, Leicestershire, arrowed. © Crown Copyright and database right 2014. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900


Figure 3: Map to show the location of Groby Old Hall, Groby, Leicestershire. © Crown Copyright and database right 2014. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900


Figure 4：Ground－floor plan showing the various areas under investigation（after Finn et al 2009）


Figure 5: Smoke-blackened truss in the former open hall, photograph taken from the north (Robert Howard)


Figure 6: Roof of the former open hall, looking north-east (Robert Howard)


Figure 7: Roof truss I in the cross-wing, photograph taken from the north-west (Alison Arnold)


Figure 8: Repair to the principal rafter, truss I in the cross-wing, photograph taken from the south (Alison Arnold)


Figure 9: Roof of range E, photograph taken from the north-east (Robert Howard)


Figure 10: Roof of range F, photograph taken from the south-west (Robert Howard)


Figure II: Roof of the stair tower, photograph taken from the south-east (Alison Arnold)


Figure I2: Tower I, photograph taken from the south (Robert Howard)


Figure I3: Tower I door lintel, photograph taken from the north-west (Alison Arnold)


Figure 14: Remnants of the first-floor frame in tower I, photograph taken from below (Alison Arnold)


Figure 15: Tower 2, south-east elevation with openings, photograph taken from the east (Alison Arnold)


Figure 16: Tower 2 window lintels (GRO-B64 and GRO-B65), photographs taken from the north-west (Alison Arnold)


Figure I7: Tower 2 door lintels (GRO-B62 and GRO-B63), photograph taken from the southwest (Alison Arnold)


Figure I8: Remains of 'lost' range D with timber lintel (GRO-B6I), photograph taken from the north-west (Alison Arnold)


Figure 19: Section A-A, showing the location of samples GRO-BOI-09, GRO-BI 7, and GRO-B22-3 (after Finn et al 2009)


Figure 20: Attic plan, showing the location of samples GRO-BIO-16, GRO-BI8-2I, GRO-B24-7, GRO-B3I, GRO-B33, and GRO-B39-57 (after Finn et al 2009)


Figure 2I: Section C-C, showing the location of samples GRO-B28-30, GRO-B32, and GRO-B34-8 (after Finn et al 2009)


Figure 22: Ground-floor plan of tower I, showing the location of samples GRO-B58-60 (after Finn et al 2009)


Figure 23: Bar diagram of samples in site sequence GROBSQOI


Figure 24: Bar diagram of samples in site sequence GROBSQ02


Figure 25: Bar diagram of dated samples, sorted by area

## DATA OF MEASURED SAMPLES

## Measurements in 0.01 mm units

GRO-B01A 86
2032271691501482042182551652031631521641221011301131118665 35644853624471603743466453487312470109115185 91100153165292170186146114157225146183184181145204202234206 184168105172165171222185172221195240269235227200235191287228 186165193221203168
GRO-B01B 86
207234167149142201228245166206159150167118941361191139571 43604359604872583739536054546712465114105182 96102145177302172180154103165228149198194196146201197232215 184169111165174171209183169224201241258235229201234200285230 191167194216200223

## GRO-B02A 56

288369358300472433364448348388295208172119163125174276344208 110105161149250286298259383327281373142144107240358308403377 2994034092287886118169169175204170327301216308 GRO-B02B 56
289360351297431448360444340384303201128106162135180274336213 108103124156249284299263378323282371163152103297390322405385 3094113992347784116138171177201168316255234321
GRO-B03A 67
220322382304320307388108132171126159163226264308299298407348 2903652782952501621258912113717431334019293151182176200202 15414616623019215174926617730127140539225632428215975137 210210232251186168224
GRO-B03B 67
247324376304319304406107137181109169154216255315311281413348 2853802772972431571208612113617130834519092155181172200207 149145170229193160731047718632527440739024833028015982135 211209228247195165225
GRO-B04A 62
390306341300273273342808819723132315331315015418213213385
11294176195190226177125100174178162175189191180206177226215
187146215188120179166205246161148160234230147187204290285188 127163
GRO-B04B 62
3933073372982732743408110619322932114928317215618112213279 11410317419417022917211697171179181176191166196186186234211 165156202191122182165210248165142158238224150183199295281185 126160
GRO-B05A 74
291331403341362301281180161288287209228179197181223234290255 2342152092222102082673172982191251041128310796145149204207 214164167197211210207169153108756710011310010395141140119 1211731151501459677122152144124146166123
GRO-B05B 74
288320403346387292279194171278291208228177199179218235291254 23921420622320821227231730121113411111780104101146147203210

2101621671962132072111691561077372961131029796141142121 1231671211501409467112155149118145166127
GRO-B06A 93
350235201196307256362305360271257221245342301306263242174152
191186143161117144134167173251238208190184200157188242250231
157109868178746899111155149167113118143140145155148126
94754965911038712613615211013117613415919711868114170 2101361941971381411221569711686197154
GRO-B06B 93
351234200172293261356306342272268228250336301298259211154145 190189145172131144135164183242237199185188196156191243250230 155111868376716998110154149170108113146143146148149123
8966557080869612014215610112617913616119411265113162 1921401982011281431151559711092188157 GRO-B07A 92
118181125200339346323244198264403282287249181113791049594 1276294689311314814813911210914414716121422119514813290 76737467115117162143172142164150200202164148105835950 95121929111417014714013317416220820313193175223228164199 178130114136177115130389355290251285
GRO-B07B 92
122186125219374351326245191271398282284257185116751039793 124698069801141511551211099814714316722821518815212596 7174796811298148154182140157158196200160148107815654 93126928512216115313713417116020721113395186220229155189 173142123131180126127375345275223286 GRO-B08A 94
35629731832924325224526614487124128116162180211266240298222 241349241248276269241109895965857386161166244238138143 13314216417918815412394777083926871507210083111141 14321814869641071581841281731751181028862695472126163 13917714692101226269287236218288182164166

## GRO-B08B 94

46532131132323724624126514785128131119163181214266234313216 240355258276283273233112746568827281157175257232155131 1131501651821971511308978668078747254759994115156 1492021416758100162183127172186116999563646067120161 14716715390104221266259235203298187166181 GRO-B09A 115
152218145196212308175170207178170249257136110149118139123158 179193157182174155188189159218184191122104755474515691 901021068768539716315517112812172819610291667559 8310384869487136906348739387761029581806046 4342456279818279595386108123122125142901379689 859469807985707186938094506583
GRO-B09B 115
135218152197226296165170204172175237256145101151117111107164 18419815918916715619019015722518718612899825469555792 8110610687685591172148189116114828110310193637164 671108284100811379064506992898210211075796155 50474076818885835254731021251151311539413010798 82103708480846770871038695497888
GRO-B12A 64

2452463104333313363344745846794578122209219183226134209 1741682162331851731511741171421352683404471738456131116140 180991081641701701551072701612793612842552138620820814188 128166130127
GRO-B12B 64
2602433144323313563024779546805186137197218182230140202 1821672112121601791521651141321362633324261909063109117139 185119781671761711541032761622813602842562108322020313795 122161125130
GRO-B13A 99
376332238179161921411831421261291351088290156165130134117 1211108811311112010284533962485860757588748679 5568725975476283593850524142542756384350 59117976267116105137107100186785068706046659798 87105138757572929210314111094120109119887083118 GRO-B13B 99
3783312481891591061451681451251241321197193143167134128129 119889910012411510488564359535255806590768874 5271695971446680614249474347492856483648 64112113607111411413010398188745172576649619799 8610313782747398988915498109107105130927285105 GRO-B14A 107
 6152595273604667476250504556697563543663 53769356537049881069386149135987491105126119135 1481721371381631981191111661017018898104103111108109128108 13198808890129121150123137186172232211216130116121102186 159126164112118168119
GRO-B14B 107
 6353595270615458516343405062647770534164 45769656536553881089385145139109699295129123132 14316914414016319211711216410266181111100106118102116132100 13197806511412512214512214317717623120922413211012799180 164120169115119160121

## GRO-B15A 86

66671452333663692832911432654204764563482561791218575111 112145143205223214203293254280212247148159163140104155217157 1601501549366108132168205205211143115166146146159170126158 10712912715211616915310411512810411484928787949398131 107166179115117126
GRO-B15B 86
65711592823683722642871262694124904473562461841168581108 110142147199226196207291250256222254142157163138105173212156 1591511569267107136165202202214144114171141143167166128156 10913012415411417013911811012896121799585889610399132 107165181105120132
GRO-B16A 101
 918367127121928093104148128881421901311441391188298 114102981331401561792081861338759861291161089988117122 13415014812181826411313288817078939493110109172299 223252262176217308427433488292196212215274258239204144161174

GRO-B16B 101

9173741221269776861061481298514018713713113711488100 1081071021381401471752101891388364871321171049195119119 12715115111885766911312792848374929898108110169296 222247266174211292402423480296200211210276264241201150157168 239
GRO-B17A 61
22622016117024420117413510511313816613711098156163186162187 1461221138812713212811710711412696106141121143221201165148 14617117618523422718710310910011411410198791179184153138 185
GRO-B17B 61
2132201631742061932021449811913615414111592141171194168170 1471291148113012913112111310612894105140121153236201156149 146158179181230236189101114105117115102106831169286159139 210
GRO-B18A 110
208267207226320288210254182218170132144161179137222207155270 173344303232235213146118219180213186209253198196209212137182 1522102451662562311401691972452231188910390109126144148159 18119016214114614698929511680103838983109133141111124 13114714814411779598711313413712713213711713883926362 667690879911571887970
GRO-B18B 110
213259253224298276207249184212171121138159179142217204150273 169346298229235215155134190167215156204294189193207213126182 1512052481592562261431651902532071287810992107120148145153 18219115514214814210576821237992878684115147143112119 13713915314411577657611612712812914012612214583906460 7370878110012271917166

## GRO-B19A 57

119901552142273092821842152852102871971881571337312010688 118120107180166153189133135173188246263308232233176165228176 16715712798186118136116119136136150188143162162195 GRO-B19B 57
116831572172323043081812202842132741951901501387711511287
12112793192180165205137145171212245265309229238183160237176
17016211994181120147120117140131146189140173154169
GRO-B21A 105
1171221291321551101189798110185175118106138108165140109112 190153137119148206185148141174230209160168249142184177125137 121133120181195217202209223204219170172137134164160125149157 176220216230144145131130179177119127928112883899196108 1051011021129887909094999686103127108105105125114100 9189124154127
GRO-B21B 105
1111141321361461091237796117188181118112136102168146111111 191152139121151203174148140174233207161168246147189178143134 126127131182208220209218224207215173160159134159150131156157 176222210240143149131127179179117122948812681939099104 1071039811499889085941029087109121117103102125113105

8884133153125
GRO-B22A 144
527321268159166156268179286315245295295347273257201249281250
193208135191137161140245137132304252190204211208118135138218
2241941511611709467556559484434679172759097129

$\begin{array}{llllllllllllllll}55 & 45 & 65 & 72 & 57 & 79 & 43 & 41 & 49 & 63 & 37 & 37 & 40 & 34 & 33 & 57 \\ 56 & 68 & 44 & 39\end{array}$

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GRO-B36A 47
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GRO-B36B 47
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## GRO-B37A 69

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GRO-B38A 71
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GRO-B39A 126
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GRO-B40A 63
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## GRO-B43A 99

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## GRO-B43B 99

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GRO-B44A 57
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## GRO-B44B 57

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GRO-B45A 167
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## GRO-B45B 167

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GRO-B46A 56
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GRO-B48A 48
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## GRO-B48B 48

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GRO-B49A 84
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## GRO-B49B 84

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GRO-B50B 92
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GRO-B51A 124
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44354231
GRO-B51B 124
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## GRO-B52B 75

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## GRO-B53A 85

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## GRO-B56B 81

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## GRO-B57A 65

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GRO-B58B 102
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GRO-B59A 93
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GRO-B59B 93
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938311712695187204124128159184129878874113141153179159 147124921501821671621429111112312913717510716118311810298 146160136149133143174847568861281549778127112857958
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## GRO-B64A 84

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 67736374
GRO-B64B 84
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 57836276
GRO-B65A 91
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829685117109102132941161045174113112958647708462
76811118461776310212275100
GRO-B65B 91
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## APPENDIX: TREE-RING DATING

## The Principles of Tree-Ring Dating

Tree-ring dating, or dendrochronology as it is known, is discussed in some detail in the Laboratory's Monograph, An East Midlands Master Tree-Ring Chronology and its uses for dating Vernacular Building (Laxton and Litton 1988) and Dendrochronology: Guidelines on Producing and Interpreting Dendrochronological Dates (English Heritage 1998). Here we will give the bare outlines. Each year an oak tree grows an extra ring on the outside of its trunk and all its branches just inside its bark. The width of this annual ring depends largely on the weather during the growing season, about April to October, and possibly also on the weather during the previous year. Good growing seasons give rise to relatively wide rings, poor ones to very narrow rings and average ones to relatively average ring widths. Since the climate is so variable from year to year, almost random-like, the widths of these rings will also appear random-like in sequence, reflecting the seasons. This is illustrated in Figure A1 where, for example, the widest rings appear at irregular intervals. This is the key to dating by tree rings, or rather, by their widths. Records of the average ring widths for oaks, one for each year for the last 1000 years or more, are available for different areas. These are called master chronologies. Because of the random-like nature of these sequences of widths, there is usually only one position at which a sequence of ring widths from a sample of oak timber with at least 70 rings will match a master. This will date the timber and, in particular, the last ring.

If the bark is still on the sample, as in Figure A1, then the date of the last ring will be the date of felling of the oak from which it was cut. There is much evidence that in medieval times oaks cut down for building purposes were used almost immediately, usually within the year or so (Rackham 1976). Hence if bark is present on several main timbers in a building, none of which appear reused or are later insertions, and if they all have the same date for their last ring, then we can be quite confident that this is the date of construction or soon after. If there is no bark on the sample, then we have to make an estimate of the felling date; how this is done is explained below.

## The Practice of Tree-Ring Dating at the Nottingham Tree-Ring Dating Laboratory

I. Inspecting the Building and Sampling the Timbers. Together with a building historian the timbers in a building are inspected to try to ensure that those sampled are not reused or later insertions. Sampling is almost always done by coring into the timber, which has the great advantage that we can sample in situ timbers and those judged best to give the date of construction, or phase of construction if there is more than one in the building. The timbers to be sampled are also inspected to see how many rings they have. We normally look for timbers with at least 70 rings, and preferably more. With fewer rings than this, 50 for example, sequences of widths become difficult to match to a unique
position within a master sequence of ring widths and so are difficult to date (Litton and Zainodin 1991). The cross-section of the rafter shown in Figure A2 has about 120 rings; about 20 of which are sapwood rings - the lighter rings on the outside. Similarly the core has just over 100 rings with a few sapwood rings.

To ensure that we are getting the date of the building as a whole, or the whole of a phase of construction if there is more than one, about $8-10$ samples per phase are usually taken. Sometimes we take many more, especially if the construction is complicated. One reason for taking so many samples is that, in general, some will fail to give a date. There may be many reasons why a particular sequence of ring widths from a sample of timber fails to give a date even though others from the same building do. For example, a particular tree may have grown in an odd ecological niche, so odd indeed that the widths of its rings were determined by factors other than the local climate! In such circumstances it will be impossible to date a timber from this tree using the master sequence whose widths, we can assume, were predominantly determined by the local climate at the time.

Sampling is done by coring into the timber with a hollow corer attached to an electric drill and usually from its outer rings inwards towards where the centre of the tree, the pith, is judged to be. An illustration of a core is shown in Figure A2; it is about 150 mm long and 10 mm diameter. Great care has to be taken to ensure that as few as possible of the outer rings are lost in coring. This can be difficult as these outer rings are often very soft (see below on sapwood). Each sample is given a code which identifies uniquely which timber it comes from, which building it is from and where the building is located. For example, CRO-A06 is the sixth core taken from the first building (A) sampled by the Laboratory in Cropwell Bishop. Where it came from in that building will be shown in the sampling records and drawings. No structural damage is done to any timbers by coring, nor does it weaken them.

During the initial inspection of the building and its timbers the dendrochronologist may come to the conclusion that, as far as can be judged, none of the timbers have sufficient rings in them for dating purposes and may advise against sampling to save further unwarranted expense.

All sampling by the Laboratory is undertaken according to current Health and Safety Standards. The Laboratory's dendrochronologists are insured.

Figure AI: A wedge of oak from a tree felled in 1976. It shows the annual growth rings, one for each year from the innermost ring to the last ring on the outside just inside the bark. The year of each ring can be determined by counting back from the outside ring, which grew in 1976


Figure A2: Cross-section of a rafter, showing sapwood rings in the left-hand corner, the arrow points to the heartwood/sapwood boundary (H/S); and a core with sapwood; again the arrow is pointing to the H/S. The core is about the size of a pencil


Figure A3: Measuring ring widths under a microscope. The microscope is fixed while the sample is on a moving platform. The total sequence of widths is measured twice to ensure that an error has not been made. This type of apparatus is needed to process a large number of samples on a regular basis


Figure A4: Three cores from timbers in a building. They come from trees growing at the same time. Notice that, although the
sequences of widths look similar, they are not identical. This is typical
2. Measuring Ring Widths. Each core is sanded down with a belt sander using medium-grit paper and then finished by hand with flourgrade-grit paper. The rings are then clearly visible and differentiated from each other with a result very much like that shown in Figure A2. The core is then mounted on a movable table below a microscope and the ring-widths measured individually from the innermost ring to the outermost. The widths are automatically recorded in a computer file as they are measured (see Fig A3).
3. Cross-Matching and Dating the Samples. Because of the factors besides the local climate which may determine the annual widths of a tree's rings, no two sequences of ring widths from different oaks growing at the same time are exactly alike (Fig A4). Indeed, the sequences may not be exactly alike even when the trees are growing near to each other. Consequently, in the Laboratory we do not attempt to match two sequences of ring widths by eye, or graphically, or by any other subjective method. Instead, it is done objectively (ie statistically) on a computer by a process called cross-matching. The output from the computer tells us the extent of correlation between two sample sequences of widths or, if we are dating, between a sample sequence of widths and the master, at each relative position of one to the other (offsets). The extent of the correlation at an offset is determined by the $t$-value (defined in almost any introductory book on statistics). That offset with the maximum $t$-value among the $t$-values at all the offsets will be the best candidate for dating one sequence relative to the other. If one of these is a master chronology, then this will date the other. Experiments carried out in the past with sequences from oaks of known date suggest that a $t$-value of at least 4.5, and preferably at least 5.0 , is usually adequate for the dating to be accepted with reasonable confidence (Laxton and Litton 1988; Laxton et al 1988; Howard et al 1984-1995).

This is illustrated in Figure A5 with timbers from one of the roofs of Lincoln Cathedral. Here four sequences of ring widths, LIN-C04, 05, 08, and 45 , have been cross-matched with each other. The ring widths themselves have been omitted in the bar diagram, as is usual, but the offsets at which they best cross-match each other are shown; eg the sequence of ring widths of C08 matches the sequence of ring widths of C45 best when it is at a position starting 20 rings after the first ring of C 45 , and similarly for the others. The actual $t$-values between the four at these offsets of best correlations are in the matrix. Thus at the offset of +20 rings, the $t$-value between C 45 and C 08 is 5.6 and is the maximum found between these two among all the positions of one sequence relative to the other.

It is standard practice in our Laboratory first to cross-match as many as possible of the ring-width sequences of the samples in a building and then to form an average from them. This average is called a site sequence of the building being dated and is illustrated in Figure A5. The fifth bar at the bottom is a site sequence for a roof at Lincoln Cathedral and is constructed from the matching sequences of the four timbers. The site sequence width for each year is the average of the widths in each of the sample sequences which has a width for that year. Thus in Fig A5 if the widths shown are 0.8 mm for $\mathrm{C} 45,0.2 \mathrm{~mm}$ for $\mathrm{C} 08,0.7 \mathrm{~mm}$ for C 05 , and 0.3 mm for C 04 , then the corresponding width of the site
sequence is the average of these, 0.55 mm . The actual sequence of widths of this site sequence is stored on the computer. The reason for creating site sequences is that it is usually easier to date an average sequence of ring widths with a master sequence than it is to date the individual component sample sequences separately.

The straightforward method of cross-matching several sample sequences with each other one at a time is called the 'maximal $t$-value' method. The actual method of crossmatching a group of sequences of ring-widths used in the Laboratory involves grouping and averaging the ring-width sequences and is called the 'Litton-Zainodin Grouping Procedure'. It is a modification of the straightforward method and was successfully developed and tested in the Laboratory and has been published (Litton and Zainodin 1991; Laxton et al 1988).
4. Estimating the Felling Date. As mentioned above, if the bark is present on a sample, then the date of its last ring is the date of the felling of its tree (or the last full year before felling, if it was felled in the first three months of the following calendar year, before any new growth had started, but this is not too important a consideration in most cases). The actual bark may not be present on a timber in a building, though the dendrochronologist who is sampling can often see from its surface that only the bark is missing. In these cases the date of the last ring is still the date of felling.

Quite often some, though not all, of the original outer rings are missing on a timber. The outer rings on an oak, called sapwood rings, are usually lighter than the inner rings, the heartwood, and so are relatively easy to identify. For example, sapwood can be seen in the corner of the rafter and at the outer end of the core in Figure A2, both indicated by arrows. More importantly for dendrochronology, the sapwood is relatively soft and so liable to insect attack and wear and tear. The builder, therefore, may remove some of the sapwood for precisely these reasons. Nevertheless, if at least some of the sapwood rings are left on a sample, we will know that not too many rings have been lost since felling so that the date of the last ring on the sample is only a few years before the date of the original last ring on the tree, and so to the date of felling.

Various estimates have been made and used for the average number of sapwood rings in mature oak trees (English Heritage 1998). A fairly conservative range is between 15 and 50 and that this holds for $95 \%$ of mature oaks. This means, of course, that in a small number of cases there could be fewer than 15 and more than 50 sapwood rings. For example, the core CRO-A06 has only 9 sapwood rings and some have obviously been lost over time - either they were removed originally by the carpenter and/or they rotted away in the building and/or they were lost in the coring. It is not known exactly how many sapwood rings are missing, but using the above range the Laboratory would estimate between a minimum of $6(=15-9)$ and a maximum of $41(=50-9)$. If the last ring of CRO-A06 has been dated to 1500, say, then the estimated felling-date range for the tree from which it came originally would be between 1506 and 1541. The Laboratory uses this estimate for sapwood in areas of England where it has no prior information. It
also uses it when dealing with samples with very many rings, about 120 to the last heartwood ring. But in other areas of England where the Laboratory has accumulated a number of samples with complete sapwood, that is, no sapwood lost since felling, other estimates in place of the conservative range of 15 to 50 are used. In the East Midlands (Laxton et a/ 2001) and the east to the south down to Kent (Pearson 1995) where it has sampled extensively in the past, the Laboratory uses the shorter estimate of 15 to 35 sapwood rings in $95 \%$ of mature oaks growing in these parts. Since the sample CRO-A06 comes from a house in Cropwell Bishop in the East Midlands, a better estimate of sapwood rings lost since felling is between a minimum of $6(=15-9)$ and $26(=35-9)$ and the felling would be estimated to have taken place between 1506 and 1526, a shorter period than before. Oak boards quite often come from the Baltic region and in these cases the 95\% confidence limits for sapwood are 9 to 36 (Howard et al 1992, 56).

Even more precise estimates of the felling date and range can often be obtained using knowledge of a particular case and information gathered at the time of sampling. For example, at the time of sampling the dendrochronologist may have noted that the timber from which the core of Figure A2 was taken still had complete sapwood but that some of the soft sapwood rings were lost in coring. By measuring into the timber the depth of sapwood lost, say 20 mm , a reasonable estimate can be made of the number of sapwood rings lost, say 12 to 15 rings in this case. By adding on 12 to 15 years to the date of the last ring on the sample a good tight estimate for the range of the felling date can be obtained, which is often better than the 15 to 35 years later we would have estimated without this observation. In the example, the felling is now estimated to have taken place between AD 1512 and 1515 , which is much more precise than without this extra information.

Even if all the sapwood rings are missing on a sample, but none of the heartwood rings are, then an estimate of the felling-date range is possible by adding on the full compliment of, say, 15 to 35 years to the date of the last heartwood ring (called the heartwood/ sapwood boundary or transition ring and denoted $\mathrm{H} / \mathrm{S}$ ). Fortunately it is often easy for a trained dendrochronologist to identify this boundary on a timber. If a timber does not have its heartwood/sapwood boundary, then only a post quem date for felling is possible.
5. Estimating the Date of Construction. There is a considerable body of evidence collected by dendrochronologists over the years that oak timbers used in buildings were not seasoned in medieval or early modern times (English Heritage 1998; Miles 1997, 505). Hence, provided that all the samples in a building have estimated felling-date ranges broadly in agreement with each other, so that they appear to have been felled as a group, then this should give an accurate estimate of the period when the structure was built, or soon after (Laxton et al 2001, fig 8; 34-5, where 'associated groups of fellings’ are discussed in detail). However, if there is any evidence of storage before use, or if there is evidence the oak came from abroad (eg Baltic boards), then some allowance has to be made for this.
6. Master Chronological Sequences. Ultimately, to date a sequence of ring widths, or a site sequence, we need a master sequence of dated ring widths with which to crossmatch it, a Master Chronology. To construct such a sequence we have to start with a sequence of widths whose dates are known and this means beginning with a sequence from an oak tree whose date of felling is known. In Figure A6 such a sequence is SHE-T, which came from a tree in Sherwood Forest which was blown down in a recent gale. After this other sequences which cross-match with it are added and gradually the sequence is 'pushed back in time' as far as the age of samples will allow. This process is illustrated in Figure A6. We have a master chronological sequence of widths for Nottinghamshire and East Midlands oak for each year from AD 882 to 1981. It is described in great detail in Laxton and Litton (1988), but the components it contains are shown here in the form of a bar diagram. As can be seen, it is well replicated in that for each year in this period there are several sample sequences having widths for that year. The master is the average of these. This master can now be used to date oak from this area and from the surrounding areas where the climate is very similar to that in the East Midlands. The Laboratory has also constructed a master for Kent (Laxton and Litton 1989). The method the Laboratory uses to construct a master sequence, such as the East Midlands and Kent, is completely objective and uses the Litton-Zainodin grouping procedure (Laxton et al 1988). Other laboratories and individuals have constructed masters for other areas and have made them available. As well as these masters, local (dated) site chronologies can be used to date other buildings from nearby. The Laboratory has hundreds of these site sequences from many parts of England and Wales covering many short periods.
7. Ring-Width Indices. Tree-ring dating can be done by cross-matching the ring widths themselves, as described above. However, it is advantageous to modify the widths first. Because different trees grow at different rates and because a young oak grows in a different way from an older oak, irrespective of the climate, the widths are first standardized before any matching between them is attempted. These standard widths are known as ring-width indices and were first used in dendrochronology by Baillie and Pilcher (1973). The exact form they take is explained in this paper and in the appendix of Laxton and Litton (1988) and is illustrated in the graphs in Figure A7. Here ring-widths are plotted vertically, one for each year of growth. In the upper sequence of (a), the generally large early growth after 1810 is very apparent as is the smaller later growth from about 1900 onwards when the tree is maturing. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the lower sequence of (a) starting in 1835. In both the widths are also changing rapidly from year to year. The peaks are the wide rings and the troughs are the narrow rings corresponding to good and poor growing seasons, respectively. The two corresponding sequence of Baillie-Pilcher indices are plotted in (b) where the differences in the immature and mature growths have been removed and only the rapidly changing peaks and troughs remain, that are associated with the common climatic signal. This makes cross-matching easier.

## $t$-value/offset Matrix



## Bar Diagram

|  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 110 |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 | 110 |

C45


Figure A5: Cross-matching of four sequences from a Lincoln Cathedral roof and the formation of a site sequence from them

The bar diagram represents these sequences without the rings themselves. The length of the bar is proportional to the number of rings in the sequence. Here the four sequences are set at relative positions (offsets) to each other at which they have maximum correlation as measured by the $t$-values. The $t$-value/offset matrix contains the maximum $t$-values below the diagonal and the offsets above it. Thus, the maximum $t$-value between C 08 and C 45 occurs at the offset of +20 rings and the $t$-value is then 5.6 . The site sequence is composed of the average of the corresponding widths, as illustrated with one width.

(a)

(b)


Figure A7 (a): The raw ring-widths of two samples, THO-AOI and THO-B05, whose felling dates are known

Here the ring widths are plotted vertically, one for each year, so that peaks represent wide rings and troughs narrow ones. Notice the growth-trends in each; on average the earlier rings of the young tree are wider than the later ones of the older tree in both sequences

Figure A7 (b): The Baillie-Pilcher indices of the above widths
The growth trends have been removed completely

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