# WHALLEY ABBEY, WHALLEY, LANCASHIRE

# TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS FROM THE GREAT HALL AND NORTH RANGE

SCIENTIFIC DATING REPORT

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard



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#### SUMMARY

Tree-ring analysis undertaken on timbers of the great hall roof and the north range resulted in the construction and dating of a single site sequence containing 48 samples and spanning the period AD 1362–1559.

Timbers of the great hall roof have a felling date range of AD 1493–1518. In the north range, the primary timbers associated with the whole of the stables roof are thought to have been felled in AD 1521. Timbers reused as backing rafters to modify this roof have been dated to AD 1490 and AD 1504, whilst a series of purlins are believed to be a mixture of reused, primary, and later insertions with felling dates ranging from the late fifteenth/early sixteenth century to the third quarter of the sixteenth century. A ground-floor ceiling beam in the stables also dates to AD 1521, whilst a lintel was felled a few years later in AD 1524 and two other lintels were also potentially felled in the AD 1520s. Again, in the north range, the bothy roof contains what appear to be primary timbers felled in AD 1559 but also appears to utilise reused timbers from AD 1504. The roofs over the north range carriage house and lobby each contain at least one, presumably reused, timber of AD 1496–1521 and AD 1480–1505, respectively. The partition wall between these two areas contains timber of AD 1524 and AD 1550–75.

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Grade I listed Whalley Abbey is located in the village of Whalley, Lancashire (Figs 1–3). It was a Cistercian monastery, established in AD 1296 by the transfer of monks from Stanlaw Abbey in the Wirral, Cheshire, and was one of the last Cistercian houses to be founded in England. Building work began in c AD 1320, with the abbey church being completed in AD 1380. The east range is late-fourteenth century and the infirmary and abbot's lodgings' fifteenth century. The north-east gateway is also thought to be fifteenth century, dating to c AD 1480. Following the Dissolution (AD 1537) the abbey site was leased out by the Crown and then sold in AD 1553 to Richard Assheton, who converted parts of the abbot's house and infirmary into a residence. Assheton's descendants owned it until AD 1834 after which it had a series of different owners. In 1919 the west range and adjacent farmhouse were sold to Salford Roman Catholic Diocese and in 1922 the manor house and remainder of the site sold to Manchester Anglican Diocese, later taken over by Blackburn Diocese. At this point it was developed as a retreat and conference centre.

#### Great Hall

Within the Assheton manor house, now the conference centre, is a first-floor hall which is open to the roof. There are six trusses of king-post type, with high collars, and moulded archbraces. Between the purlins and principals are carved triangular braces (Fig 4). This roof is thought to be *c* AD 1500 in date. The hall is supported on large beams dendrochronologically dated to AD 1478–1508 (Bridge 2007).

#### North range

The description of this range is largely based on the report on the building produced by Nigel Neil (2014).

This multi-period range of largely two-storey buildings measures approximately 47m x 9m and abuts the late-fifteenth century north-east gatehouse at its west end. Contained within this range are, from the east, the stables, the former bothy, the carriage house, the lobby, and the gatekeeper or porter's lodge (Figs 3 and 5). This range is thought to incorporate medieval fabric although to what extent is unclear. Historic illustrations appear to show this range and the east range to be linked (Fig 6); the demolition of the link is thought to have occurred during the period AD 1727–62.

#### Stables

This consists of seven bays, plus half bays at each end. Each bay is separated by a principal rafter truss with king post-type from which braces rise up to the ridgepiece. The

easternmost trusses (1 and 2) also have high collars and clasped rather than the trenched purlins seen elsewhere along the roof (Fig 7). The tiebeams of trusses 3 and 4 are canted (Fig 8), rather than straight as seen in the other trusses that are not modern replacements. It was thought possible that the east end of the building had a different status or function than farther west and may even have been of a different, possibly earlier, date. At some point the roof pitch has been modified and backing rafters inserted on the northern side above the principal rafters (Fig 9). These backing rafters are believed to be reused principal rafters, perhaps cruck blades. A number of the purlins and some tiebeams exhibit redundant mortices implying reuse. It has been suggested that the stables date to *c* AD 1558 and that the change in roof pitch dates to the eighteenth century.

At ground-floor level there are two surviving, apparently primary, ceiling joists (Fig 10). The easternmost one (beam 1) has a slot, possibly for a plank-and-muntin partition and widely spaced bars. The joist to the west of this (beam 2) is chamfered.

#### Bothy

To the west of the stables is the single-bay former bothy. This originally had a staircase in the south-east corner and a north-south partition which had the effect of creating a very narrow room to the west. The ground-floor is believed to have been a kitchen. The only visible roof timbers are two tiers of purlins and a ridgepiece (Fig 11); at least one of the purlins is clearly reused as it has redundant mortices.

#### Carriage House

The roof of the carriage house consists of two principal rafter trusses with king posts with squared projecting heads, and raking braces (Fig 12). This part of the north range does not appear on illustrations of AD 1727 (Fig 6) but is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of AD 1848, suggesting a nineteenth-century date for it.

#### Lobby

The roof over this part of the north range consists of modern common rafters, a ridge piece, and two tiers of purlins (Fig 13). This roof is also thought to be nineteenth-century in date, although there is evidence it replaced a steeper (probably thatched) roof, the scar of which can be seen in the unplastered wall (once an exterior wall) separating this bay from the carriage house. Also visible in this wall are the remains of a doorway, as shown by a surviving lintel and post (Fig 14). The dating of this part of the building is unclear.

#### SAMPLING

A dendrochronological survey was requested by Andrew Davison, English Heritage Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments, to complete the dendrochronology programme undertaken previously (Bridge 2007) as part of an English Heritage grantaided condition survey and conservation plan. Obtaining dates for the north range and the great hall roof would inform the overall project, guide future works, and enhance the presentation of the abbey site as a whole.

A total of 71 timbers from the north range and the great hall was sampled by coring. Each sample was given the code WHL-Y and numbered 01–71. The location of all samples was noted at the time of sampling and has been marked on Figures 15–30. Further details relating to the samples can be found in Table 1. Trusses have been numbered from east to west.

#### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Five of the samples taken from the north range had too few rings for secure dating and so were rejected prior to measurement. The remaining 66 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. All samples were then compared with each other by the Litton/Zainodin grouping programme (see Appendix), resulting in 52 samples matching to form three groups.

Forty-eight samples matched each other and were combined at the relevant offset positions to form WHLYSQ01, a site sequence of 198 rings (Fig 31). This site sequence was compared against a series of relevant reference chronologies for oak where it was found to span the period AD 1362–1559. The evidence for this dating is given in Table 2.

The four other matched samples form two groups and were combined at the relevant offset positions to form WHLYSQ02, a site sequence of 73 rings and WHLYSQ03 of 63 rings, respectively (Figs 32 and 33). Attempts to date these two site sequences and the remaining ungrouped samples by comparing them against the reference material were unsuccessful and all remain undated.

#### INTERPRETATION

Tree-ring analysis has resulted in the successful dating of 48 timbers. To aid interpretation each area is dealt with separately below and illustrated in Figure 34. Felling date ranges have been calculated using the estimate that mature oak trees in this region have 15–40 sapwood rings (95% confidence range).

#### Great hall

Ten of the samples taken from the roof have been successfully dated, four of which have the heartwood/sapwood boundary. The dates of these rings are broadly contemporary and suggestive of a single felling. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date is AD 1478, allowing an estimated felling date to be calculated for the four timbers represented to within the range of AD 1493–1518. The last-measured rings of the other six dated samples from this roof range from AD 1444 (WHL-Y71) to AD 1472 (WHL-Y68), and thus have *terminus post quem* dates for felling ranging from AD 1459 to AD 1487. These are thus also consistent with having been felled in AD 1493–1518, an interpretation supported by the high level of cross-matching between some of the dated timbers.

#### North range

#### Stables

#### East end roof

Six of the samples taken from trusses 1 and 2 have been dated. One of these, WHL-Y07, from the king post of truss 2, has complete sapwood and the last-measured ring date of AD 1521, the felling date of the timber represented. The five other dated samples from these two trusses have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring, which in all cases is broadly contemporary, and suggestive of a single felling. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date is AD 1503, giving an estimated felling date for the five timbers represented of AD 1518–43, consistent with these timbers as also having been felled in AD 1521.

#### Main roof

Ten samples from the timbers of trusses 3–8 have been successfully dated, eight of which have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring. In all cases, this is broadly contemporary and suggestive of a single felling. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of these samples is AD 1496, giving an estimated felling date range for the samples represented to within the range of AD 1511–36. The other two dated samples (WHL-Y09 and WHL-Y22) do not have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date, but with last-measured ring dates of AD 1483 and AD 1488 these would be estimated to have terminus post quem felling dates of AD 1498 and AD 1504, respectively. This combined with the good level of crossmatching between all of the timbers suggests that they are also likely to have been felled in AD 1511–36.

#### Other timbers - backing rafters

Two of the backing rafters have been dated, both of which have complete sapwood. Sample WHL-Y20 has a last-measured ring date of AD 1490, the felling date of the timber represented whereas WHL-Y19 is slightly later with a last-measured ring date (and hence felling date) of AD 1504.

#### Other timbers - purlins

Six purlins in this roof have been dated, five of which have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring, the dates of which suggest that several different fellings may be represented. These timbers produce a series of overlapping felling date ranges: the earliest heartwood/sapwood boundary ring (AD 1475) belongs to WHL-Y32 and produces an estimated felling date range of AD 1490–1515; WHL-Y31 (AD 1486) gives an estimated felling date range of AD 1501–26; WHL-Y29 (AD 1496) produces an estimated felling date range of AD 1511–36; WHL-Y27 (AD 1510) gives a felling within the range AD 1525–50; and lastly sample WHL-Y28, with a heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1534, has an estimated felling date range of AD 1549–74. Thus, whilst some of the five timbers may have been felled at the same time, they clearly represent more than one phase of felling. The final dated sample WHL-Y25 has a last-measured heartwood ring date of AD 1434, giving the timber represented a *terminus post quem* for felling of AD 1449 and so could have been felled in any of the ranges above, or equally could represent a totally different felling.

#### Other timbers - lintels

Three lintels have been dated, of which all three have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring. The earliest belongs to WHL-Y35 (AD 1482), taken from the lintel over the south door at ground-floor level, and an estimated felling date can be calculated for the timber represented to the range AD 1497–1522. Sample WHL-Y36, from a lintel over the ground-floor door between the stables and bothy, has a heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1491, giving an estimated felling date range of AD 1506–31. The latest heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date (AD 1503) belongs to sample WHL-Y24, from a lintel in the east gable wall, which produces an estimated felling date for the timber represented of AD 1518–43.

However, it should be noted that sample WHL-Y35 matches with sample WHL-Y54 (a door lintel in the partition wall) at a *t*-value of 12.2, a level high enough to suggest that both timbers were cut from the same tree. It is known that sample WHL-Y54 was felled in AD 1524 (see below) and hence it appears likely that WHL-Y35 was also felled at this time. The felling date ranges calculated for the other two lintels (AD 1506–31 and AD 1518–43) encompass the AD 1524 felling date making it possible that all three lintels were felled at this time but this cannot be proven.

#### Other timbers - ground-floor ceiling

Only one of the two samples taken from the ground-floor ceiling has been dated. Sample WHL-Y33 has complete sapwood and the last-measured ring date of AD 1521, the felling date of the timber represented.

#### Bothy

Five samples taken from purlins and the ridge of the roof over this part of the building have been dated. Sample WHL-Y38 has complete sapwood and the last-measured ring of AD 1504, the felling date of the timber represented. Sample WHL-Y37 also has complete sapwood but has the somewhat later last-measured ring date (and hence felling date) of AD 1559. The other three samples have heartwood/sapwood boundaries which suggest two separate fellings. The heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of sample WHL-Y41, the ridge, is AD 1482, allowing an estimated felling date to be calculated for the timber represented to within the range AD 1497–1522, compatible with an AD 1504 felling. The heartwood/sapwood boundary ring dates of the other two samples are both later and broadly contemporary to each other. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date is AD 1533 which, allowing for sample WHL-Y40 to have the last-measured ring date of AD 1551 with incomplete sapwood, gives an estimated felling date for the purlins represented of AD 1552–73, consistent with a felling of AD 1559.

#### Carriage house

Only one of the samples taken from this roof has been dated. Sample WHL-Y42, taken from a tiebeam has the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1481, giving an estimated felling date range for the timber represented of AD 1496–1521.

#### Lobby

#### Roof

A single sample from this roof has been dated. Sample WHL-Y59, from a purlin, has the last-measured ring date of AD 1465. This is the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring which allows an estimated felling date to be calculated for the timber represented to within the range AD 1480–1505.

#### Partition wall

Three samples from this partition wall have been dated. Sample WHL-Y54, taken from a lintel (east side) over the door between them has complete sapwood and the last-

measured ring date of AD 1524, the felling date of the timber represented. WHL-Y56, a plate south of the door has a heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1505 giving an estimated felling date of AD 1520–45. This felling date range is consistent with an AD 1524 felling, however, given that there is no clear relationship between these two beams it is also possible that this timber represents a separate felling. The final dated sample, taken from the west lintel over the door between the carriage house and lobby, has the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1535, giving an estimated felling date of AD 1550–75.

#### DISCUSSION

The great hall roof was thought to date to c AD 1500 and previous tree-ring analysis undertaken on the beams supporting this first-floor room had produced a felling date range of AD 1478–1508. Adding support for an end of fifteenth-/beginning of sixteenth-century construction date for this room is the felling date range of AD 1493–1518 now obtained for the roof timbers.

It was unclear as to whether the stables roof was the product of a single phase of construction or whether the east end represented a slightly earlier phase. It is now known that the trusses of the east end contains timber felled in AD 1521 and that the timber used within the rest of the roof was felled in AD 1511-36, a felling date range which encompasses AD 1521. Furthermore, it can clearly be seen (Fig 34) that there is no discernable difference in heartwood/sapwood boundary ring position between samples taken from the east end and the rest of the roof. This, and the evidence of good intra-site matching between samples from both parts (Fig 35) suggests that the timber used in all eight trusses is likely to be of a single felling. Also dating to AD 1521, is one of the two surviving ground-floor ceiling beams from the stables, whilst at least one of the three dated lintels from the stables has been dated to AD 1524. The two other lintels have felling date ranges of AD 1506–31 and AD 1518–43 and it is therefore possible that they were also felled in AD 1524, although this cannot be proven. The dendrochronology has demonstrated not only that both parts of the stable roof are contemporary but has also identified the survival of an apparently primary main floor beam. It therefore appears likely that construction of the stables occurred in the AD 1520s, making it slightly earlier than the c AD 1558 previously suggested for it.

Alterations to the stable roof are thought to have occurred in the eighteenth century, although the timber used to undertake this modification can be seen to be reused. One of these backing rafters has now been dated to AD 1490, with a second one, slightly later, dating to AD 1504. It had been suggested that these backing rafters (possibly reused cruck beams) might represent timbers from an earlier stable roof. These timbers have been dated to slightly earlier than the bulk of the material within this building (AD 1521/AD 1524), though clearly broadly coeval with the dated material from the great hall. This raises the possibility that the timber originated from a different structure on site,

possibly the linking building of the east range, thought to have been demolished in the eighteenth century.

In addition, in relation to this stable roof, there had been discussion as to whether all of the purlins related to the original construction or were later insertions. The tree-ring dating has produced a series of felling date ranges ranging from the late-fifteenth/early sixteenth century until the third quarter of the sixteenth century for five of these purlins and a *terminus post quem* for felling of AD 1449 for a sixth. The estimated felling date range for one of these timbers (AD 1490–1515) negates it being primary to the AD 1521 roof but it could have originated from the same structure as the backing rafters (dated AD 1490 and AD 1504). Two of the purlins have overlapping estimated felling date ranges (AD 1501–26 and AD 1511–26), which encompass AD 1521/1524, and so may represent primary timbers, and two are later (AD 1525–50 and AD 1549–74), and thus, presumably, represent later insertions.

Roof timbers of the bothy have been dated to AD 1504 and AD 1559. At least one of the earlier purlins with empty mortices is thought to have been reused. This potentially suggests construction of this roof shortly after the felling of timbers in AD 1559, but utilising reused beams of AD 1504. Construction therefore potentially occurred shortly after the acquisition of the site by Richard Assheton in AD 1553 and hence was associated with the work undertaken to transform the former monastery into a manor house.

The roofs over both the carriage house and the lobby were both thought to date to the eighteenth century on the basis of style and, in the case of the carriage house, on the evidence of early illustrations, which do not show this building. Both of these structures are now known to contain medieval timber, with a tiebeam in the carriage house dating to AD 1496–1521 and a purlin in the lobby to AD 1480–1505, though the vast majority of sampled timbers remain undated. The implication is that these two dated timbers are likely to be reused from another structure. At least one of the timbers (door lintel, east) in the partition wall, which separates these two areas has been dated to AD 1524, and it is possible that the plate to the south of the door, with a felling date range of AD 1520–45 is coeval. However the other door lintel (west) is clearly later with a felling date range of AD 1550–75.

Traditionally, the north range was thought to be post-dissolution in date but the tree-ring dating has demonstrated that the majority of the timber in the stables is in fact pre-dissolution, dating to the period of the last abbot John Paslew's tenure (AD 1507–37). It was already known that he was responsible for the rebuilding of the abbot's lodgings and adding a lady chapel, but it would now appear that he was also the architect of the stables. However, the tree-ring dating does suggest that the bothy is post-dissolution, dating to, or soon after, AD 1559. It is possible that the bothy and the lobby are broadly contemporary with the latter containing timber of AD 1550–75, consistent with an AD

1559 felling. However, the interpretation of some areas of the north range remains complex due to the presence of reused timber.

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# TABLES

Table 1: Details of tree-ring samples from Whalley Abbey, Whalley, Lancashire

Sample	Sample location	Total	Sapwood rings**	First measured ring	Last heartwood ring	Last measured ring
number		rings*		date (AD)	date (AD)	date (AD)
Stables – ea:	st end roof					
WHL-Y01	Tiebeam, truss 1	100	h/s	1411	1510	1510
WHL-Y02	North principal rafter, truss 1	78	h/s	1421	1498	1498
WHL-Y03	South principal rafter, truss 1	66	02	1444	1507	1509
WHL-Y04	North principal rafter, truss 2	77	08	1431	1499	1507
WHL-Y05	South principal rafter, truss 2	84	h/s			
WHL-Y06	Collar, truss 2	95	h/s	1406	1500	1500
WHL-Y07	King post, truss 2	141	17C	1381	1504	1521
Stables – ma	iin roof					
WHL-Y08	Tiebeam, truss 3	94	12	1416	1497	1509
WHL-Y09	Tiebeam, truss 4	89		1395		1483
WHL-Y10	South principal rafter, truss 5	112	h/s	1385	1496	1496
WHL-Y11	King post, truss 6	88	h/s	1404	1491	1491
WHL-Y12	North principal rafter, truss 6	115	h/s			
WHL-Y13	Tiebeam, truss 6	112	04	1388	1495	1499
WHL-Y14	Tiebeam, truss 7	94	h/s	1399	1492	1492
WHL-Y15	North principal rafter, truss 7	109	h/s	1394	1502	1502
WHL-Y16	Tiebeam, truss 8	62	h/s	1442	1503	1503
WHL-Y17	North principal rafter, truss 8	108	h/s	1388	1495	1495
WHL-Y21	North wallplate truss 3-5	49	h/s			
WHL-Y22	North wallplate, truss 5-6	70		1419		1488
Stables – otl	ner timbers					
WHL-Y18	Backing rafter, truss 4	50				
WHL-Y19	Backing rafter, truss 6	75	43C	1430	1461	1504
WHL-Y20	Backing rafter, truss 7	116	33C	1375	1457	1490
WHL-Y23	Lintel, first floor south door	NM				

Table 1: (cont)

Table 1: (cont)								
WHL-Y24	East gable, lintel	98	h/s	1406	1503	1503		
WHL-Y25	South lower purlin, truss 2-3	72		1363		1434		
WHL-Y26	South upper purlin, truss 2-3	74						
WHL-Y27	North lower purlin, truss 3-4	70	h/s	1441	1510	1510		
WHL-Y28	North upper purlin, truss 3-4	85	h/s	1450	1534	1534		
WHL-Y29	North upper purlin, truss 4-5	97	h/s	1400	1496	1496		
WHL-Y30	South lower purlin, truss 4-5	NM						
WHL-Y31	South lower purlin, truss 5-6	111	03	1379	1486	1489		
WHL-Y32	North lower purlin, truss 6-7	96	h/s	1380	1475	1475		
WHL-Y33	Ground-floor ceiling beam 1	100	20C	1422	1501	1521		
WHL-Y34	Ground-floor ceiling beam 2	65	13					
WHL-Y35	Lintel over ground floor south door	94	h/s	1389	1482	1482		
WHL-Y36	East lintel, door between bothy and stables	57	h/s	1435	1491	1491		
Bothy	Bothy							
WHL-Y37	North lower purlin	84	19C	1476	1540	1559		
WHL-Y38	South lower purlin	95	34C	1410	1470	1504		
WHL-Y39	North upper purlin	68	h/s	1468	1535	1535		
WHL-Y40	South upper purlin	110	20	1442	1531	1551		
WHL-Y41	Ridge	99	18	1402	1482	1500		
Carriage hou	ise – roof							
WHL-Y42	Tiebeam, truss 1	58	13	1437	1481	1494		
WHL-Y43	North principal rafter, truss 1	73	21C					
WHL-Y44	South principal rafter, truss 1	66	15					
WHL-Y45	Tiebeam, truss 2	61	14					
WHL-Y46	North principal rafter, truss 2	NM						
WHL-Y47	South principal rafter, truss 2	48	10					
WHL-Y48	North lower purlin, east end to truss 1	55	17					
WHL-Y49	South lower purlin, east end to truss 1	51	17					

Table 1: (cont)

	North lower purlin, truss 1-2	B.C.				NAUL VIOLENIA DE LA COLONIA DE						
		50	29C									
	outh lower purlin, truss 1-2	44	24									
	Wall between Carriage house and Lobby											
	North post	NM	-									
WHL-Y53 Pl	late, north of door	NM										
WHL-Y54 D	oor lintel (east)	126	30C	1399	1494	1524						
WHL-Y55 D	oor lintel (west)	129	h/s	1407	1535	1535						
WHL-Y56 PI	late, south of door	72	h/s	1434	1505	1505						
Lobby												
	North upper purlin	62	h/s									
WHL-Y58 N	North lower purlin	56	h/s									
	outh upper purlin	66	h/s	1400	1465	1465						
	outh lower purlin	61	h/s									
WHL-Y61 Be	eam to west wall	98	19C									
Great hall roof												
WHL-Y62 N	North principal rafter, truss 1	91	h/s	1385	1475	1475						
WHL-Y63 Sc	outh principal rafter, truss 1	77	h/s	1398	1474	1474						
WHL-Y64 Sc	outh principal rafter, truss 2	97	h/s	1380	1476	1476						
WHL-Y65 Ti	iebeam, truss 2	90		1375		1464						
WHL-Y66 Ki	ing post, truss 2	86		1376		1461						
WHL-Y67 Ki	ing post, truss 3	91		1362		1452						
WHL-Y68 Ea	ast brace (king post to ridge), truss 3	61		1412		1472						
WHL-Y69 Ki	ing post, truss 4	89		1374		1462						
WHL-Y70 Ti	iebeam, truss 5	60	h/s	1426	1485	1485						
WHL-Y71 Ki	ing post, truss 5	73		1372		1444						

 $NM = not \ measured; \ h/s = heartwood/sapwood \ boundary; \ C = complete \ sapwood \ retained \ on \ sample, \ last \ measured \ ring \ is \ the \ felling \ date$ 

3 - 2015

Table 2: Results of the cross-matching of site sequence WHLYSQ01 and the reference chronologies when the first-ring date is AD 1362 and the last-measured ring date is AD 1559

Reference chronology	t-value	Span of chronology (AD)	Reference
Ordsall Hall, Salford, Greater Manchester	10.7	1385–1512	Howard et al 1994
2–4 Church Street, Leek, Staffordshire	9.8	1406–1512	Arnold and Howard 2009 unpubl
Worden Old Hall, Chorley, Lancashire	8.8	1415–1531	Bridge 2003
Tithe Barn, Bolton Abbey, West Yorkshire	8.7	1371–1518	Arnold et al 2006 unpubl
Apethorn Fold Farmhouse, Tameside, Greater Manchester	8.6	1379–1512	Tyers 1999
Nether Levens Hall, Kendal, Cumbria	8.5	1395–1541	Howard et al 1991
Mousley Bottom, New Mills, Derbyshire	8.5	1417–1566	Esling <i>et al</i> 1990

#### **FIGURES**



Figure 1: Map to show the general location of Whalley, Lancashire. © Crown Copyright and database right 2015. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900



Figure 2: Map to show the location of Whalley Abbey, Whalley, Lancashire. © Crown Copyright and database right 2015. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900

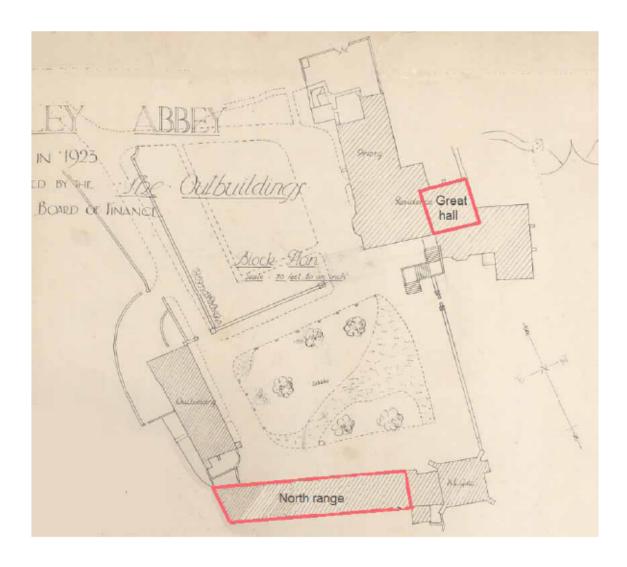


Figure 3: Plan of Whalley Abbey, showing the areas under investigation (Robert Martin, architect to Manchester Diocese (LA DRB acc 7633/37)

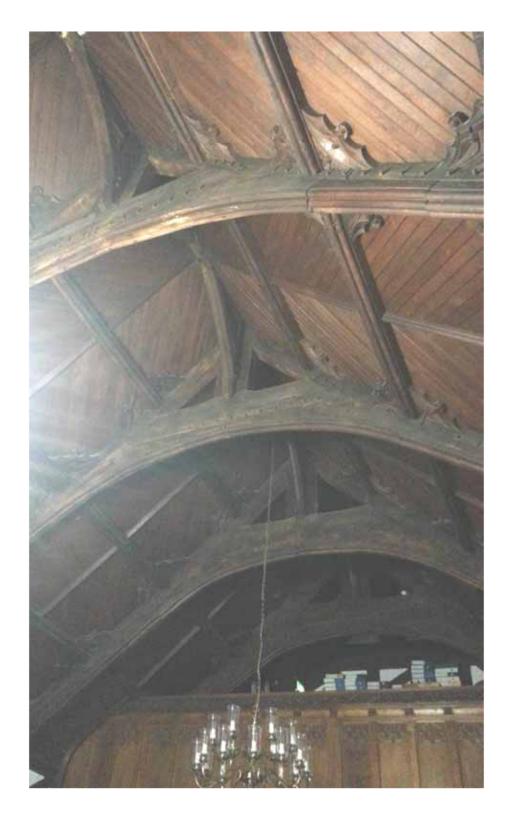


Figure 4: Great hall, photograph taken from the east (William Howard)

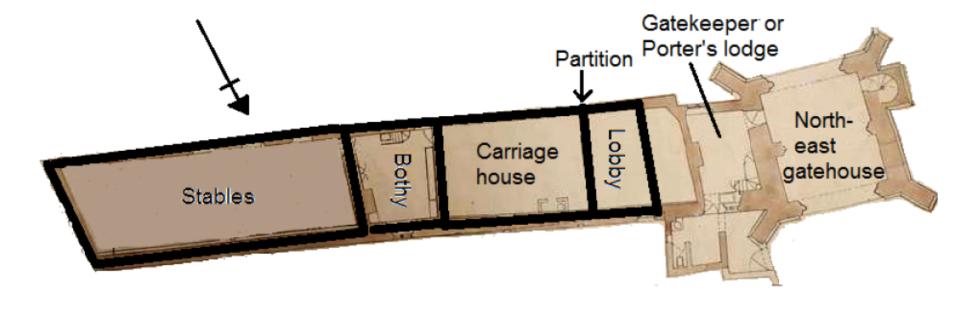


Figure 5: Plan of the north range, showing component parts (Robert Martin, architect to Manchester Diocese (LA DRB acc 7633/37)

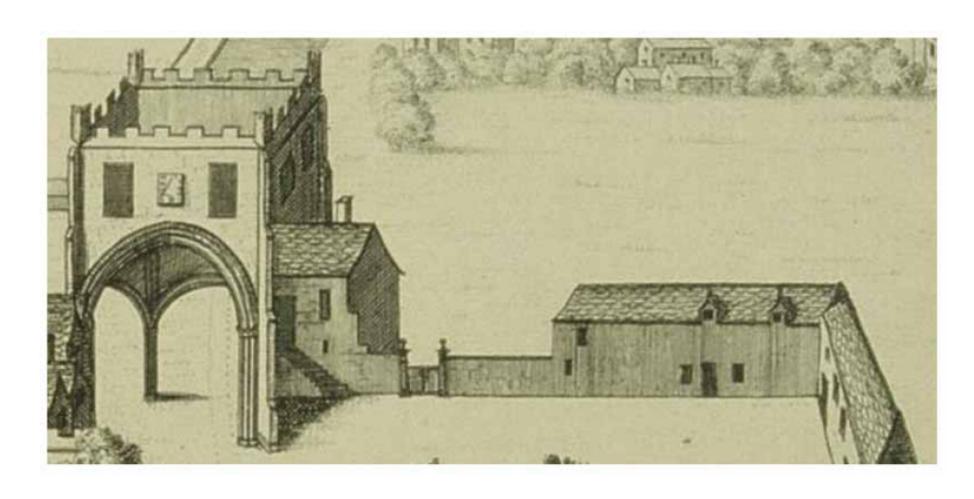


Figure 6: Detail from Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's AD 1727 view of the abbey (north-east gatehouse to the left)



Figure 7: Stables, truss 2 with high collar and modern tiebeam, photograph taken from the east (Alison Arnold)



Figure 8: Stables; truss 4 with canted tiebeam, photograph taken from the west (Alison Arnold)



Figure 9: Stables, one of the backing rafters used to modify roof pitch, photograph taken from the west (Alison Arnold)



Figure 10: Stables, ground-floor ceiling beams (beam 2 in the foreground), photograph taken from the north-west (Alison Arnold)



Figure 11: Former bothy roof, photograph taken from the north-east (Alison Arnold)



Figure 12: Carriage house, truss 2, photograph taken from the east (Alison Arnold))



Figure 13: Lobby roof, photograph taken from the north (William Howard)



Figure 14: Partition between carriage house and lobby, photograph taken from the carriage house (Alison Arnold)

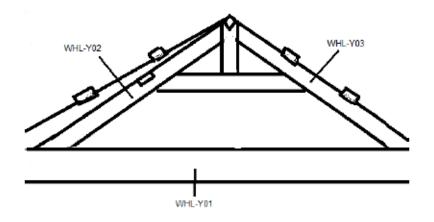


Figure 15: Sketch of truss 1, showing the location of samples WHL-Y01-03

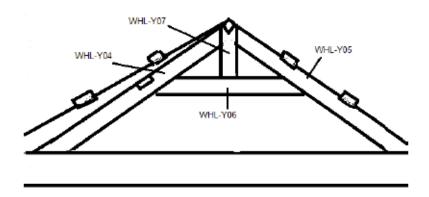


Figure 16: Sketch of truss 2, showing the location of samples WHL-Y04-07

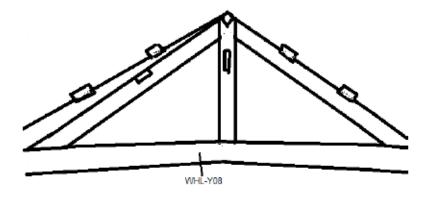


Figure 17: Sketch of truss 3, showing the location of sample WHL-Y08

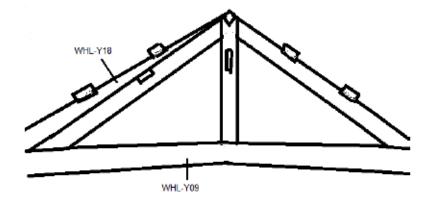


Figure 18: Sketch of truss 4, showing the location of samples WHL-Y09 and WHL-Y18

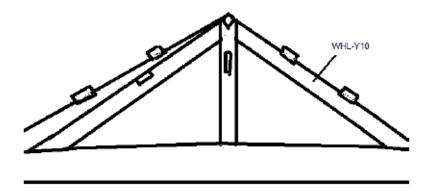


Figure 19: Sketch of truss 5, showing the location of sample WHL-Y10

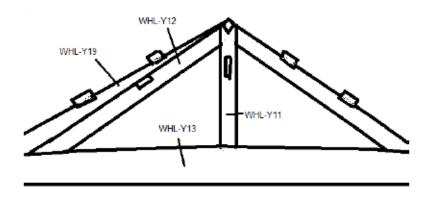


Figure 20: Sketch of truss 6, showing the location of samples WHL-Y11-13 and WHL-Y19

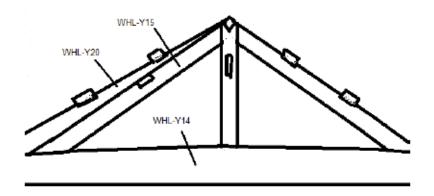


Figure 21: Sketch of truss 7, showing the location of samples WHL-Y14, WHL-Y15, and WHL-Y20

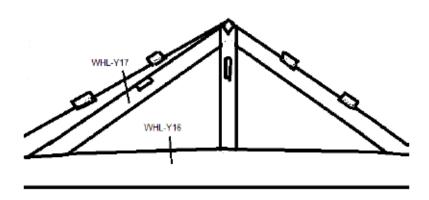


Figure 22: Sketch of truss 8, showing the location of samples WHL-Y16 and WHL-Y17

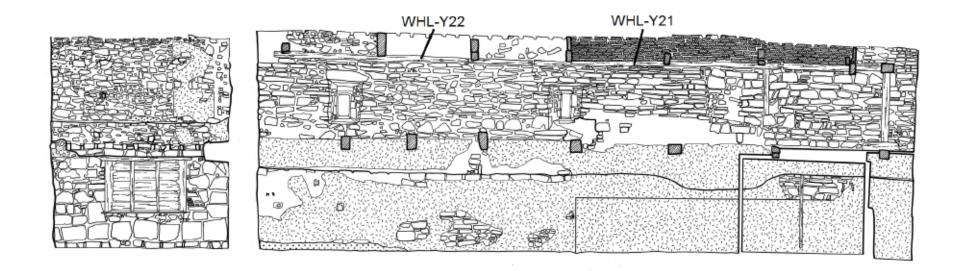


Figure 23: Stables and bothy, north wall (south face), showing the location of samples WHL-Y21 and WHL-Y22 (LUAC, 1997)

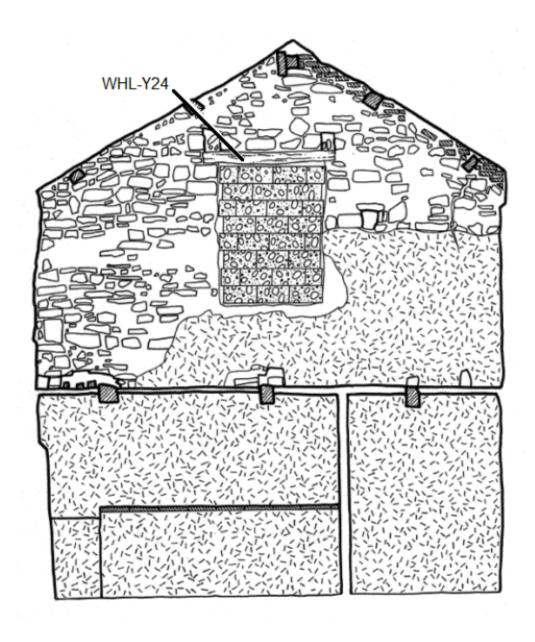


Figure 24: Stables, east wall (west face), showing the location of sample WHL-Y24 (LUAC 1997)

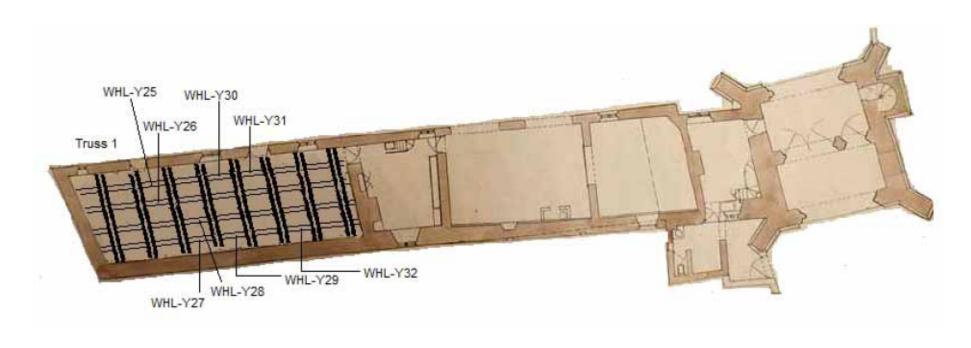


Figure 25: Plan of the Stables, showing the location of samples WHL-Y25-32 (Robert Martin, architect to Manchester Diocese (LA DRB acc 7633/37)

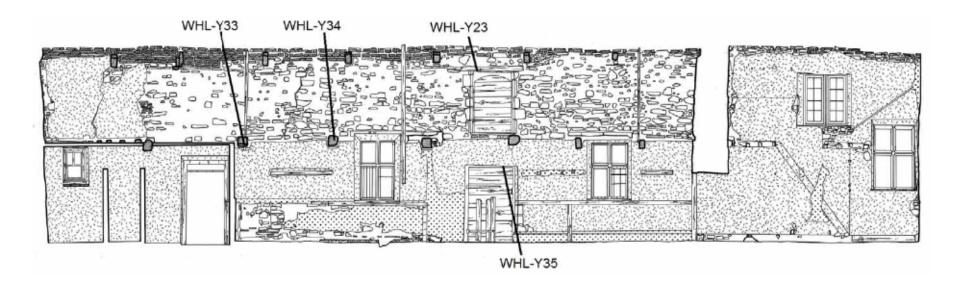


Figure 26: Stables and bothy, south wall (north face), showing the location of samples WHL-Y23 and WHL-Y33-5 (LUAC 1997)

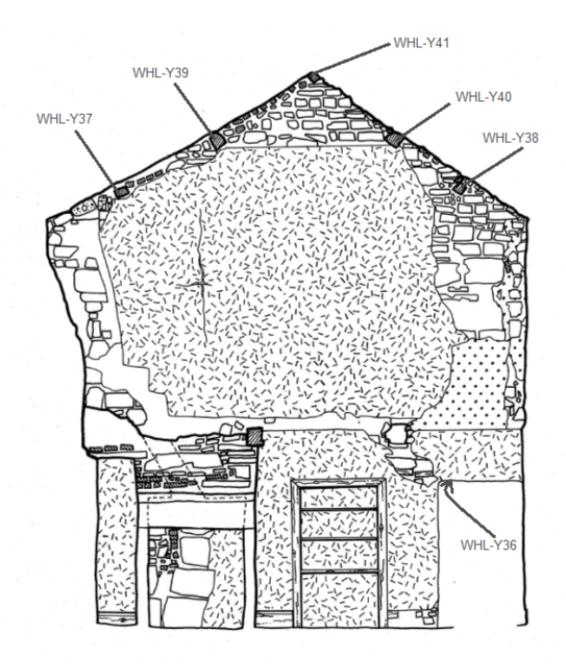


Figure 27: Interior wall between stables and bothy (west face), showing the location of sample WHL-Y36-41 (LUAC 1997)



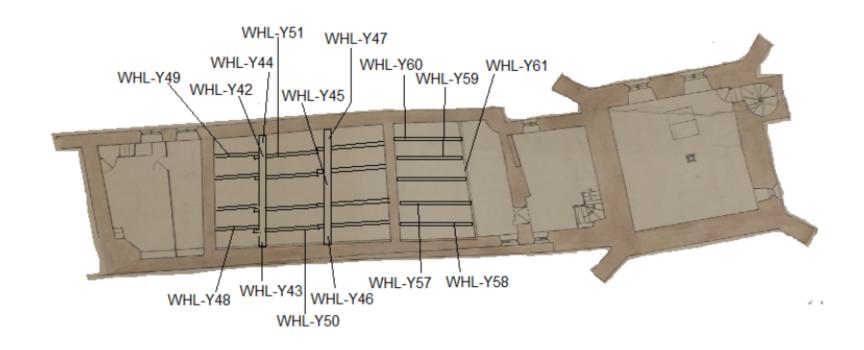


Figure 28: Plan of the north range, showing the location of samples WHL-Y42-51 and WHL-Y57-61 (Robert Martin, architect to Manchester Diocese (LA DRB acc 7633/37)

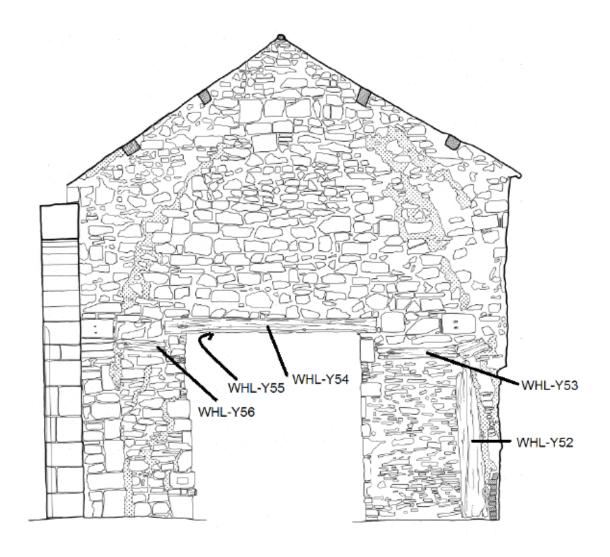


Figure 29: Dividing wall between carriage house and lobby (east face), showing the location of samples WHL-Y52-56 (LUAU 1997)

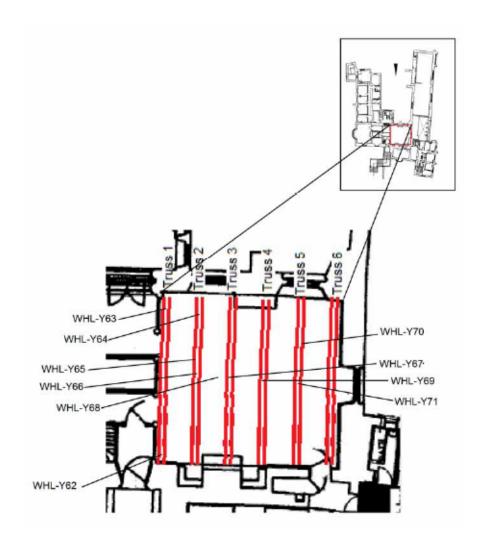


Figure 30: Plan of the great hall, showing the location of samples WHL-Y62-71 (Ashworth Burke Partnership)



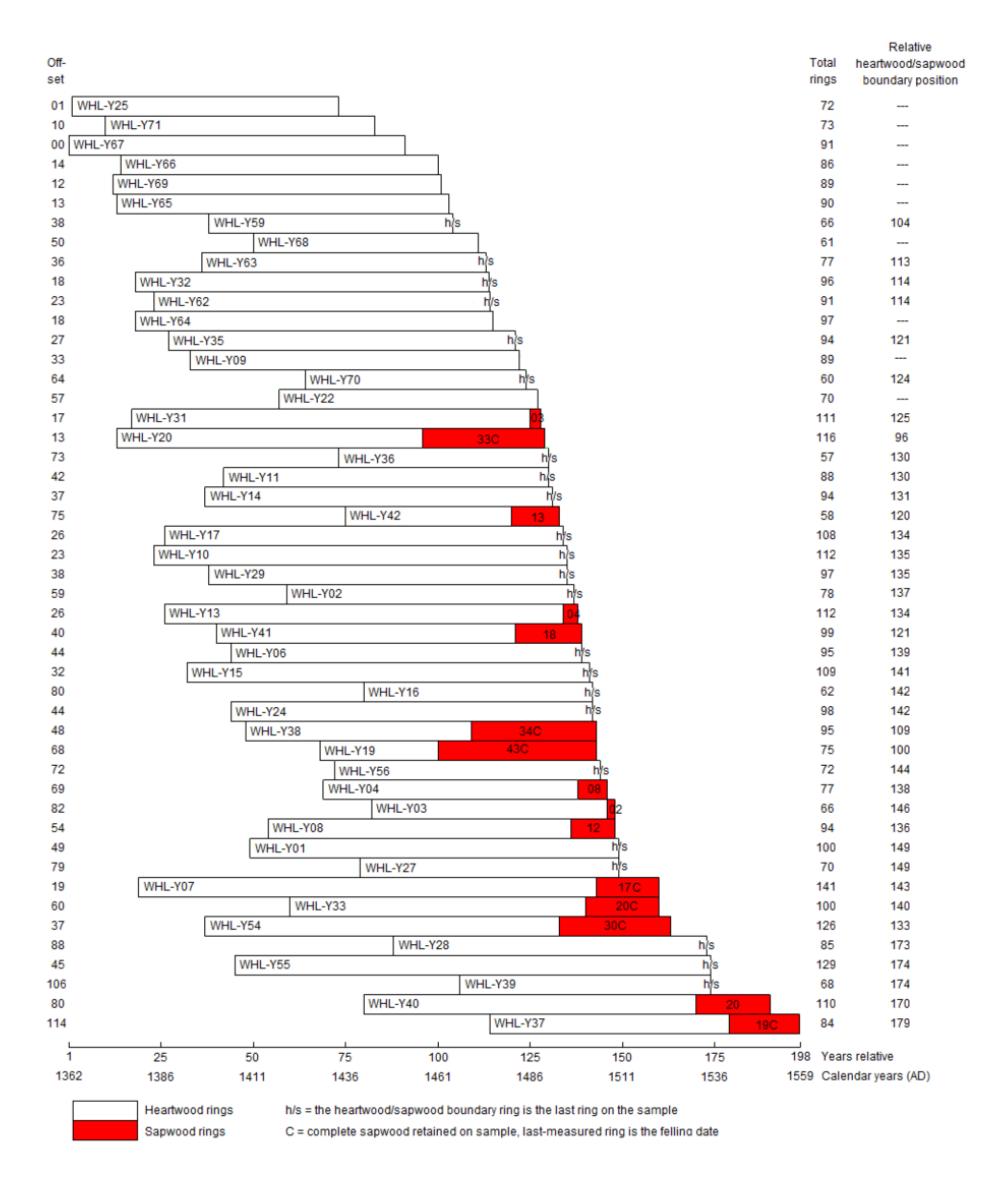


Figure 31: Bar diagram of samples in site sequence WHLYSQ01

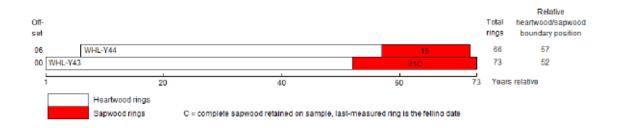


Figure 32: Bar diagram of samples in undated site sequence WHLYSQ02

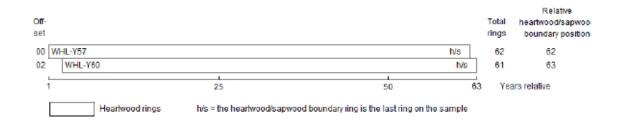


Figure 33: Bar diagram of samples in undated site sequence WHLYSQ03

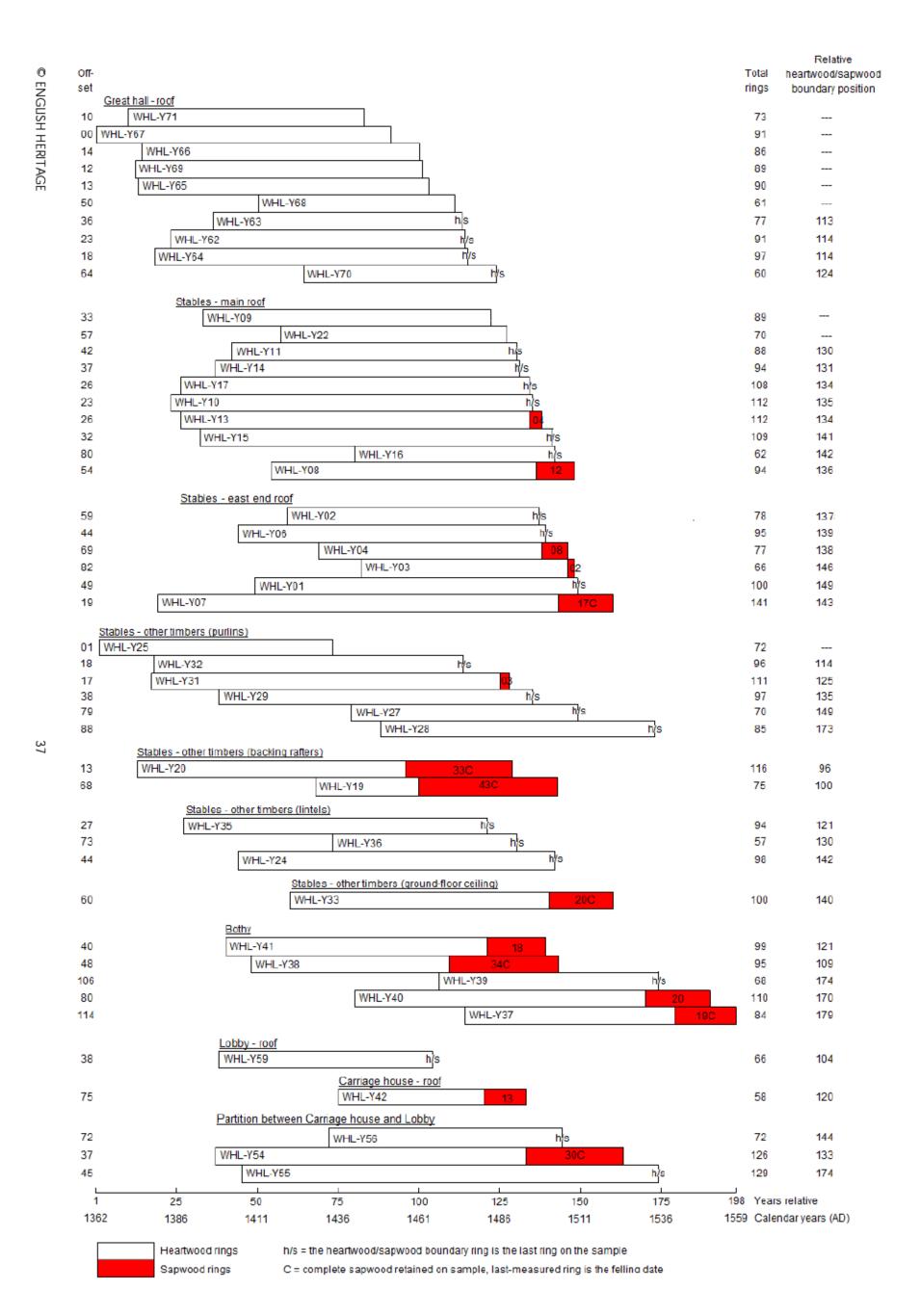


Figure 34: Bar diagram of all dated samples, sorted by area

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
WHL-Y01	1		-10	-8	-20	-19	-31	30	-5	-20	10	-36	43	23	41	17	-39	23	-34	-8
WHL-Y02	2	4.0	***	-23	20	27	1 D	35	0	-14	36	-23	49	53	17	-16	-26	28	-19	2
WHL-Y03	3	4.0	8.0	***	26	33	27	38	49	38	-8	29	80	56	34	54	6	45	4	14
WHL-Y04	4	3.2	3.3	2.9	***	20	20	63	15	-13	46	27	4	-23	-25	37	3	Б1	-23	12
WHL-Y05	5	3.2	3.0	2.6	4.4	***	32	67	-16	-1	-22	38	-24	-34	44	44	-4	55	-8	24
WHL-Y06	6	2.8	4.2	2.0	3.2	3.3	***	25	-1 D	-17	21	2	3.8	12	7	12	-36	18	-43	-13
WHL-Y07	7	4.3	4.7	2.9	3.1	3.8	5.2	***	-35	-14	-4	-23	-6	-7	-1B	-13	-61	-7	-21	-38
WHL-Y08	8	4.1	3.5	3.2	2.6	3.0	6.9	5.9	***	21	31	12	-15	28	17	22	-26	28	-41	-3
WHL-Y09	9	3.6	2.8	2.0	2.7	2.3	3.0	5.5	4.7	***	10	-9	62	-7	-4	1	2	7	-26	-39
WHL-Y10	10	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.5	3.2	5.2	6.2	4.8	5.9	***	-19	6	28	-14	-9	-57	-3	-9	-34
WHL-Y11	11	3.1	3.6	3.1	3.4	3.7	5.7	7.2	4.0	5.0	3.9		17	-2	5	10	-38	16	2	-15
WHL-Y12	1.2	3.2	3.3	2.8	2.7	3.3	2.6	3.1	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.4		-1	-6	-1	-28	5	-30	-27
WHL-Y13	13	3.6	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.8	4.8	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.9	3.4	***	-11	-6	-54	0	-22	-31
WHL-Y14	1.4	4.1	3.8	3.0	2.5	4.0	4.2	7.5	6.6	3.3	3.2	6.0	2.5	5.5	***	5	-43	11	-3	-20
WHL-Y15	15	6.3	4.2	3.6	3.4	2.5	4.2	7.4	6.0	4.6	3.3	6.0	3.5	5.5	7.5	TTX	-48	Б	-8	-25
WHL-Y16	16	3.1	2.8	2.0	2.2	2.8	5.4	7.2	5.5	2.7	3.5	5.1	3.3	3.3	4.0	5.1	***	54	-10	23
WHL-Y17	17	5.1	3.6	2.7	4.1	3.8	5.5	8.6	6.1	3.5	4.5	6.7	2.8	3.9	7.5	7.4	5.8	***	-14	-31
WHL-Y21	18	2.3	1.5	1.9	1.6	2.3	3.8	2.7	2.8	3.3	3.0	3.2	2.8	2.6	3.7	4.1	1.7	2.0	***	-5
WHL-Y22	19	4.2	3.9	3.5	3.3	5.4	4.4	5.6	5.8	2.6	4.0	3.5	2.7	3.3	6.1	6.7	3.7	5.9	3.2	***

Figure 35: Table showing offset and level of matching between samples of the stables roof; figures in the box show the t-level matching between samples from the east end against those from the rest of the roof

# DATA OF MEASURED SAMPLES

# Measurements in 0.01mm units

## WHL-Y01A 100

320 360 409 307 321 350 255 272 254 423 268 240 307 306 256 187 219 207 238 266 289 339 289 275 297 300 330 267 201 203 248 284 328 303 238 226 177 143 199 189 209 206 121 57 48 63 61 47 57 80 78 87 96 89 93 112 145 140 78 74 130 111 150 202 246 249 181 134 169 177 151 65 103 161 168 196 232 113 84 77 121 152 139 173 239 235 149 104 106 96 67 82 115 129 119 156 116 131 151 151 WHL-Y01B 100

331 352 400 296 327 350 258 308 257 419 251 254 292 311 254 188 209 208 251 251 281 338 288 276 298 288 334 267 193 211 252 285 331 301 243 223 186 141 192 181 202 218 129 64 51 68 62 48 54 76 88 92 93 86 97 112 146 138 79 72 124 114 148 200 249 253 170 131 163 177 152 68 98 158 173 186 231 124 83 85 129 152 139 173 256 237 148 99 112 92 70 77 120 123 119 161 114 134 152 151 WHL-YO2A 78

77 59 83 113 166 201 165 137 130 96 186 242 186 154 153 159 169 154 154 176 176 173 175 174 126 148 139 144 173 172 147 171 239 441 378 424 385 382 239 356 315 287 304 217 216 248 274 202 143 180 195 132 148 190 322 281 156 209 141 204 256 136 185 249 252 219 289 165 137 114 155 169 115 146 201 230 127 128 WHL-Y02B 78

80 56 84 123 155 202 168 138 131 85 170 226 186 165 151 155 158 164 155 186 182 167 179 176 128 150 144 144 177 185 142 177 238 449 395 421 384 371 248 357 309 282 317 215 222 247 265 212 140 183 202 133 150 178 332 282 149 203 147 207 255 143 186 270 252 219 291 161 140 111 162 164 122 150 185 239 122 116 WHL-Y03A 66

216 123 193 162 205 226 225 218 289 337 487 402 362 256 318 280 392 349 399 408 277 241 322 292 281 198 279 256 219 231 228 360 360 273 257 202 168 249 211 249 250 310 220 256 145 130 109 180 231 157 162 205 259 145 160 184 230 211 176 166 198 192 246 139 149 169

# WHL-Y03B 66

200 156 181 160 198 230 229 235 284 334 489 397 367 254 315 274 392 350 394 410 277 240 320 294 293 184 247 278 221 240 230 348 376 255 233 198 167 245 222 245 250 306 213 244 145 124 121 186 230 156 147 212 263 144 162 172 242 211 175 164 202 189 259 149 153 179

# WHL-Y04A 76

431 335 345 457 366 269 249 243 186 164 167 138 229 187 200 168 171 177 207 176 199 274 237 203 166 203 195 205 137 143 146 189 154 119 130 138 153 136 142 118 116 105 149 144 178 159 156 113 102 102 84 61 82 80 63 65 44 44 43 47 61 60 56 57 48 67 48 46 45 52 51 51 49 53 47 59

# WHL-Y04B 77

418 352 342 469 305 265 260 240 183 169 172 138 223 191 170 157 173 175 211 176 200 275 243 200 166 206 186 207 143 142 147 189 154 110 133 139 146 144 133 119 109 101 157 151 169 157 143 111 102 98 84 55 93 80 63 57 47 41 42 44 59 54 53 51 51 61 53 45 45 40 50 42 50 60 77 80 63

# WHL-Y05A 84

42 78 73 101 177 196 259 295 213 384 237 296 347 338 435 334 254 206 223 303 323 325 304 310 187 191 171 191 150 120 118 122 190 120 96 104 95 105 128 90 112 144 176 145 137 117 116 105 117 146 145 135 119 107 124 94 92 81 79 80 76 77 91 104 129 145 111 91 68 87 70 67 75 82 68 59 48 48 50 35 57 44 50

#### WHL-Y05B 84

57 65 82 100 168 204 283 311 213 390 267 302 328 349 449 344 270 205 224 305 321 320 302 287 193 190 170 191 148 118 121 124 184 121 97 106 91 111 129 85 115 144 175 147 132 123 118 104 116 150 141 134 119 106 121 95 92 83 79 74 78 78 90 104 125 144 112 93 73 86 69 67 72 83 59 53 64 47 44 34 52 57 46 52

## WHL-Y06A 95

293 259 268 271 292 218 240 211 172 228 158 188 143 143 193 188 187 214 191 143 211 201 170 198 195 173 258 160 228 190 210 133 185 111 158 114 141 186 211 155 119 155 141 189 150 183 179 127 125 141 163 149 142 116 120 101 117 138 115 153 101 103 165 155 231 177 143 227 158 285 262 152 173 213 146 218 181 190 226 189 159 229 193 178 185 186 125 163 116 174 179 140 117 152 121

#### WHL-Y06B 95

297 260 263 276 290 226 238 213 163 233 156 187 143 145 188 197 166 229 204 135 203 193 165 202 188 179 263 173 224 185 213 137 186 113 158 108 142 187 217 166 118 134 163 184 151 181 183 126 126 136 168 149 141 112 124 104 114 131 113 154 105 92 170 150 238 183 139 226 155 275 252 157 167 215 146 226 184 186 225 188 157 235 203 190 178 176 127 151 120 174 182 141 117 142 130

## WHL-Y07A 141

362 333 313 370 295 360 372 355 269 304 315 329 295 287 249 269 288 239 226 292 250 179 318 243 228 223 186 198 228 218 154 175 191 110 143 121 161 147 123 120 147 134 150 138 128 160 160 159 170 210 161 176 135 122 125 127 132 98 87 83 99 99 88 115 100 64 94 89 88 91 87 112 79 61 63 81 75 81 75 69 74 64 89 54 71 86 59 48 63 82 93 50 88 77 133 148 87 83 76 95 138 83 130 168 136 156 172 118 160 149 143 133 113 113 130 179 106 89 106 86 74 124 140 143 143 144 94 106 154 105 120 99 142 124 112 129 85 114 118 117 131

## WHL-Y07B 141

366 332 308 368 302 359 372 356 272 303 312 326 299 282 252 267 286 239 233 290 249 178 320 238 231 220 192 198 225 211 151 186 198 105 135 127 154 152 121 122 155 151 148 143 136 163 160 165 170 198 176 180 130 123 132 125 129 103 95 82 95 105 86 106 108 61 99 80 93 97 98 114 71 60 68 71 84 70 68 76 72 69 76 55 76 80 59 48 57 82 90 53 90 85 128 147 93 79 83 91 132 95 123 159 141 152 176 114 156 155 150 124 111 116 133 176 110 91 103 90 72 118 141 138 140 136 92 112 150 111 118 101 140 125 94 148 91 105 119 124 118

# WHL-Y08A 94

583 539 415 381 539 354 332 316 347 221 259 365 291 266 229 178 295 181 240 263 196 207 194 126 120 144 156 195 243 243 161 183 195 206 188 158 131 110 86 92 132 130 138 113 140 130 127 145 101 127 76 73 56 56 77 106 105 160 101 192 202 156 136 103 93 127 93 109 125 148 132 168 168 151 154 156 134 150 89 121 147 117 77 91 75 50 73 75 106 134 157 124 104 128

# WHL-Y08B 94

591 539 420 378 538 370 324 322 352 225 266 368 301 268 230 173 293 182 243 255 197 211 191 129 120 143 157 192 262 241 163 182 194 206 183 156 134 114 82 106 123 137 135 117 142 135 126 146 98 132 87 63 55 61 72 110 105 156 110 194 202 154 137 99 97 118 93 103 124 147 133 173 162 156 145 156 132 149 98 110 154 114 70 94 78 53 76 85 118 127 142 106 108 140

# WHL-Y09A 89

624 529 527 591 498 480 561 295 474 490 411 483 454 448 432 469 357 326 388 348 274 279 278 231 176 194 293 242 244 307 220 252 289 254 212 230 185 247 128 204 141 144 138 140 94 98 110 95 79 113 108 58 135 126 78 106 145 98 67 66 57 72 81 58 78 76 80 55 88 65 70 54 62 39 42 42 54 56 89 78

111 113 98 92 66 72 70 58 79

#### WHL-Y09B 89

636 532 531 586 501 484 565 296 474 501 403 492 457 460 436 469 356 324 384 342 264 287 272 231 173 185 286 246 253 292 217 249 293 251 219 229 171 272 137 203 145 140 140 122 105 96 106 97 79 106 110 64 131 115 94 110 130 109 67 48 77 63 76 63 80 76 72 65 87 67 64 55 65 36 42 44 50 58 88 75 113 107 103 91 71 74 92 54 73

## WHL-Y10A 112

277 494 435 335 369 295 358 358 343 306 383 389 345 314 308 325 325 191 384 334 303 336 253 258 274 200 183 208 194 179 186 142 172 159 112 179 197 148 156 166 154 175 178 183 205 157 104 198 123 182 174 170 113 142 122 116 106 92 110 133 112 69 102 93 77 83 86 97 77 72 74 67 73 73 66 85 69 75 76 62 82 61 78 75 84 79 84 54 64 66 132 137 127 116 77 114 104 93 135 140 90 105 145 87 115 94 85 76 75 75 68 79

#### WHL-Y10B 112

281 488 444 336 345 311 353 361 343 313 381 396 337 317 307 325 328 186 381 330 303 348 259 261 272 197 182 210 192 182 182 145 172 158 109 180 200 154 148 173 150 178 177 188 205 152 99 203 127 184 168 168 117 141 107 124 117 96 109 130 109 70 103 88 76 95 75 95 74 74 73 75 71 74 70 67 70 75 82 62 85 57 78 82 81 73 87 58 66 60 145 135 125 114 80 99 118 90 132 143 97 79 160 93 118 93 85 77 74 79 71 64

#### WHL-Y11A 88

355 298 360 279 286 325 353 254 221 247 184 202 186 241 212 186 192 209 240 246 199 165 205 167 180 175 182 273 243 177 209 191 221 172 200 131 128 154 141 171 214 176 121 146 135 143 117 169 169 141 133 121 129 137 113 107 115 105 126 135 106 134 93 107 87 131 146 124 97 131 107 163 140 119 106 85 104 130 84 99 119 130 120 115 99 103 100 132

## WHL-Y11B 88

355 304 361 276 285 337 361 250 220 245 186 199 192 240 208 188 191 220 239 243 196 166 198 171 186 176 182 277 238 164 210 187 216 163 210 127 137 152 142 177 214 177 123 147 133 140 122 169 169 138 138 116 134 131 119 108 112 104 114 129 115 133 89 110 88 125 146 130 97 134 106 156 140 115 107 93 104 121 82 99 132 129 116 123 82 93 112 117

## WHL-Y12A 115

177 186 148 145 118 151 135 182 173 150 161 168 162 188 182 137 155 130 140 144 151 108 105 114 130 144 141 131 117 118 157 136 118 111 128 125 122 125 127 114 116 152 158 171 166 157 157 148 180 215 194 167 165 151 132 148 158 170 156 182 150 159 148 149 165 183 155 114 130 127 132 137 168 162 190 247 250 295 212 197 149 153 224 208 200 159 147 171 232 232 171 175 138 127 133 106 113 133 101 140 88 106 105 117 105 96 117 111 130 116 101 116 117 99 82

# WHL-Y12B 115

183 156 145 141 121 153 134 179 163 147 151 177 170 189 179 136 152 144 147 140 146 109 115 111 133 149 148 127 111 119 166 121 120 109 135 115 121 129 121 110 121 160 154 166 163 160 158 146 175 214 194 169 163 150 139 147 160 170 141 184 155 158 161 142 166 183 153 120 122 131 134 139 164 169 185 240 247 292 214 199 146 161 212 228 188 148 139 175 226 229 172 170 139 123 136 104 116 123 107 138 86 115 94 122 106 92 116 114 131 108 112 117 119 90 88

# WHL-Y13A 112

261 393 237 292 359 200 280 336 361 326 339 306 339 302 250 399 310 342 315 287 313 353 293 285 210 177 176 157 145 213 225 153 274 143 104 144 105 135 167 150 175 178 222 208 134 155 134 146 125 159 126 94 127 108 184 132 122 129 126 77 90 118 105 101 126 98 65 64 68 89 85 101 96 89 117 137 112 84 66 49 47 54 77 86 70 100 103 167 149 74 96 90 79 114 95 113 105 115 110 124

94 82 85 85 68 56 81 94 128 76 73 74

## WHL-Y13B 112

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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 1998) 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 randomlike, 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

1. 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 150mm long and 10mm 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 A1: 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

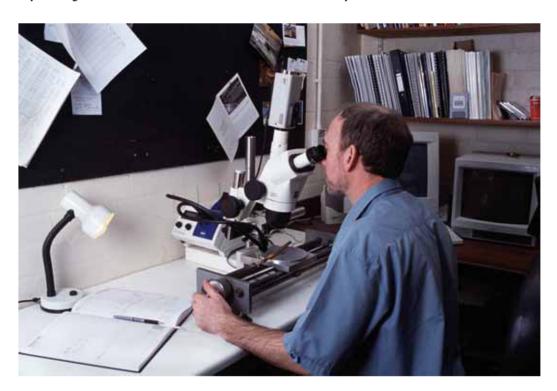


Figure A3: Measuring ring widths under a microscope. The microscope is fixed while the sample is on a moving platform. The total sequence of widths is measured twice to ensure that an error has not been made. This type of apparatus is needed to process a large number of samples on a regular basis



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).
- Cross-Matching and Dating the Samples. Because of the factors besides the local 3. 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 a/1988; Howard et a/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 C45, 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 C45 and C08 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 0.8mm for C45, 0.2mm for C08, 0.7mm for C05, and 0.3mm for C04, then the corresponding width of the site

sequence is the average of these, 0.55mm. 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 cross-matching 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 al* 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 20mm, 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 H/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, 50–5). 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 seguence 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.

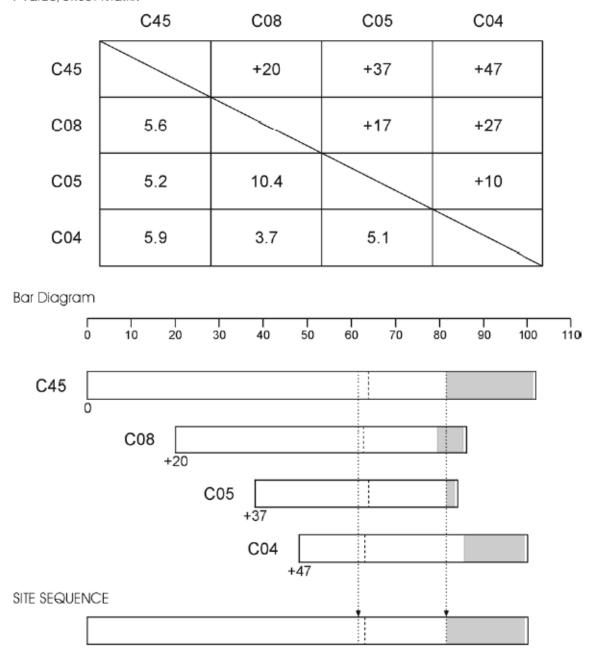


Figure A5: Cross-matching of four sequences from a Lincoln Cathedral roof and the formation of a site sequence from them

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 C08 and C45 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.

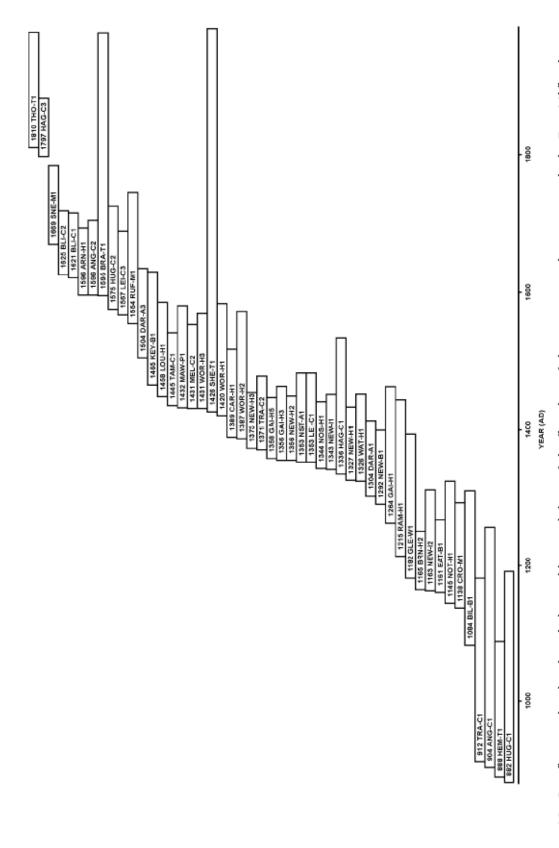
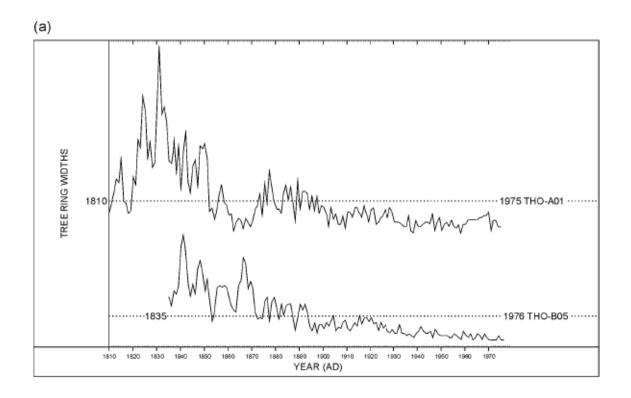


Figure A6: Bar diagram showing the relative positions and dates of the first rings of the component site sequences in the East Midlands Master Dendrochronological Sequence, EM08/87



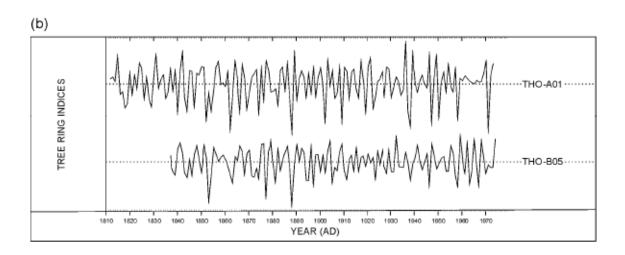


Figure A7 (a): The raw ring-widths of two samples, THO-A01 and THO-B05, whose felling dates are known

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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