

Tree-ring analysis of wood from 5 Scale Lane, Hull

Jennifer Hillam, June 1985

Four wood samples from HF 85 (Trench III Context 100) were examined at the Sheffield Dendrochronology Laboratory in 1985. The timbers had been set in a clay raft about 20m thick. The raft was about 2m below the modern ground surface within water-logged deposits.

Examination of the samples (Table 1) revealed that they were not oak (Quercus spp), which is the wood type usually used in Britain for tree-ring dating. Instead they were identified as spruce (Picea abies), which is not a native British tree. The timbers therefore are likely to have been imported from somewhere on the Continent. Previous sites at Hull have also produced coniferous samples, eg Blackfriars and Monkgate (Hillam 1983), although the type of conifer was not identified.

Tree-ring work has been carried out on Picea abies elsewhere in Europe, eg Austria, Switzerland, and long chronologies have been produced (Eckstein et al 1984). But without knowing the provenance of the Hull timbers, it would be difficult to date them.

However, the Hull ring widths were not measured for other reasons. Samples 1-3 had less than 50 rings, and are not suitable for dating purposes on the grounds of insufficient rings. Sample 4 had about 72 growth rings, but some were so narrow that accurate measurement was impossible.




Acknowledgements

The work was funded by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England. The samples were identified by Ms BA Crone.

References

- Eckstein D, Baillie MGL & Egger H 1984 Handbooks for Archaeologists. No 2 Dendrochronological Dating. European Science Foundation, Strasbourg
- Hillam J 1983 Tree-ring analysis: Hull, Blackfriars. Ancient Monuments Laboratory report no 4129
- Hillam J 1983 Tree-ring analysis: Hull, Monkgate. Ancient Monuments Laboratory report no 4130

Table 1: Details of tree-ring samples from 5 Scale Lane, Hull.
 All are spruce (Picea abies). Sketches are not to scale. Samples
 numbers were given at Sheffield.

sample number	number of rings	maximum dimensions (mm)	sketch
1	39	139 x 43	
2	41	130 x 32	
3	23	218 x 66	
4	?72	209 x 36	