

Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 11/96

THE TREE-RING DATING OF THE  
OLD FARMHOUSE AT CULLACOTT,  
WERRINGTON, CORNWALL

D W H Miles

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Summary

Thirty-three samples were taken from five main and two intermediate phases at the old farmhouse at Cullacott (SX 303 880). All but one of the samples extracted had complete sapwood and contained between 26 and 115 rings. Despite this, positive dates could only be obtained for three samples from the first phase, that being the Hall and Lower End. This phase produced three felling dates which were the spring of AD 1472, the spring of AD 1478, and the summer or autumn of AD 1481. Nevertheless, the dendrochronology has confirmed that the parlour and the north-east wing are coeval, the west porch was ceiled over upstairs originally, and that the Hall was ceiled over 35 years before the south-east porch was constructed. Although no firm dates could be found for the later phases, it is possible that they may date against future sites in the south-west, and as such the data contain great potential.

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# THE TREE-RING DATING OF THE OLD FARMHOUSE, CULLACOTT

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Table 1: CULLACOTT - SUMMARY OF TREE-RING DATING

| Sample number                                 | timber & position                    | dates AD spanning | H/S bdry | sap-wood | no of rings | mean width mm | std devn mm | mean sens mm | felling seasons and dates |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Hall and Lower End</b>                     |                                      |                   |          |          |             |               |             |              |                           |
| * c11a  | c Principals T2                      | 1415-1481         | 1460     | 21½C     | 67          | 1.77          | 0.47        | 0.225        | summer/autumn 1481        |
| b   | c (matched t=10.98)                  | 1394-1481         | 1455     | 25½C     | 88          | 1.65          | 0.53        | 0.208        |                           |
| † c12   | c E lower purlin b VI                | 6-46              |          | 11¼C     | 41          | 2.47          | 0.73        | 0.203        |                           |
| * c13   | c Principals T5                      | 1408-1477         | 1458     | 18¼C     | 70          | 2.48          | 0.78        | 0.220        | spring 1478               |
| † c14   | c W upper purlin b VI                | 1-46              |          | 14¼C     | 46          | 1.85          | 0.72        | 0.194        |                           |
| * c15   | c Principals T3                      | 1402-1471         | 1461     | 10¼C     | 70          | 2.24          | 0.96        | 0.251        | spring 1472               |
| † c16   | c E rafter bay V                     | 5-46              |          | 14¼C     | 42          | 2.03          | 0.95        | 0.233        |                           |
| c17   | c Floor joist bay IV                 | -                 |          | 19¼C     | 52          | 2.13          | 1.31        | 0.253        |                           |
| c18   | c Floor joist bay IV                 | -                 |          | 12¼C     | 28          | 3.50          | 0.86        | 0.247        |                           |
| † = c1246                                     | site sequence                        | 1-46              |          |          | 46          | 2.09          | 0.68        | 0.188        |                           |
| * = CULLACOTT                                 | site master                          | 1394-1481         |          |          | 88          | 2.05          | 0.52        | 0.190        |                           |
| <b>Parlour End and North-east Wing</b>        |                                      |                   |          |          |             |               |             |              |                           |
| † c21a  | c Floor joist                        | 2-61              |          |          | 60          | 0.90          | 0.52        | 0.241        |                           |
| b   | c (matched t=9.32)                   | 2-84              |          | 18¼C     | 83          | 1.42          | 0.63        | 0.213        |                           |
| c22a  | c Floor joist                        | -                 |          |          | 34          | 1.10          | 0.29        | 0.227        |                           |
| b   | c (matched t=5.86)                   | -                 |          | 12       | 54          | 1.50          | 0.53        | 0.198        |                           |
| c23   | c Floor joist                        | -                 |          | 22½C     | 82          | 2.38          | 1.16        | 0.148        |                           |
| c31a  | c Floor joist                        | -                 |          | 4        | 24          | 2.32          | 0.71        | 0.196        |                           |
| b   | c (matched t=5.27)                   | -                 |          | 15¼C     | 35          | 2.28          | 0.74        | 0.199        |                           |
| c32a  | c Floor joist                        | -                 |          | 14¼C     | 82          | 1.13          | 0.58        | 0.245        |                           |
| b   | c (matched t=5.05)                   | -                 |          |          | 43          | 1.53          | 0.73        | 0.238        |                           |
| † c33a  | c Floor joist                        | 1-65              |          | 9        | 65          | 1.41          | 0.66        | 0.271        |                           |
| b   | c (matched t=8.8)                    | 1-50              |          |          | 50          | 1.46          | 0.48        | 0.305        |                           |
| † = c2133                                     | site sequence                        | 1-84              |          |          | 84          | 1.24          | 0.46        | 0.210        |                           |
| <b>West Porch</b>                             |                                      |                   |          |          |             |               |             |              |                           |
| c41   | c W outer doorhead                   | -                 |          | 11¼C     | 65          | 2.84          | 0.90        | 0.229        |                           |
| c42   | c Floor joist                        | -                 |          | 20¼C     | 82          | 1.19          | 0.89        | 0.254        |                           |
| † c43a  | c Floor joist                        | 6-53              |          | 16¼C     | 48          | 1.81          | 0.70        | 0.179        |                           |
| b   | c (matched t=9.33)                   | 6-36              |          | h/s      | 31          | 1.81          | 0.53        | 0.225        |                           |
| † c44a  | c Floor joist                        | 1-42              |          | 1        | 42          | 3.08          | 0.63        | 0.165        |                           |
| b   | c (matched t=8.97)                   | 3-54              |          | 13C      | 52          | 2.33          | 0.48        | 0.179        |                           |
| † c45   | s Ceiling joist                      | 5-54              |          | 19C      | 50          | 1.26          | 0.47        | 0.281        |                           |
| c46   | s Ceiling joist                      | -                 |          | 17C      | 62          | 1.14          | 0.57        | 0.252        |                           |
| † = c43-45                                    | site sequence                        | 1-54              |          |          | 54          | 1.92          | 0.39        | 0.189        |                           |
| <b>Miscellaneous Phases</b>                   |                                      |                   |          |          |             |               |             |              |                           |
| c51   | s Lower End stave                    | -                 |          | 19¼C     | 26          | 2.31          | 0.77        | 0.291        |                           |
| <b>Jettied room and cross passage in Hall</b> |                                      |                   |          |          |             |               |             |              |                           |
| † c52   | c Hall jetty stud                    | 1-46              |          | 16¼C     | 46          | 1.36          | 0.64        | 0.307        |                           |
| c53   | c Hall jetty stud                    | -                 |          | 23¼C     | 52          | 1.11          | 0.63        | 0.270        |                           |
| † c54a  | c Hall jetty stud                    | 4-36              |          | 3        | 33          | 1.93          | 0.78        | 0.256        |                           |
| b   | c (matched t=8.91)                   | 22-45             |          | 11¼C     | 42          | 1.47          | 0.46        | 0.240        |                           |
| c55   | c Hall jetty joist                   | -                 |          | 11       | 54          | 1.73          | 0.94        | 0.373        |                           |
| † = c524                                      | site sequence                        | 1-46              |          |          | 46          | 1.54          | 0.63        | 0.234        |                           |
| <b>Inserted ceiling to Hall</b>               |                                      |                   |          |          |             |               |             |              |                           |
| c56   | c Hall ceiling joist (with SE Porch) | 12-79             |          | 25¼C     | 68          | 1.12          | 0.48        | 0.246        |                           |
| <b>South-east Porch</b>                       |                                      |                   |          |          |             |               |             |              |                           |
| † c61   | s N purlin                           | 9-115             |          | 24¼C     | 107         | 1.03          | 0.73        | 0.316        |                           |
| † c62   | c W principal rafter                 | 39-107            |          | 18       | 69          | 1.72          | 0.58        | 0.219        |                           |
| † c63   | c W collar                           | 6-87              |          | 7        | 82          | 1.43          | 0.88        | 0.259        |                           |
| † c64   | c Jetty joist                        | 25-115            |          | 24¼C     | 91          | 1.43          | 0.60        | 0.210        |                           |
| † c65   | c Jetty joist                        | 4-115             |          | 29¼C     | 112         | 1.12          | 0.78        | 0.182        |                           |
| † c66   | c Jetty joist                        | 1-115             |          | 30¼C     | 115         | 0.88          | 0.72        | 0.223        |                           |
| † = c61-66                                    | site sequence                        | 1-115             |          |          | 115         | 1.41          | 0.74        | 0.186        |                           |

Key: \* = sample included in site-master; † = in site sequence; c,s = core, slice;  
 ¼C, ½C, C = bark edge present, partial or complete ring; ¼ = spring (ring not measured), ½ = summer/autumn, or C = winter felling (ring measured);  
 H/S bdry = heartwood/sapwood boundary - last heartwood ring date;  
 std devn = standard deviation; mean sens = mean sensitivity

# THE TREE-RING DATING OF THE OLD FARMHOUSE AT CULLACOTT

## 1. Introduction and objectives

Cullacott is a Grade I listed farmhouse of outstanding regional and national importance. Despite its state of semi-dereliction, the retention of its many features, and the absence of modern improvements, makes its survival of considerable importance.

This cob and stone built house comprises an open three-bay hall, the third bay having a screen and an internal jetty with room above, with a floored lower end encompassing four bays. Recent investigations have revealed that it originally was constructed as a long house. To the north is a two-storey chamber end with another to the north-east, together they form a cross-wing. Both the first two phases have roofs constructed of principals with short curving feet set into the stone walls. To the west of the hall cross-passage is a two-storey stone-built porch with garderobe, and to the south-east is a timber-framed two-storied jettied porch clad in enormous slates which is open below. Further information on the historical and architectural history of the house can be found in Cox and Thorp (1991).

The intention of the dendrochronology was to firmly date each of these phases so that a precise chronological framework of the house's development could be outlined. In all, this entailed the sampling of all four main phases and two minor phases. Sampling was initially carried out on the 5th, 6th, and 7th of May 1992, and the samples processed during the ensuing year.

During 1994, consolidation work on the wallpaintings in the hall brought to light a painting of St George fighting the Dragon on the south wall of the Hall above an inserted cross-passage. It immediately became a priority to make another more serious attempt to date the inserted floor and jettied partition above the cross-passage in order to date the new wall paintings. During the initial 1992 work, two samples with complete sapwood were taken from the partition in question but the samples failed to date, match any other elements within the house, or match each other. Therefore, the site was revisited during March 1995 and three further samples were taken. One was from another joist with complete sapwood which had subsequently become exposed in the kitchen, another was from a jetty joist, and a third sample was taken from another stud from the partition over the cross passage. No other samples were considered suitable for sampling.

## 2. Methods of sample collection, preparation and dating

Normal practice in tree-ring sampling offers a choice of three possible methods: measurements *in situ* on a well-polished beam end (normally by sanding); cores drilled with a hollow auger; or slices cut from the timbers. At Cullacott, cores were

universally taken from all phases with the exception of the collapsed ceiling joists from the west porch, a purlin end from the roof space of the south-east porch, and a stave end. Several samples required two cores from each to either obtain complete sapwood or to bridge a broken section of core. All timbers sampled were of oak, *Quercus* sp.

As all timbers were dry, the samples could be sanded without pretreatment on a finisher through several grades of abrasive paper ranging from 60 grit to 1200 grit. This prepared a sufficiently clean view of the transverse section of the wood for the ring boundaries to be distinguished and for the ring-widths to be measured. Once polished, all samples were measured under a x10/x30 microscope using a travelling stage electronically displaying displacement to a precision of 0.001mm. Where they contained breaks, cores were measured in sections for eventual alignment against other samples.

Dendrochronology is based on the principal that the annual growth rings of trees reflect regional climatic conditions and because of this it is possible to match a sequence of growth rings from a sample of wood against regional reference chronologies to establish the date of the last measured ring in calendar years. If the sample has its sapwood complete, ie to the underside of the bark, then the date of when the tree was felled can be determined to the year and in many instances the season. The usual procedure is to match two or more individual samples from a phase together, make a mean of these, and then try to match any other matched samples, repeating the process of intermediate means until all of the samples from a phase have either been dated together relatively into a floating chronology or have failed to match. The resulting site master or sub-master is then compared with other reference chronologies which have been unequivocally dated in time, thereby dating the floating chronology or sample.

This is accomplished by using a combination of both visual matching and a process of qualified statistical comparison by computer. The ring-width series are recorded on an Amstrad PC2386 computer for statistical cross-matching using a variant of the Baillie and Pilcher (1973) CROS program. A version of this and other programs were written in BASIC by D Haddon-Reece, late of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory. The programs measure the amount of correlation between two sequences and the Student's 't' test is then used as a significance test on the correlation coefficient. Generally a 't'-value of 3.5 or over represents a match, provided that the visual match between the tree-ring graphs is acceptable. In addition to our own databank, the site data has been compared against the databank at the Dendrochronology Laboratory of Sheffield University.

After measurement, the ring-width series for each sample are drawn in the usual fashion as a graph of width against year on log-linear graph paper. This paper is translucent so that graphs ("curves") can be visually compared by overlaying. Samples which originated from the same tree are first combined into a single

sequence for the purposes of the analysis. Although there is no precisely defined limit, studies on modern samples suggest that those which cross-match with 't' values over approximately 10.0 are likely to have been derived from the same tree. However, here at Cullacot a number of samples from the same trees (c22 and c32) have not matched very well and this may indicate distress within the tree and thus its unsuitability for reliable dating. All pairs of tree-ring curves in the group are then compared visually at the positions indicated by the computer matching and, if found satisfactory and consistent, are averaged to form a mean of the two. This operation removes 'noise' due to the individual behaviour of the trees such as their response to pollarding or thinning out of their woodland neighbours, and reinforces the common climatic signal.

As previously mentioned, once a tree-ring sequence has been firmly dated in time, a felling date needs to be ascribed. With samples which have sapwood complete to the underside or including bark, this process is relatively simple. In measuring, if the whole ring is complete, ie both spring-wood and summer-wood has been fully formed, then the tree was felled in the winter from

the October of the last measured ring date to the March of the following year. If the spring vessels only have formed, signified by a '1/4' (this is not measured), then the tree was felled from between March and May of the year following the last measured ring. If there is some summer-wood but this is not complete, then this is signified by a '1/2' (this is measured) and the tree was felled between June and September of the year of the last measured ring date (Baillie 1982, 46-51). Care must be taken to not misread the 'dates spanned' or 'last measured ring' as a *felling date*. These are two very different things. Also, months can only be used a guide, as there is considerable variation in the complex relationships between climate and the changes in wood growth.

If the sapwood is partially missing, or if only a heartwood/sapwood boundary survives, then an *estimated felling date range* can be given for each sample. The number of sapwood rings can be estimated by using the accepted national sapwood estimate of between 10 and 55 rings. This is within the 95% confidence range for British oaks as determined by Hillam *et al* (1987). If more than one estimated felling date range has been given for a phase, then the area of common overlap of these ranges might be given to effect a reduced felling date range. However, this relies on the assumption that the samples have a common felling year, which may or may not be true. Whilst most structural phases tend to have trees which have been felled within a year or two of each other, this is not always the case and examples of some timbers having been felled ten or fifteen years previous to the main felling date have been known, the first phase at Cullacott being a good example. It should also be noted that no probability estimate can be advanced for such a reduced felling date range.

As it was common practice to build timber-framed structures with green or unseasoned wood, it therefore follows that construction would generally commence within a year or so of felling.

However, dendrochronology can only date when a tree has been felled, not when the timber was used to construct the structure which is being sampled. But apart from reuse, a timber can generally be identified as having been fashioned green by the distinctive shakes and deformed surfaces which would have been straight and square when initially cut by the saw. When these characteristics are present, one can be reasonably certain that construction would have taken place prior to seasoning which is generally accepted to be one year per inch in thickness.

### 3. Timbers sampled and analysis

The Cullacott tree-ring samples are designated as *c11*, *c21*, *c41*, etc, the first integer designating the phase or intermediate sub-phase. The cores were drilled with a 5/8" hollow auger with hardened steel teeth. Figure 1 shows the location of timbers sampled *in situ*. The plans were prepared by Mr John Thorp of Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants and were separately commissioned by English Heritage.

In all, thirty samples were taken over the period 5-7th May 1992, with a further three timbers sampled during March 1995. Generally, the exposed condition of many of the structural elements caused by the dereliction aided the process of obtaining all thirty samples with complete sapwood. Despite this, it was necessary in a few samples to have the last 10 to 20 rings omitted from the site measurements due to very distressed and narrow sapwood rings.

A summary of the timbers sampled and their relative dating is shown in Table 1.

#### 3a. Hall and Lower End - first phase (samples *c11* - *c18*)

Sample *c11* was taken from the Hall itself, and was actually two cores, one from each of the pair of principal rafters in truss 2. As the principals were clearly paired ( $t=10.98$ ), ie both being cut from the same tree, the two samples were averaged together to represent one tree, *c11*. Other samples were taken from the Lower End which included two other principals, two purlins, a rafter, and two floor joists. Samples *c11*, *c13*, and *c15* matched together to form site sub-master '*CULACOTI*' for the first phase.

|            | <i>c13</i><br>AD1477 | <i>c15</i><br>AD1471 |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>c11</i> | 4.46<br>70           | 7.21<br>70           |
| <i>c13</i> |                      | 5.30<br>64           |

Table 2: Matrix of *t*-values and overlaps for *CULACOTI*.



THE HALL AND LOWER END (CULACOT1)

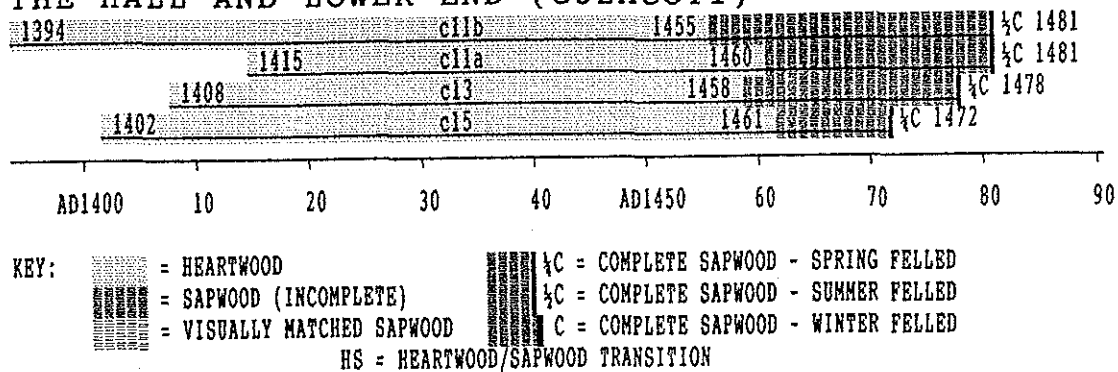


Figure 1: Bar diagram of samples comprising CULACOT1

| Reference chronology                   | Spanning  | Overlap | t-value |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|
| BOWHILL (Hillam 1991)                  | 1292-1468 | 75      | 3.66    |
| ENGLAND (Baillie and Pilcher 1982)     | 404-1981  | 88      | 3.71    |
| EXMED (Mills 1988)                     | 1367-1616 | 88      | 3.83    |
| DUBLIN2 (Baillie 1977a)                | 1357-1556 | 88      | 4.06    |
| WOLVERTN (Haddon-Reece and Miles 1992) | 1325-1580 | 88      | 4.13    |
| YORKS2 (Hillam pers comm)              | 1192-1663 | 88      | 4.13    |
| ELLAND (Hillam 1984)                   | 1374-1574 | 88      | 4.32    |
| BISHOP (Morgan 1977)                   | 1359-1591 | 88      | 5.04    |
| ESTLEIGH (Miles 1994)                  | 1405-1474 | 70      | 5.09    |
| MDM10 (Miles 1992)                     | 1381-1445 | 52      | 5.37    |
| BELFAST (Baillie 1977b)                | 1001-1970 | 88      | 5.46    |
| HAFOTY1 (Hillam and Groves 1991)       | 1372-1499 | 88      | 5.86    |
| HALDEN (Bridge pers comm)              | 1299-1462 | 69      | 7.17    |

Table 3: Dating of CULACOT1 (1394-1481) at AD 1481.

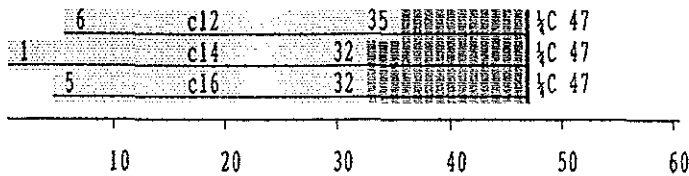
The first site sequence was then cross-matched against the regional and national reference chronologies and dated at AD 1481 which was the last measured ring of sample *c11*. This also dated sample *c13* to the spring of AD 1478 and sample *c15* to the spring of AD 1472.

Samples *c12*, *c14*, and *c16* also matched together to form a second site sequence of 46 rings. Due to the small number of rings, this failed to date conclusively with other samples from Cullacott, and more first phase samples would be required to advance any future possibility of dating this second site sequence. The two samples from the floor joists failed to match each other or any of the individual phase I samples or the resulting site sequences.

|            |            |            |
|------------|------------|------------|
|            | <i>c14</i> | <i>c16</i> |
|            | 46         | 46         |
| <i>c12</i> | 5.02       | 4.64       |
|            | 41         | 41         |
| <i>c14</i> |            | 3.50       |
|            |            | 42         |

Table 4: Matrix of t-values and overlaps for *c1246*.

LOWER END



KEY: = HEARTWOOD 1/2 C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - SPRING FELLED  
 = SAPWOOD (INCOMPLETE) 1/2 C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - SUMMER FELLED  
 = VISUALLY MATCHED SAPWOOD C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - WINTER FELLED  
 HS = HEARTWOOD/SAPWOOD TRANSITION

Figure 2: Bar diagram of samples comprising c1246

3b. Parlour End and north-east wing - second phase  
 (samples c21-c23 and c31-c33)

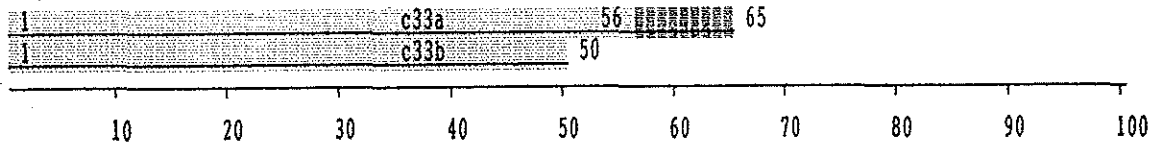
In both of these areas, little of the timber was suitable for sampling as all of the timber in the roofs were both wide ringed and with little or no sapwood. In each part, only three joists were found with complete sapwood and these were sampled. All but one were sampled twice to ensure complete sapwood. The sapwood on sample c22b as well as that on c33a had complete sapwood but the last 8 and 19 rings respectively were too narrow and distressed to be measured accurately so these were omitted.

Only samples c21 and c33 matched together conclusively at t=6.05, further confirmation would be required before the other four samples can be positively matched. However, both c21 and c33 (allowing for the 19 rings omitted) showed they were probably felled within a year of each other. Both c21 and c33 were formed into a third site sequence which was cross-matched with the other samples from Cullacott as well as the national and regional reference chronologies but there was no consistent match at any date.

PARLOUR END



NORTH-EAST WING



KEY: = HEARTWOOD 1/2 C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - SPRING FELLED  
 = SAPWOOD (INCOMPLETE) 1/2 C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - SUMMER FELLED  
 = VISUALLY MATCHED SAPWOOD C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - WINTER FELLED  
 HS = HEARTWOOD/SAPWOOD TRANSITION

Figure 3: Bar diagram of samples comprising c2133

### 3c. West Porch - third phase (samples *c41* - *c47*)

In all, six samples were taken from various parts of the West Porch, again all with complete sapwood. Downstairs, one sample was taken from the head of the outer west door, while three samples were from the first floor joists. Upstairs, two sections were taken from collapsed and decayed ceiling joists. Additionally nine sections of close-ringed oak ceiling lath were also salvaged from the remains. Despite having complete sapwood, the laths had insufficient numbers of rings to be suitable for further analysis.

Samples *c43* - *c45* matched together to form a fourth site sequence with one sample being felled in the spring of relative year 54, while the other two samples were felled in the winter of relative year 54/5. Despite the good matches of the three samples between themselves, this site sequence also failed to date against any of the regional or national reference chronologies. Samples *c41*, *c42*, and *c46* failed to match conclusively each other, any of the site sequences, or any of the reference chronologies. It should be noted, however, that sample *c41*, the west door-head, could possibly be from a different phase.

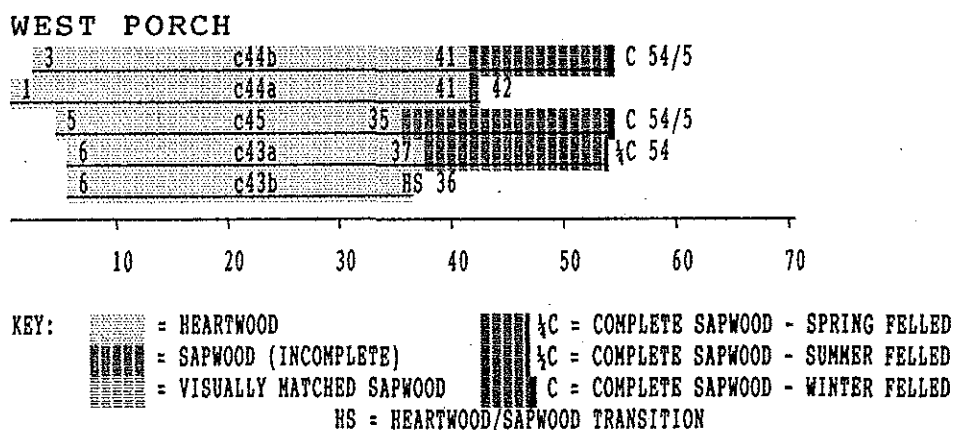


Figure 4: Bar diagram of samples comprising *c43-45*

|            | <i>c44</i> | <i>c45</i> |
|------------|------------|------------|
|            | 54         | 54         |
| <i>c43</i> | 4.23       | 6.59       |
|            | 48         | 48         |
| <i>c44</i> |            | 5.08       |
|            |            | 50         |

Table 5: Matrix of *t*-values and overlaps for *c43-46*.

### 3d. Intermediate phases (samples c51 - c56)

Sample c51 was a slice, with complete sapwood, taken from a protruding stave end of a wattle and daub partition in line with the central chimney stack adjacent to T4. However, it had less than 30 rings and was therefore unsuitable for dating.

The first floor screen partition above the internal jetty (in line with the Hall open truss T2) had three studs sampled. Although both samples c52 and c53 had complete sapwood, they did not match each other at all well and failed to match with any of the site sequences. The shortness of the ring sequences would not have helped their chances either. Sample c54 from a third stud sampled in 1995 matched with sample c52 with a *t*-value of 5.38 with a relative felling date of sample 54 being one year before sample c52. The two samples were combined to form a site sequence of 46 rings. This was compared against the reference chronologies as well as the other samples from the site, but no matches whatsoever were found.

The jetty joists were inspected during the 1995 sampling session and most seemed to be of small scantling, of boxed heart timbers with fairly wide rings. The best of these for dating purposes was sampled, but had only 54 rings including 11 sapwood rings which were not complete. This sample failed to match any samples within the site, or any of the reference chronologies. None of the other timbers from the jetty or partition above were considered worth sampling.

Sample c56 was taken from one of the remaining hall ceiling joists adjacent to T2, and this had 68 rings. Although this failed to date individually, it did match well against the site sequence for the south-east Porch.

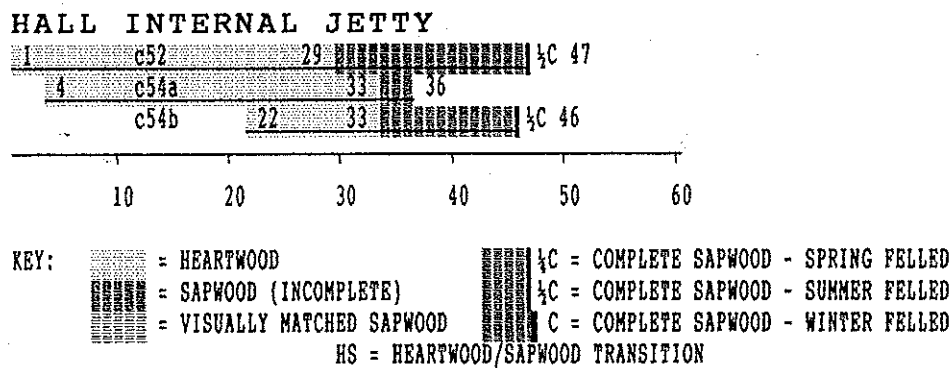
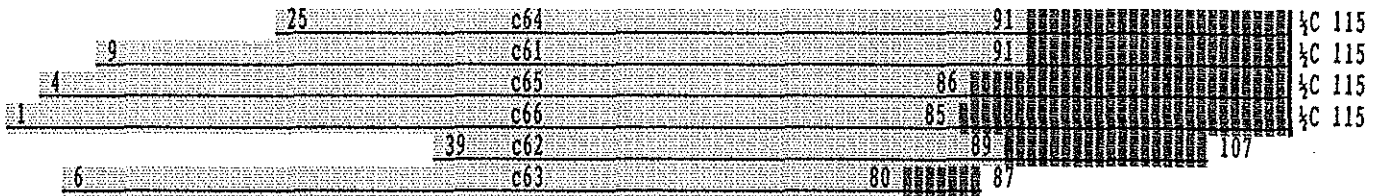


Figure 5: Bar diagram of samples comprising c524

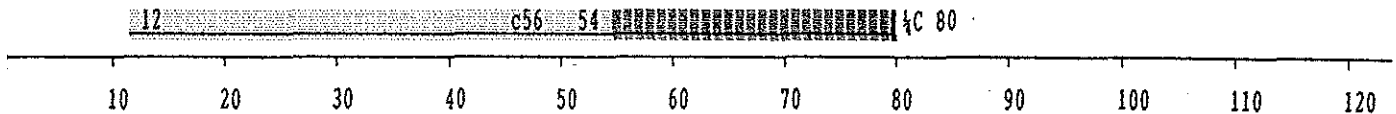
### 3e. South-east Porch - fourth phase (samples *c61* - *c66*)

Of all the phases sampled at Cullacott, this one appeared to have the most promise. The rings were relatively narrow and the timbers of sufficient size to allow several to have over 100 rings. In fact, some of the rings were so distressed in samples *c62* and *c63* that it was necessary to omit the last (approximately) 8 and 25 sapwood rings respectively. Samples *c65* and *c66* matched with  $t=10.17$  and as these were considered to have been from the same tree, they were combined to form *c656*. Once this had been done, all five samples from the porch matched together and was formed into the fifth site sequence. All three samples with measurable sapwood were found to have been cut down in the summer or autumn of the relative year 115. Despite the formation of a well replicated site sequence of 115 years, this too failed to date with any of the reference chronologies or any other samples from the site with the sole exception of sample *c56*. Here this matched with a  $t$ -value of 5.71 with a relative felling date of the spring of year 80.

#### SOUTH-EAST PORCH



#### INSERTED HALL CEILING



KEY:   
 = HEARTWOOD   
 = SAPWOOD (INCOMPLETE)   
 = VISUALLY MATCHED SAPWOOD   
 HS = HEARTWOOD/SAPWOOD TRANSITION   
 1/2C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - SPRING FELLED   
 1/2C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - SUMMER FELLED   
 C = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - WINTER FELLED

Figure 6: Bar diagram of samples comprising *c61-66* + *c56*

|            | <i>c62</i> | <i>c63</i> | <i>c64</i> | <i>c656</i> |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
|            | 107        | 87         | 115        | 115         |
| <i>c61</i> | 3.24       | 5.56       | 1.30       | 3.17        |
|            | 69         | 79         | 91         | 107         |
| <i>c62</i> |            | 4.06       | 3.50       | 2.91        |
|            |            | 49         | 69         | 69          |
| <i>c63</i> |            |            | 3.62       | 4.04        |
|            |            |            | 63         | 82          |
| <i>c64</i> |            |            |            | 5.96        |
|            |            |            |            | 91          |

Table 6: Matrix of  $t$ -values and overlaps for *c61-66*.

#### 4. Dating results and conclusion

In all, Cullacott produced six site sequences (see Appendix), only the first being securely dated to the period AD 1394-1481. This had a last measured ring of AD 1481 (*c11*) and as this was a partially complete sapwood ring, this tree would have been felled sometime in the summer or autumn of AD 1481. The other two dated samples from this phase were felled in the spring of AD 1478 (*c13*) and the spring of AD 1472 (*c15*). It must be stressed that these are the *felling dates* for the trees, not the construction dates, and the latter must be determined in the light of other architectural or archaeological factors in addition to these felling dates. As the three dated samples from this phase have inconsistent felling dates ranging over ten years, it may be postulated that some of the trees were dead, windfalls or felled previously to the commencement of the building operations which would presumably have begun immediately after the autumn of AD 1481, assuming of course the Hall and the Lower End are of one build.

The other five site sequences of 46 (2), 84, 54, and 115 rings in length remain floating but the longer of these remain potentially datable in the future should other work in the locality be undertaken. It should be borne in mind that in Devon, and Cornwall in particular, very little dendrochronology has been carried out and this coupled with the disparate climatic effects and the probable existence of micro-climates, initial work will prove extremely difficult. The only key to this problem will lie in more ground work in the area, plus looking more towards Ireland and Normandy for additional reference chronologies. The ring width data for these six sequences plus *c56* is located in the Appendix.

Despite the failure of the other five site sequences to date, the dendrochronology programme has nevertheless provided several useful pieces of information. Firstly, the Parlour End and the north-east wing have been proved to be coeval despite the differences in their window moulding profiles. Secondly the first floor room in the west porch was ceiled at the same time as the floor joists were laid, despite the chamfered purlins giving evidence to the contrary. And thirdly it has shown that the Hall was ceiled over at just below purlin level about 35 years before the construction of the south-east porch.

Summary results of the tree-ring dating have been published in *Vernacular Architecture* (Miles 1995).

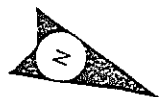
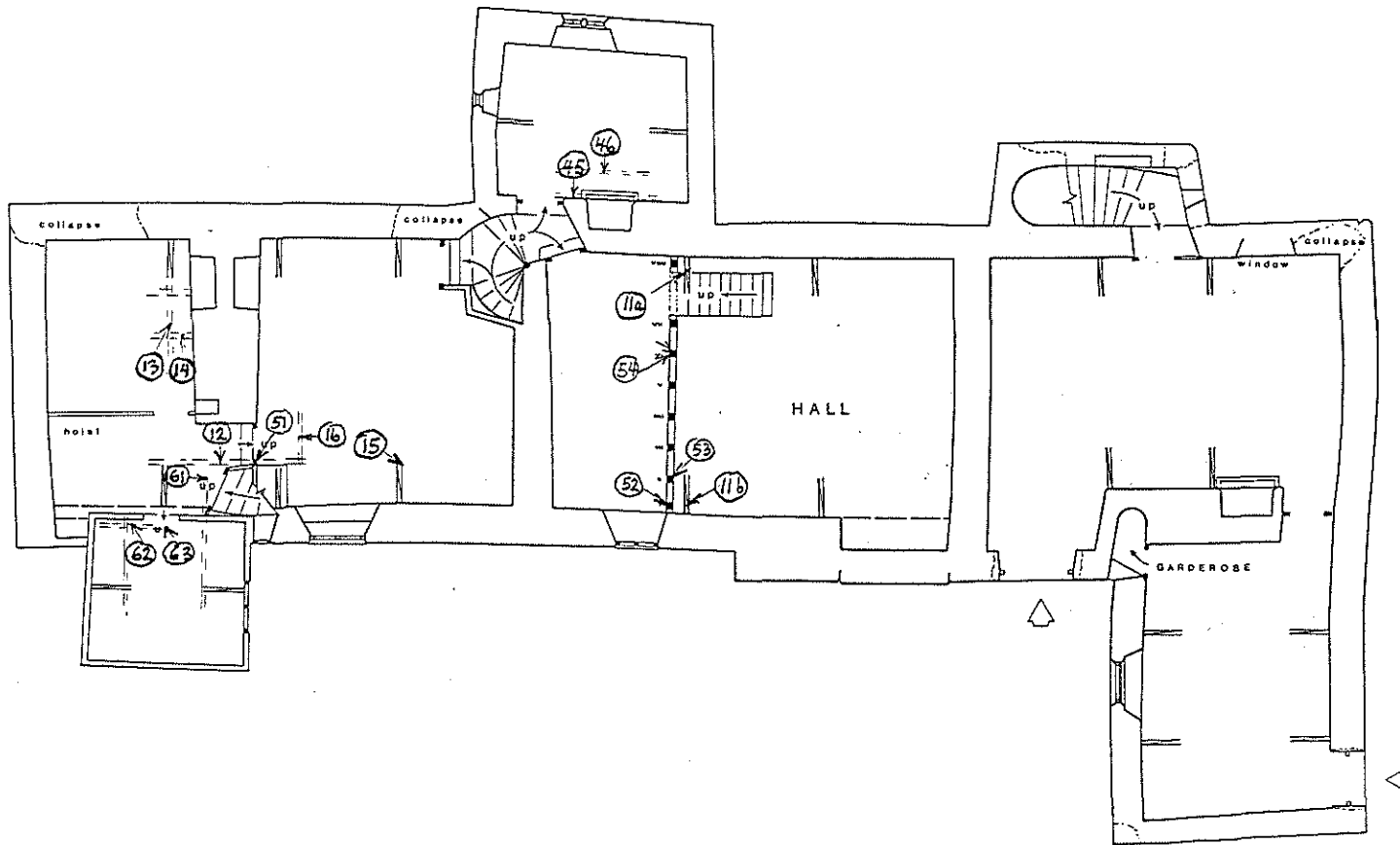
## **5. Acknowledgements**

The author is grateful to Miss Jennifer Hillam and Miss Cathy Groves of the English Heritage funded Sheffield University Dendrochronology Laboratory for both practical assistance as well with the production of this report. Further thanks are given to Jo Cox and John Thorp of Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants for the drawings reproduced herein, and to Mrs Rebecca Child, English Heritage Architect, for assistance on site and in interpreting the structure. Acknowledgements are also given to the Ancient Monuments Laboratory of English Heritage, Sheffield Dendrochronology Laboratory, and I Tyers of the Museum of London Archaeology Services (MoLAS) for both published and unpublished data.

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A

site datum



DAIRY

KITCHEN

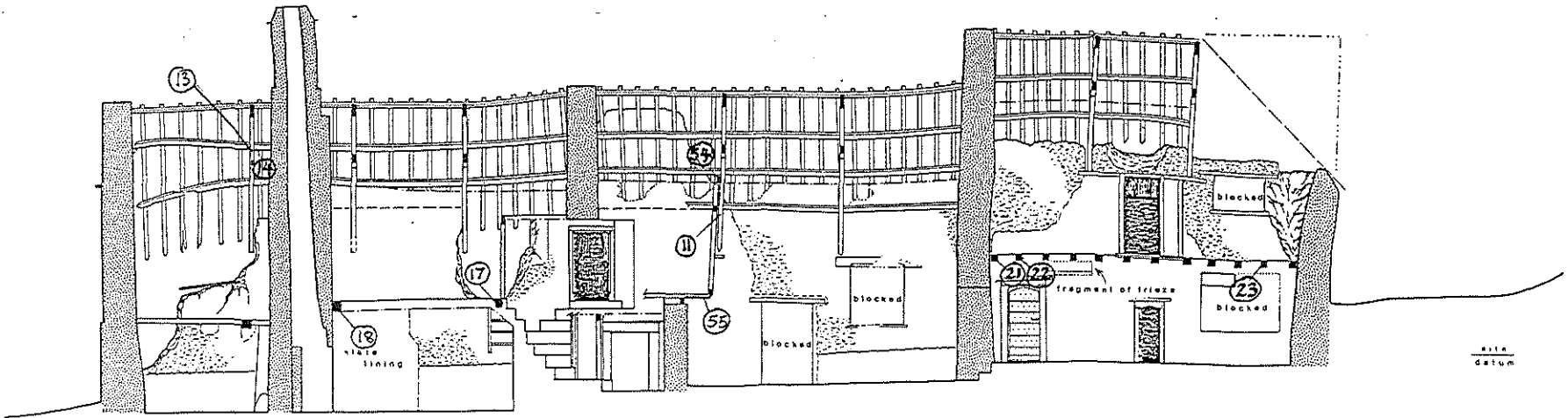
PASSAGE

HALL

PARLOUR

B

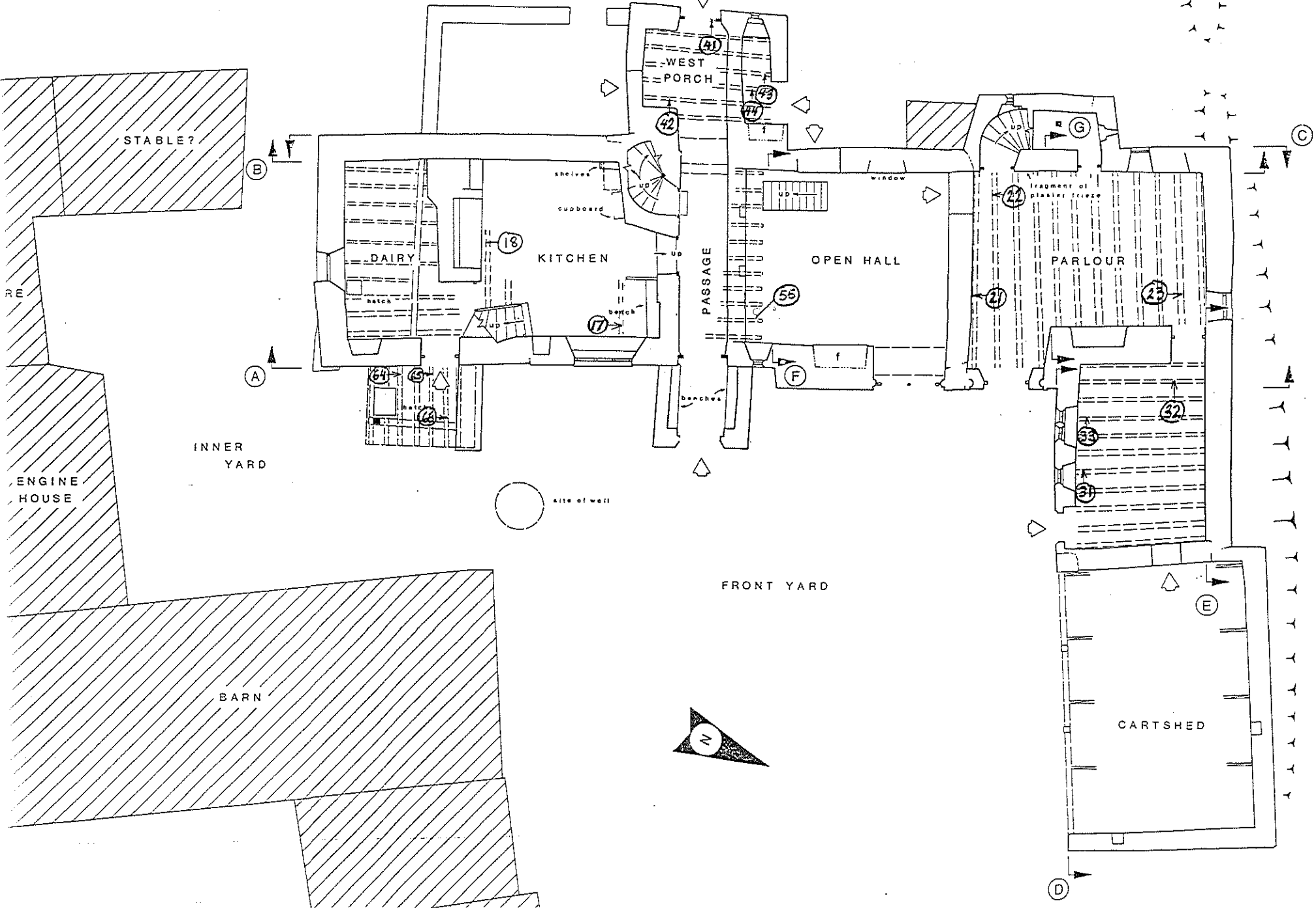
site datum



FIELD

GARDEN

LANE



STABLE?

WEST  
PORCH

DAIRY

KITCHEN

OPEN HALL

PARLOUR

PASSAGE

INNER  
YARD

ENGINE  
HOUSE

site of wall

FRONT YARD

BARN

CARTSHED

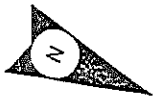
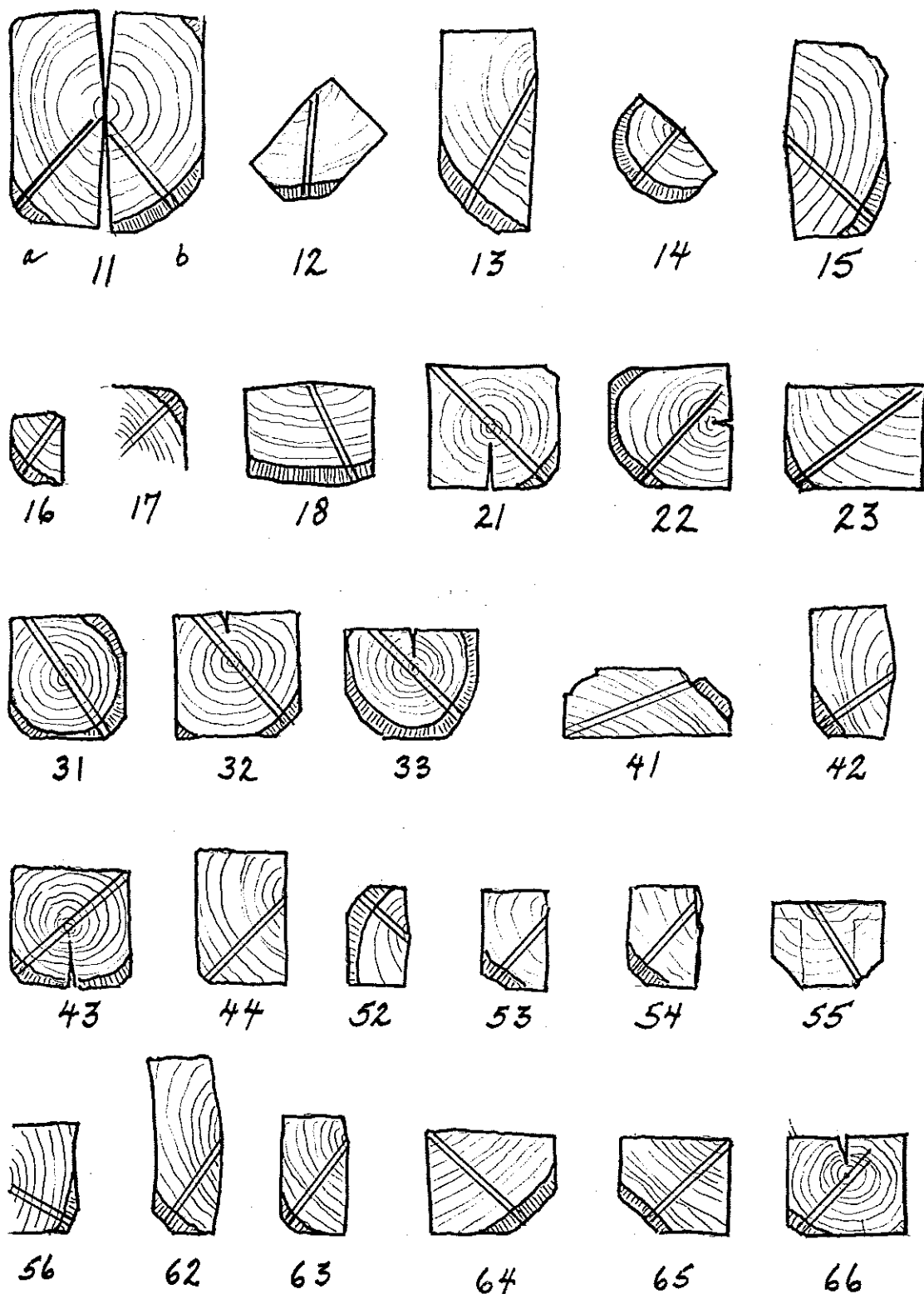


Figure 10: Sections of timbers sampled



APPENDIX - RING WIDTH DATA OF SITE SEQUENCES

CULACOT1 <1394-1481> mean of c11+c15+c13  
88 rings, starting in AD 1394

| <u>ring widths (0.01mm)</u> |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | <u>number of trees per year</u> |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 192                         | 262 | 157 | 102 | 149 | 166 | 175 | 179 | 169 | 269 | 1                               | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 292                         | 172 | 180 | 147 | 238 | 266 | 238 | 251 | 254 | 286 | 2                               | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 275                         | 232 | 225 | 227 | 186 | 178 | 307 | 175 | 165 | 277 | 3                               | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 244                         | 263 | 262 | 159 | 203 | 202 | 189 | 241 | 237 | 194 | 3                               | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 224                         | 272 | 200 | 145 | 116 | 124 | 164 | 202 | 206 | 269 | 3                               | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 236                         | 243 | 243 | 254 | 369 | 338 | 217 | 189 | 216 | 195 | 3                               | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 254                         | 196 | 207 | 214 | 235 | 177 | 224 | 209 | 223 | 222 | 3                               | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 179                         | 131 | 171 | 245 | 189 | 105 | 148 | 171 | 183 | 158 | 3                               | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| 182                         | 161 | 172 | 148 | 108 | 129 | 148 | 110 |     |     | 2                               | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |   |   |

c1246 Cullacott c12+c14+c16  
46 rings

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 256 | 234 | 134 | 115 | 242 | 273 | 306 | 198 | 329 | 315 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 337 | 276 | 274 | 372 | 339 | 273 | 253 | 264 | 205 | 223 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 206 | 242 | 216 | 223 | 173 | 198 | 206 | 186 | 171 | 116 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 147 | 171 | 200 | 176 | 137 | 179 | 153 | 100 | 113 | 169 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 203 | 173 | 141 | 138 | 143 | 125 |     |     |     |     | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |   |   |   |   |

c2133 Cullacott Phase 2 Parlour End & NE Wing c21+c33  
84 rings

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 247 | 305 | 156 | 119 | 220 | 237 | 186 | 126 | 155 | 216 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 199 | 218 | 187 | 178 | 207 | 147 | 180 | 166 | 129 | 195 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 117 | 101 | 125 | 110 | 109 | 96  | 113 | 131 | 106 | 112 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 98  | 101 | 116 | 116 | 86  | 51  | 103 | 99  | 100 | 100 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 171 | 66  | 118 | 114 | 132 | 137 | 121 | 114 | 129 | 89  | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 70  | 64  | 77  | 98  | 90  | 100 | 103 | 67  | 140 | 130 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 106 | 108 | 113 | 105 | 115 | 150 | 112 | 93  | 64  | 84  | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 103 | 89  | 113 | 80  | 84  | 114 | 109 | 105 | 116 | 122 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 105 | 84  | 76  | 99  |     |     |     |     |     |     | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |

c43-45 Cullacott Phase 3 W Porch c43+c44+c45  
54 rings

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 189 | 177 | 147 | 212 | 144 | 254 | 238 | 260 | 237 | 180 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 220 | 223 | 118 | 155 | 155 | 178 | 231 | 190 | 232 | 210 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 194 | 179 | 228 | 220 | 144 | 164 | 215 | 215 | 169 | 189 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 235 | 218 | 168 | 187 | 173 | 203 | 211 | 176 | 172 | 229 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 206 | 207 | 166 | 127 | 158 | 191 | 103 | 129 | 125 | 133 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 187 | 158 | 166 | 135 |     |     |     |     |     |     | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |   |

c524 Cullacott - Hall jetty studs c52+c54  
46 rings

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 89  | 85  | 72  | 260 | 224 | 338 | 359 | 227 | 111 | 141 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 180 | 238 | 186 | 212 | 176 | 197 | 203 | 181 | 131 | 137 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 119 | 79  | 136 | 122 | 155 | 143 | 98  | 99  | 127 | 210 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 241 | 129 | 165 | 157 | 101 | 108 | 97  | 112 | 138 | 133 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 118 | 128 | 116 | 119 | 103 | 73  |     |     |     |     | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |   |

c56 Cullacott Hall ceiling joist

68 rings

214 155 167 200 180 194 222 136 124 156  
 099 083 102 157 131 149 163 112 124 098  
 105 135 087 078 092 076 057 078 120 100  
 081 076 078 061 048 084 080 103 061 076  
 070 058 071 128 129 087 078 135 112 142  
 095 109 205 231 245 144 098 064 116 069  
 091 094 096 080 054 047 055 043

c61-66 Cullacott Phase 4 SE Porch c61+c62+c63+c64+(c65+c66)

115 rings

ring widths (0.01mm)

number of trees per year

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 405 | 362 | 385 | 326 | 335 | 278 | 220 | 351 | 341 | 192 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| 215 | 255 | 277 | 227 | 149 | 133 | 171 | 246 | 140 | 265 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 226 | 131 | 131 | 149 | 193 | 161 | 170 | 161 | 148 | 189 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 134 | 144 | 165 | 153 | 159 | 125 | 138 | 102 | 120 | 140 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| 119 | 120 | 102 | 157 | 116 | 118 | 144 | 138 | 167 | 99  | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 126 | 118 | 129 | 92  | 103 | 78  | 60  | 68  | 90  | 93  | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 63  | 49  | 54  | 82  | 106 | 111 | 98  | 106 | 89  | 127 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 74  | 87  | 109 | 143 | 145 | 123 | 134 | 110 | 135 | 156 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 154 | 156 | 198 | 164 | 141 | 148 | 127 | 121 | 129 | 110 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| 120 | 145 | 115 | 122 | 108 | 86  | 88  | 84  | 86  | 88  | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 99  | 108 | 82  | 65  | 55  | 69  | 61  | 58  | 64  | 50  | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 83  | 56  | 71  | 68  | 94  |     |     |     |     |     | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |