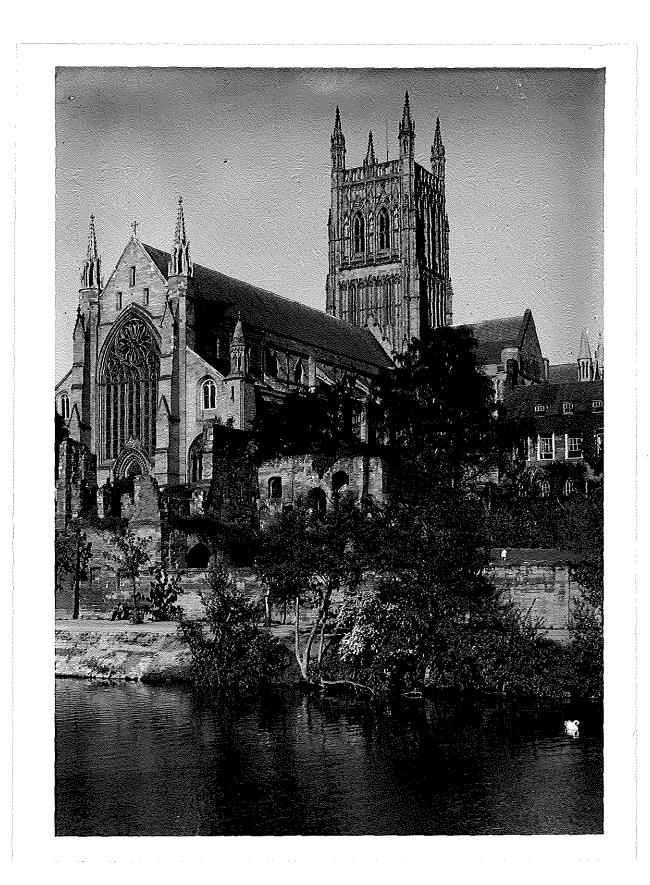
Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report 42/2000

TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS FROM WORCESTER CATHEDRAL, WORCESTER

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R E Howard R R Laxton C D Litton

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Frontispiece: Worcester Cathedral from the south-west, across the river Avon (©RCHME)

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## TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS FROM WORCESTER CATHEDRAL, WORCESTER

R E Howard R R Laxton C D Litton

#### Summary

A total of ninety-eight samples from the eastern roofs of Worcester Cathedral were analysed by tree-ring dating. This analysis produced six site chronologies. The first site chronology, WORCSQ01, consisting of forty-five samples, has 287 rings and spans the period AD 1443 - AD 1729. Interpretation of the sapwood on these samples indicates felling dates between AD 1724 and AD 1729. This shows that a substantial rebuilding or repair programme was undertaken in the choir, the north-east and southeast transepts, and in the crossing between the transepts at this time. This site chronology includes several timbers felled in AD 1650 - 3 and shows that some earlier material was incorporated in the eighteenth-century rebuilding programme. The second site chronology, WORCSQ02, consists of eighteen samples from timbers showing evidence of reuse. This site chronology has 191 rings spanning the period AD 1057 - AD 1247. The third site chronology, WORCSQ03, consisting of eleven samples from timbers which again show evidence of reuse, has 116 rings spanning the period AD 1096 - AD 1211. Interpretation of the sapwood on these two site chronologies combined indicates a range of felling dates in the early- to mid-thirteenth century, between about AD 1225 and AD 1260. Other later thirteenth-century material is represented by site chronology WORCSQ06. This is made up of two samples and has 77 rings spanning the period AD 1174 - AD 1250. The timbers represented have an estimated felling date in the range AD 1264 - AD 1299. The fourth site chronology, WORCSQ04, consists of four samples with 85 rings. This site chronology failed to date. The fifth site chronology, WORCSQ05, is made up of two samples with 97 rings. This site chronology also failed to date.

Authors' addresses :-

R E Howard UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM University Park Nottingham NG7 2RD

Dr R R Laxton UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM (University Park Nottingham NG7 2RD Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report

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Dr C D Litton UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM University Park Nottingham NG7 2RD

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#### TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS FROM WORCESTER CATHEDRAL, WORCESTER

#### **Introduction**

Worcester Cathedral (frontispiece), standing in a prominent position on the east bank of the river Severn (SO 850545; Fig 1) has a long history. The bishopric was founded in the seventh century and the first Cathedral was dedicated to St Peter. Oswald, who was made bishop in AD 961, built a new cathedral, dedicated to St Mary. The presbytery of St Peter's was rebuilt following a Danish raid in AD 1041. Both early Cathedrals appear to have been demolished around the time St Wulfstan started the present Cathedral in AD 1084 (although the current hypothesis is that the Chapter House is a remodelling of a late Anglo-Saxon rotunda).

Surviving work of St Wulfstan's period includes the crypt, western transepts, cloisters, and Chapter House. In AD 1175 the crossing tower fell down and was rebuilt (Guy 1994). It was rebuilt again the AD 1370s. In AD 1224 the construction of a new east end was started under bishop William of Blois. Much of the existing decorated architecture at the east end belongs to this phase, with additional work in the perpendicular style dating from the late-fourteenth or early-fifteenth century. There was also a considerable amount of rebuilding activity in the nineteenth century

A modest amount of sampling for tree-ring analysis has been undertaken from timbers of the nave roof. This was commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral in 1993, the work being funded by English Heritage (Howard *et al* 1995). The 1993 analysis indicated that, although a significant number of samples could not be dated, a certain amount of timber was felled in the early-seventeenth century, for repair work undertaken at that time. That programme of sampling showed that some earlier timbers were reused.

The programme of sampling and analysis by tree-ring dating reported on here was commissioned by English Heritage. In this phase of the work the sampling and dating exercise was restricted to the eastern roof of the cathedral, that is the choir, the north-east and south-east transepts, and the crossing between them. A plan of these roofs is given in Figure 2.

The choir roof is known from documentary sources to have been rebuilt in the early-eighteenth century, with written records pointing to a construction date of AD 1728. It contains nine trusses comprising tall, slender king-posts standing on tiebeams, with upper and lower diagonal struts to principal rafters. The trusses of the transepts and the crossing are almost identical in form, though those of the transepts have spine or bridging beams running between each truss at tiebeam and collar level. It is known from documentary sources that the roofs of the transepts were rebuilt in AD 1730.

Most of the trusses, as well as other portions of the roof, contain timbers which show no evidence of reuse and are thus believed to belong to the early-eighteenth century work. However, the roof contains timbers which, on the evidence of redundant mortices, tenons, lap-joints, and peg holes, were reused in the eighteenth-century rebuilding. The purpose of this programe of sampling and dating was twofold. Its first purpose was to determine the age and likely origin of the reused timbers. It was also hoped that it might be possible to show that timbers reused in each part of the roof, the choir, the transepts, etc, originally came from these sections so allowing an attempt at reconstructing the form of these earlier roofs.

The second purpose of sampling and analysis was to confirm, if possible, the date of the early eighteenthcentury work. An important element of sampling this material was to provide extensive data for a wellreplicated tree-ring chronology for the eighteenth century for Worcestershire and the south-west Midlands.

The Laboratory would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who assisted with the sampling of the timbers. In particular thanks are due to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral, the Clerk of Works,

and to the Vergers' Office, whose staffs assisted with access to the roof. The Laboratory would also like to thank Mr Christopher Guy, the Cathedral Archaeologist, who made a detailed study of the roof, produced the drawings used in this report, and who assisted with the descriptive introduction to the site given above.

#### Sampling

The Laboratory was asked to sample four different areas of the eastern roofs: the choir, the north-east transept, the south-east transept, and the crossing. Within each of these, it was believed, were timbers of two phases, one of the early-eighteenth century rebuild material, the second of medieval reused timbers. In effect this gave eight different sets of timbers. Within each area an attempt was made to sample the two sets of timbers separately. While this was relatively easy to do in most places, it was more difficult in the area of the choir near the crossing and in the crossing itself. In the former, work, possibly in connection with nineteenth- and twentieth-century piping and electrical work, made for confusion between eighteenth-century and reused material. In the latter, within the crossing itself, there appeared to be relatively little reused material except for the timbers beneath the walkway.

Thus, a total of ninety-eight samples was obtained. Each sample was given the code WOR-C (for Worcester Cathedral) and numbered 01 - 98. Twelve samples, WOR-C01 - 12, were obtained from the eighteenth-century timbers of the crossing. Ten samples, WOR-C13 - 22, were obtained from the eighteenth-century timbers of the north-east transept, with eight samples, WOR-C23 - 30, being obtained from the south-east transept. Seventeen samples, WOR-C31 - 47, were obtained from what were believed to be eighteenth-century timbers of the choir.

Samples from reused timbers included fourteen, WOR-C48 – 61, from the north-east transept, and twelve, WOR-C62 – 73, from the south-east transept. Fifteen samples, WOR-C74 – 88, were obtained from what were believed to be reused timbers from the choir. Ten samples, WOR-C89 – 98, were obtained from reused timbers in the crossing, mainly below the walkway in that area and from timbers reused as wall-plates.

The positions of the samples were recorded at the time of sampling on plans produced by Christopher Guy and provided by English Heritage. These are reproduced here as Figures 3a - 7. Details of the samples are given in Table 1. Trusses, bays, and frames have been numbered from north to south, or from east to west following those given on the plans and drawings provided.

#### <u>Analysis</u>

Each sample was prepared by sanding and polishing. At this stage it was seen that two samples, WOR-C87 and WOR-C95, had too few rings for satisfactory analysis, and they were not measured. The growth-ring widths of the remaining ninety-six samples were measured (data at the end of the report) and compared with each other by the Litton/Zainodin grouping procedure (see appendix). At a minimum t-value of 4.5 six groups of samples formed, with brief details as sumarised below.

Site chronology	Sample area	Number of samples	Number of rings	Date span
WORCSQ01	Eighteenth-century rebuilding timbers	45	287	AD 1443 - 1729
WORCSQ02	Reused thirteenth-century timbers	18	191	AD 1057 - 1247
WORCSQ03	Reused thirteenth-century timbers	11	116	AD 1096 - 1211
WORCSQ04	-	4	85	undated
WORCSQ05		2	97	undated
WORCSQ06	Reused thirteenth-century timbers	2	77	AD 1174 - 1250

Bar diagrams of the samples in each site chronology are given in Figures 8 - 13, with evidence for the dating of those which cross-match with the reference chronologies being given in the t-values of Tables 2 - 5.

The six site chronologies created were compared with each other and with the fifteen remaining measured but ungrouped samples. In no case was there any further satisfactory cross-matching. Each of the fifteen ungrouped samples was compared with a full range of reference chronologies but, again, there was no further satisfactory cross-matching and these samples remain undated.

#### **Interpretation**

#### Site chronology WORCSQ01: eighteenth-century rebuilding timbers, bar diagram Figure 8

It is apparent that the documentary evidence for the rebuilding of the roofs of the eastern end of the Cathedral in the early-eighteenth century is correct. Site chronology WORCSQ01 is made up of samples from timbers of this phase of the work, two samples of which have last measured complete sapwood ring dates of AD 1729. However, observation of the bar diagram of this site chronology in Figure 8 shows that in each section of the roof there may be a slight time difference in the felling date of the timbers cut specifically for this eighteenth-century rebuilding.

One sample from the south-east transept, WOR-C30, has a last measured complete sapwood ring date of AD 1724. Two samples from timbers of the choir, WOR-C42 and WOR-C44, have last measured complete sapwood ring dates of AD 1726 and AD 1725 respectively. A further sample from the choir, WOR-C45, has a last sapwood ring date of AD 1724, from which one or possibly two rings were lost in coring. This would give this timber a felling date of AD 1725 or AD 1726. Two samples from the crossing, WOR-C02 and WOR-C04, both have a last measured complete sapwood ring date of AD 1727 and three samples from the north-east transept, WOR-C14, WOR-C16, and WOR-C20, have last measured complete sapwood ring dates of AD 1729, AD 1728, and AD 1729 respectively.

Given that the number of samples from each section with complete sapwood is small, it is not certain whether or not these felling dates are truly indicative of their construction dates. However, it does appear possible that the felling dates of these timbers, from AD 1724 to AD 1729, may reflect the progress of the work in the roofs. Perhaps documentary or structural evidence may agree with the felling dates to show that work began in the south-east transept, moved to the choir, and then to the crossing, and finally the north-east transept.

Interpretation of the sapwood on seven or eight samples in the bar diagram of site chronology WORCSQ01 would suggest that there is another and earlier phase of felling represented by some timbers in the northeast and south-east transepts. Among these samples WOR-C17, C23, C24, and C28 all have complete sapwood, with last ring dates of AD 1653, AD 1652, AD 1650, and AD 1653 respectively. All these samples are from raking shores and the spine, or bridging, beams which run between the trusses of the transepts. This combination of factors suggests that these timbers are a definite sub-group, distinct from the other timbers in site chronology WORCSQ01.

Given that the raking shores and the spine beams are integral to the construction of the trusses of the transepts, they must be reused timbers. It is possible that when originally felled in the mid-seventeenth century they were used somewhere in the Cathedral roof. There is some documentary evidence for such work on the cathedral roofs in the mid-seventeenth century (Simpson 1993). Simpson (1994,19,21) suggests a rebuilding of the Nave roof in the first half of the seventeenth-century but it may have been later and associated with the post-Restoration repairs to the fabric. It is quite possible that the trees of this sub-group were felled in the AD 1650s but not immediately used.

#### Reused timbers

#### Site chronology WORCSQ02: thirteenth-century timbers, bar diagram Figure 9

It is more difficult to be so precise about the felling dates of the reused timbers represented by site chronology WORCSQ02 because the upper and lower limits of the relative positions of the heartwood/sapwood boundaries is wider. The earliest heartwood/sapwood transition is AD 1187, on sample

WOR-C71, and the latest heartwood/sapwood transition is AD 1247, on sample WOR-C32, a range of 60 years. This range is wider than would be expected on a group of timbers all felled at the same time.

Because of this range it is believed possible that the eighteen samples of site chronology WORCSQ02 are representative of three phases of felling. The earliest is thought to be represented by sample WOR-C71. Its heartwood/sapwood transition date of AD 1187 would give this timber an estimated felling date in the range AD 1214 - 37. This felling date range is based on a 95% confidence limit for the amount of sapwood on mature oaks of 15-50 rings, and allowing that the last measured ring on the sample is dated to AD 1213.

The next phase may be represented by thirteen samples, WOR-C49, C57, C58, C62, C64, C65, C67, C69, C70, C72, C83, C85, and C96. The average last heartwood ring date on these samples is AD 1212. Using the same confidence limit for the number of sapwood rings as given above gives an estimated felling date in the range AD 1235 - 62 for the timbers represented by these samples, allowing that sample WOR-C69 has a last measured ring date of AD 1234.

The final possible phase of felling is represented by samples WOR-C32, C74, C84, and C89. The average last heartwood ring date on these samples is AD 1241. Using the same sapwood estimate as above gives the timbers represented by these samples a felling date in the range AD 1256 - 91. If the assumption that these four timbers were felled at the same time is correct, then it is likely that the felling was after AD 1260. This is because sample WOR-C32 has a heartwood/sapwood boundary date at AD 1247, and the timber it represents is unlikely to have been felled before AD 1262, based on a minimum number of 15 sapwood rings.

#### Site chronology WORCSQ03: reused mid-thirteenth century timbers, bar diagram Figure 10

The relative positions of the heartwood/sapwood boundaries on the six samples in site chronology WORCSQ03 where this survives are closer together, varying only by seven years, as shown in the bar diagram Figure 10. This suggests that these timbers were felled in a single phase. The average last heartwood ring date of this group is AD 1207. Using a 95% confidence limit for the amount of sapwood on mature oaks of 15 - 50 rings gives these timbers an estimated felling date in the range AD 1222 - 57. The five remaining samples have no heartwood/sapwood boundary. It is possible that this has simply been trimmed off, but the dates of the last rings suggest that they too could have been felled sometime in this period, though some are possibly a little later than the six timbers which do have the heartwood/sapwood boundaries.

#### Site Chronology WORCSQ06: mid to late thirteenth-century timbers, bar diagram Figure 13

The two samples of this site chronology appear to represent a single felling phase. Having an average last heartwood ring date of AD 1249 gives the timbers represented an estimated felling date in the range AD 1264 - 99.

The dating information thus obtained can be summarised as follows:

Site chronology	Number of samples	Estimated felling date range
WORCSQ01 (felling phase 1)	8	AD 1650-1653
WORCSQ01 (felling phase 2)	37	AD 1724 – 1729
WORCSQ02 (felling phase 1)	1	AD 1214 – 1237
WORCSQ02 (felling phase 2)	13	AD 1235 – 1262
WORCSQ02 (felling phase 3)	4	AD 1256 - 1291
WORCSQ03	11	AD 1222 – 1257
WORCSQ06	2	AD 1264 - 1299

It is possible that the timbers represented by the samples in site chronology WORCSQ02, felling phase 2, and site chronology WORCSQ03 are in fact all part of the same programme of felling. If the dates of the heartwood/sapwood transitions, on those samples where it exists, are combined we get an average

heartwood/sapwood transition date of AD 1210. Using a 95% confidence limit for the amount of sapwood on mature oaks of 15-50 rings would give the timbers represented an estimated felling date in the range AD 1225 - 60.

It is also possible that the timbers represented by the samples in site chronologies WORCSQ02, felling phase 3, and WORCSQ06 are of the same programme of felling. If the dates of the last heartwood ring on each of the relevant samples are combined we get an average last heartwood ring date of AD 1245. Using the same sapwood estimate as above would give the timbers represented an estimated felling date in the range AD 1260 - 95.

In both these cases it appears possible that although the timbers used were felled at or about the same time, it is possible that they may have come from different sources. This is known to have occurred in the post medieval period (Simpson and Fearn 1997), and it would account for the failure of the samples or site chronologies to cross-match with each other.

#### Timber analysis

It seems possible that a number of timbers come from the same tree, while other timbers came from trees which were growing quite close to each other. This is particularly so with the timber felled in the eighteenth century, but less so with the earlier material. It is likely, for example, that samples WOR-C17, C23, and C24 are from the same tree, cross-matching as they do with values of about t=11.0. Samples WOR-C27 and C28 are also possibly from the same tree, cross-matching with a t-value of 9.8. However, not all samples which cross-match with each other with significant t-values are from the same tree. Samples WOR-C33, C34, C35, C37, C44, and C46, for example, cross-match well with each other but each is from a timber comprising a whole tree. In this case the trees are likely to have been growing quite close to each other.

Again, particularly with the eighteenth-century material, there appears to a greater degree of high t-value cross-matching between samples within each area of the roof than between samples from different areas of the roof. That is, samples from the choir appear to cross-match best with other samples from the choir, and less well with samples from the transepts, for example, though this is not exclusively the case. It is thus possible that individual woodland compartments were largely used for each phase of work, although, as might be expected, there was some spread of timbers into different phases.

The earlier, thirteenth-century, reused material appears to be less homogeneous. Two site chronologies composed of reused material were created, WORCSQ02 and WORCSQ03, both having roughly the same time span, AD 1057 – 1247 and AD 1096 – 1211, respectively. These two site chronologies cross-match with each other with a low, though maximum, value of t=3.9 at the suggested relative offset, plus 39 years. This low t-value cross-matching would suggest that the timbers represented came from different and widely separated sources.

It is also to be seen that the timbers for these two site chronologies are distributed amongst each part of the roof. Timbers from the choir, the crossing, and the north-east and south-east transepts, are found in both sequences.

#### **Conclusion**

This analysis has shown that the roof of the east end of the Cathedral was substantially rebuilt using timber felled between AD 1724 and AD 1729. This is almost certainly the work referred to in the documentary evidence. This work included the reuse of timber felled in the mid-seventeenth century, either purposely for the Cathedral, or possibly for elsewhere. The timber representing this earlier work shows no sign of reuse and it existence here was previously unsuspected.

The eighteenth-century timber all appears to have come from a reasonably homogeneous source. There is a possibility that individual blocks of woodland or stands of trees went into particular sections of the roof, though there was, of course, some intermixing as work progressed. It is probable that some trees were used to make more than one timber.

It will be seen from Table 1, where the number of rings that each sample contains is listed, that the trees used for the seventeenth-century work were much longer lived than the trees used for the eighteenth-century work. Allowing for some missing rings to the centres of the trees it is estimated that a number of trees felled in the AD 1650s were over 200 years old when felled; those felled in the AD 1720s were hardly ever more than 100 years old.

The eighteenth-century work also reused timbers that were felled earlier. It is possible that a small amount of this was felled in the early-thirteenth century, but most of it appears to have been felled in the early- to mid-thirteenth century. This is possibly the timber which was obtained purposely for the roof of the new east end, construction of which was begun under bishop William of Blois in AD 1224. A second group of timbers is represented which was felled in the mid- to late-thirteenth century.

The felling dates for the thirteenth-century timbers would seem to agree with the phasing of the work east of the Tower. The timbers represented by the samples in site chronology WORCSQ02, felling phase 2, and WORCSQ03 may relate to the roofing of the Lady Chapel, construction of which was started in AD 1224. The timbers represented by the samples in site chronology WORCSQ02, felling phase 3, and WORCSQ06 could have belonged to the roof of the Choir, which was rebuilt to match the style of the Lady Chapel after that had been completed.

Much of the reused thirteenth-century material is of similar scantling and it contains similar joints and other details of carpentry. Furthermore, the reuse of a lot of broadly contemporaneous material supports the probability that it does all come from the cathedral. One possible way of proving this may be to record the reused timbers and attempt a reconstruction of the medieval roofs.

It appears more likely that the thirteenth-century timber may have come from different sources, and may have been felled over a longer period. There is no way of knowing for certain that timber once used in the choir was used there again during the eighteenth-century rebuilding. This seems unlikely given the evidence for the mixing of timbers.

Nineteen samples remain undated. Most of these have a satisfactory number of rings for dating, and indeed some are quite long. Although a few of the samples are a little complacent, none of the very long undated samples show obviously complacent or stressed growth rings that would make dating difficult.

Of the ninety-six samples measured and analysed some 35 are from timbers with felling dates in the earlyeighteenth century while 31 samples are from timbers that have, or probably have, felling dates in the thirteenth century. There are eight timbers which were felled in the mid-seventeenth century and three for which felling dates cannot be estimated due to the lack of the heartwood/sapwood boundary. Nineteen measured samples remain undated.

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## Table 1: Details of samples from Worcester Cathedral, Worcester

Sample no	Sample location	Total rings	*Sapwood rings	First measured ring date	Last heartwood ring date	Last measured ring date
	The crossing			Ting dute	ing duto	This date
WOR-C01	South principal rafter, truss 2 (East truss)	60	4	AD 1656	1711	1715
WOR-C02	North principal rafter, truss 2	69	16C	AD 1659	1711	1727
WOR-C03	King post, truss 1 (West truss)	89	5	AD 1621	1704	1709
WOR-C04	South principal rafter, truss 1	74	28C	AD 1654	1699	1727
WOR-C05	North strut, truss 1	81	11	AD 1620	1689	1700
WOR-C06	South strut, truss 1	80	8	AD 1620	1691	1699
WOR-C07	Tiebeam, truss 1	75	11	AD 1636	1699	1710
WOR-C08	North strut, truss 2	69	14	AD 1633	1687	1701
WOR-C09	South rafter 4	70	2			
WOR-C10	South rafter 3	58	no h/s	444 for 106 649 144 or		
WOR-C11	North rafter 1	61	no h/s	AD 1631	ere ver ere feld alle auf	1691
WOR-C12	North rafter 4	55	no h/s	AD 1630	×	1684
WOR-C82	North principal rafter, truss 1	59	20C	AD 1667	1705	1725
	North-east transept					

#### North-east transept

WOR-C13	Spine/bridging beam, truss 2-3	240	17C	*****	ann aid bhe ain inn	
WOR-C14	King post, truss 1	67	28C	AD 1663	1701	1729
WOR-C15	East brace, truss 3	65	no h/s			
WOR-C16	King post, truss 2	100	27C	AD 1629	1701	1728
WOR-C17	Raking shore, truss 3-4	195	26C	AD 1459	1627	1653
WOR-C18	Spine/bridging beam, truss 3-4	190	h/s	AD 1447	1636	1636
WOR-C19	King post, truss 4	57	19			
WOR-C20	King post, truss 3	60	18C	AD 1670	1711	1729
WOR-C21	Tiebeam, truss 3	110	h/s	10 - 10 - 10 - 10 - 10 - 10 - 10 - 10 -	Bate 400 (000 (000 (000 (000	
WOR-C22	Tiebeam, truss 2	87	no h/s	AD 1531	<b></b>	1617

### Table 1: Continued

Sample no	Sample location	Total rings	*Sapwood rings	First measured ring date	Last heartwood ring date	Last measured ring date
	South-east transept					
WOR-C23	Spine/bridging beam truss 1-2	210	19C	AD 1443	1633	1652
WOR-C24	Raking shore, truss 2-3	193	26C	AD 1458	1624	1650
WOR-C25	Spine/bridging beam, truss 4-5	308	12			
WOR-C26	Tiebeam, truss 2	70	10			
WOR-C27	Spine/bridging beam, truss 3-4	178	no h/s	AD 1476		1653
WOR-C28	Upper spine/bridging beam, truss 3-4	141	14C	AD 1512	1639	1653
WOR-C29	Tiebeam, truss 4	57	14			
WOR-C30	King post, truss 1	64	17C	AD 1661	1707	1724
	The choir					
WOR-C31	Tiebeam, truss 1	79	h/s	AD 1530	1608	1608
WOR-C32	Tiebeam, truss 2	85	h/s	AD 1163	1247	1247
WOR-C33	Tiebeam, truss 3	131	9	AD 1579	1700	1709
WOR-C34	Tiebeam, truss 5	92	h/s	AD 1606	1697	1697
WOR-C35	Tiebeam, truss 6	122	h/s	AD 1568	1689	1689
WOR-C36	Tiebeam, truss 7	150	10	AD 1562	1701	1711
WOR-C37	Tiebeam, truss 8	130	5	AD 1566	1690	1695
WOR-C38	King post, truss 1	63	12		****	and for the set of the set
WOR-C39	King post, truss 3	70	14	AD 1649	1704	1718
WOR-C40	King post, truss 4	54	h/s	AD 1655	1708	1708
WOR-C41	King post, truss 6	76	14			
WOR-C42	King post, truss 8	95	28C	AD 1632	1698	1726
WOR-C43	North principal rafter, truss 7	72	10	AD 1649	1710	1720
WOR-C44	North common rafter 3, bay 3	72	24C	AD 1654	1701	1725
WOR-C45	North common rafter 4, bay 3	77	21c	AD 1648	1703	1724
WOR-C46	North common rafter 3, bay 4	100	no h/s	AD 1575		1674
WOR-C47	King post, truss 7	59	h/s	AD 1635	1693	1693

### Table 1: Continued

Sample no	Sample location	Total rings	*Sapwood rings	First measured ring date	Last heartwood ring date	Last measured ring date
	North-east Transept					
WOR-C48	West common rafter 3, bay 2	69	h/s	AD 1640	1708	1708
WOR-C49	West strut, truss 2	104	12c	AD 1121	1212	1224
WOR-C50	North purlin, east-west crossing trusses	77	no h/s	AD 1128	1204	1204
WOR-C51	East common rafter 2, bay 1	98	no h/s	AD 1491		1588
WOR-C52	East common rafter 1, bay 1	61	no h/s		-14-19-19-19-19-19-19-19-19-19-19-19-19-19-	
WOR-C53	East common rafter 1, bay 2	66	4	AD 1530	1591	1595
WOR-C54	East purlin, truss 3-4	83	no h/s			ينف بلود الرب الجز والد الذي
WOR-C55	East wall plate, truss 3-5	100	no h/s	AD 1096	an in this failed an	1195
WOR-C56	West purlin, truss 2-3	82	no h/s	AD 1129		1210
WOR-C57	West common rafter 4, truss 1 – crossing	93	no h/s	AD 1119		1211
WOR-C58	West strut, truss 1	70	h/s	AD 1149	1218	1218
WOR-C59	East strut, truss 5	79	h/s	and provide the provide	******	
WOR-C60	West strut, truss 3	70	no h/s	AD 1141	pro and and the state of	1210
WOR-C61	East strut, truss 2	75	no h/s	AD 1137		1211
	South-east transept					
WOR-C62	South purlin, east-west truss of crossing	95	h/s	AD 1120	1214	1214
WOR-C63	East strut, truss 5	71	h/s	any baine shield an		
WOR-C64	East strut, truss 4	79	h/s	AD 1138	1216	1216
WOR-C65	East strut, truss 2	81	h/s	AD 1120	1200	1200
WOR-C66	East strut, truss 3	54	h/s	AD 1152	1205 *	1205
WOR-C67	East purlin, truss 3-4	92	h/s	AD 1126	1217	1217
WOR-C68	West strut, truss 3	56	h/s	AD 1153	1208 -	1208
WOR-C69	West strut, truss 4	61	18	AD 1174	1216	1234
WOR-C70	West purlin, truss 3-4	95	no h/s	AD 1092		1186
WOR-C71	West purlin, truss 2-3	157	26	AD 1057	1187	1213
WOR-C72	East purlin, truss 5 – crossing	85	no h/s	AD 1097		1181
WOR-C73	West strut, truss 2	104	h/s			*****

Table	1:	Continued
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Sample no	Sample location	Total Rings	*Sapwood rings	First measured ring date	Last heartwood	Last measured
	Choir	Kings	ings	ning date	Ring date	ring date
WOR-C74	North purlin, truss 4-5	66	h/s	AD 1169	1234	1234
WOR-C75	South purlin, truss 4-5	97	h/s			
WOR-C76	South principal rafter, truss 6	67	15	AD 1657	1708	1723
WOR-C77	South common rafter 2, bay 6	66	3	AD 1626	1688	1691
WOR-C78	South common rafter 3, bay 7	77	no h/s	AD 1605		1681
WOR-C79	South common rafter 2, bay 7	60	h/s	AD 1632	1691	1691
WOR-C80	South common rafter 5, bay 7	90	21C	AD 1635	1703	1724
WOR-C81	South common rafter 4, bay 7	65	h/s	AD 1643	1707	1707
WOR-C83	North common rafter 2, bay 3	64	h/s	AD 1145	1208	1208
WOR-C84	North principal rafter, truss 1	103	no h/s	AD 1125		1227
WOR-C85	North purlin truss 1-west crossing truss	124	no h/s	AD 1066		1189
WOR-C86	South principal rafter, truss 3	64	no h/s		disk per and had-and any	
WOR-C87	North common rafter 3, bay 6	nm	***		*****	
WOR-C88	North common rafter 4, bay 6	54	hs			an en 25 es 14 44
	Timbers beneath walkway					
WOR-C89	Reused beam	80	h/s	AD 1162	1241	1241
WOR-C90	Reused beam	66	2		the last and last	
WOR-C91	Reused beam	76	h/s	AD 1126	1201 -	1201
WOR-C92	Reused beam	61	h/s	AD 1148	1208 -	1208
WOR-C93	Reused beam	79	h/s	AD 1129	1207 -	1207
WOR-C94	Reused beam	79	h/s	AD 1129	1207-	1207
WOR-C95	Reused beam	nm		***		
WOR-C96	Wall plate	62	h/s	AD 1142	1203	1203
WOR-C97	Wall plate	74	h/s	AD 1177	1250	1250
WOR-C98	Wall plate	74	h/s	AD 1174	1247	1247

\*h/s = the heartwood/sapwood boundary is the last ring on the sample c = complete sapwood on timber, all or part lost on sampling C = complete sapwood retained on sample nm = sample not measured

Table 2: Results of the cross-matching of site chronology WORCSQ01 and relevant reference
chronologies when first ring date is AD 1443 and last ring date is AD 1729

Reference chronology	Span of chronology	t-value	
East Midlands	AD 882-1981	4.9	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
St Hugh's Choir, Lincoln Cathedral	AD 401 – 1981	9.2	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
Bradgate Park, Leics	AD 1595 – 1975	7.6	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
Rufford Mill, Notts	AD 1571 – 1744	5.8	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
Westhorpe Frm, Killamarsh, Derbys	AD 1528 – 1629	7.0	(Howard <i>et al</i> 1994b)
Mansfield Woodhouse, Notts	AD 1431 – 1660	6.2	(Howard <i>et al</i> 1997)
Sutton Scarsdale Hall, Derbys	AD 1526 – 1658	6.2	(Howard et al 1996a)
Worcester Cathedral, Nave roof	AD 1597 – 1730	8.7	(Howard et al 1995)
Quenby Hall, Leics	AD 1648 – 1765	7.9	(Howard et al 1993 unpubl)
Ragnall barn, Ragnall, Notts	AD 1607 - 1717	6.6	(Howard <i>et al</i> 1997)
Southwell Minster, Notts	AD 1573 – 1716	7.2	(Howard et 1 1996b)

# Table 3: Results of the cross-matching of site chronology WORCSQ02 and relevant reference chronologies when first ring date is AD 1057 and last ring date is AD 1247

Reference chronology	Span of chronology	t-value	
East Midlands	AD 882-1981	6.2	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
England	AD 401 - 1981	6.3	(Baillie and Pilcher 1982 unpubl)
Southern England	AD 1083 – 1589	5.1	(Bridge 1988)
Angel Choir, Lincoln Cathedral	AD 912 - 1248	6.8	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
Brecon Cathedral, Powys	AD 996 – 1227	6,5	(Howard et al 1994a)
Salisbury Cathedral, Wilts	AD 1119–1201	6.1	(Howard et al 1992)
Horninglow St, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs	AD 1101 – 1345	5.9	(Howard et al 1995)

Table 4: Results of the cross-matching of site chronology WORCSQ03 and relevant reference chronologies when first ring date is AD 1096 and last ring date is AD 1211

Reference chronology	Span of chronology	t-value	
East Midlands	AD 882 – 1981	5.1	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
England Southern England	AD 401 – 1981	3.5	(Baillie and Pilcher 1982 unpubl)
Southern England Quaintree House, Braunston, Leics	AD 1083 – 1589	4.9	(Bridge 1988)
Angel Choir, Lincoln Cathedral	AD 1165 – 1305 AD 912 – 1248	4.6 5.4	(Alcock <i>et al</i> 1991)
Reading A	AD = 912 - 1243 AD = 1160 - 1407	5.4 5.4	(Laxton and Litton 1988) (Groves <i>et al</i> 1997)
Severns, Nottm	AD 1030 - 1325	4.7	(Howard <i>et al</i> 1996b)
Cross-Keys Inn, Leicester	AD 1104 - 1309	4.8	(Howard <i>et al</i> 1988)

# Table 5: Results of the cross-matching of site chronology WORCSQ06 and relevant reference chronologies when first ring date is AD 1174 and last ring date is AD 1250

Reference chronology	Span of chronology	t-value	
East Midlands	AD 882 - 1981	4.4	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
England	AD 401 – 1981	3.4	(Baillie and Pilcher 1982 unpubl)
Southern England	AD 1083 - 1589	3.9	(Bridge 1988)
Angel Choir, Lincoln Cathedral	AD 912 - 1248	4.9	(Laxton and Litton 1988)
Quaintree House, Braunston, Leics	AD 1165 - 1305	3.6	(Alcock et al 1991)
Severns, Nottm	AD 1030 - 1325	5.3	(Howard et al 1996b)
Worcester Cathedral, Nave roof	AD 1181 – 1291	4.6	(Howard et al 1995)
Brecon Cathedral, Powys	AD 996 – 1227	3.6	(Howard et al 1994a)
Horninglow St, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs	AD 1101 – 1345	4.5	(Howard et al 1995)

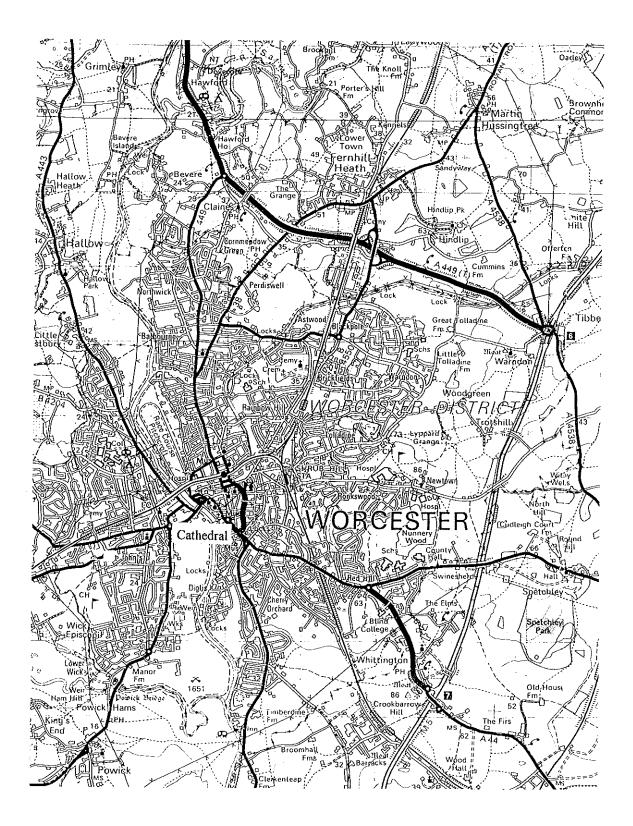
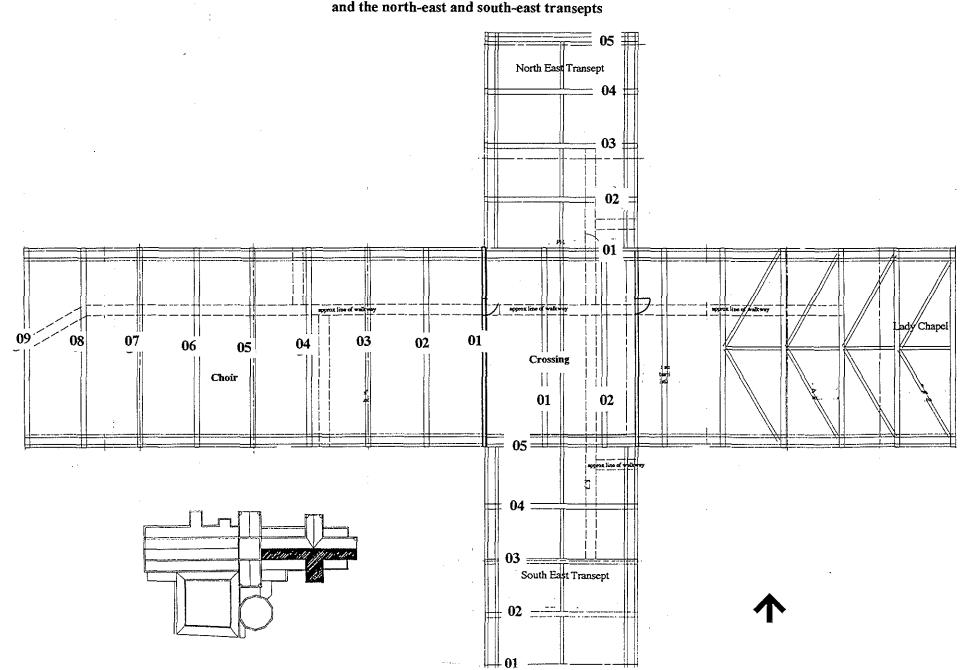


Figure 1: Map to show general location of Worcester Cathedral

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## Figure 2: Plan showing the positions of the trusses in the choir, the crossing, and the north-east and south-east transepts

Figure 3a: Choir roof truss 1 showing position of samples

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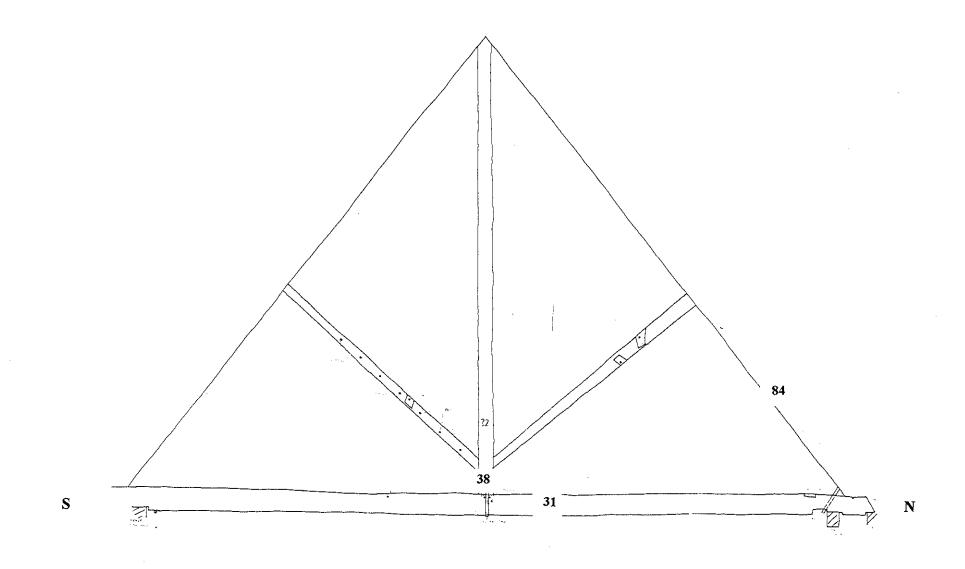


Figure 3b: Choir roof truss 2 showing position of samples

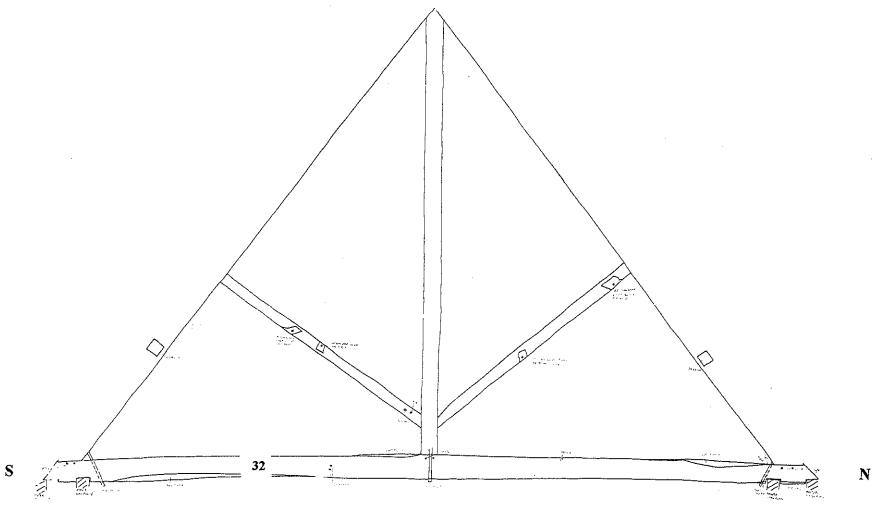
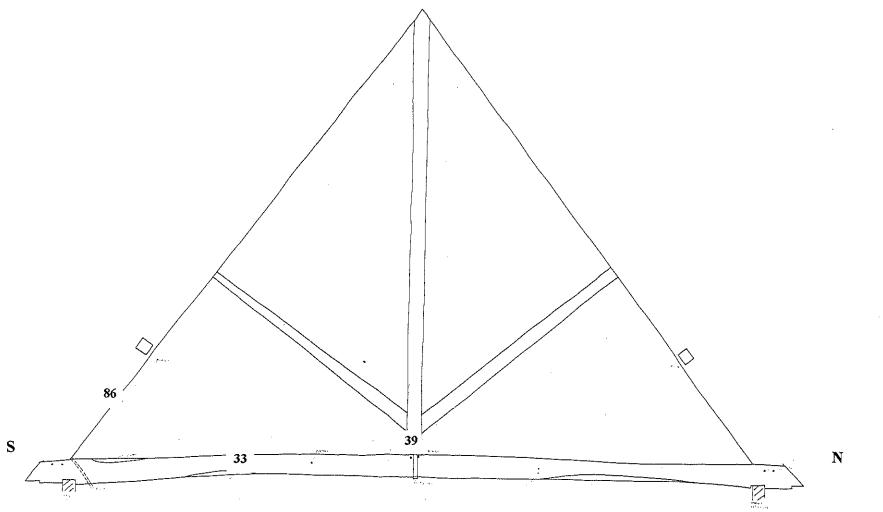
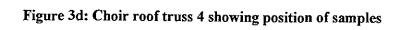
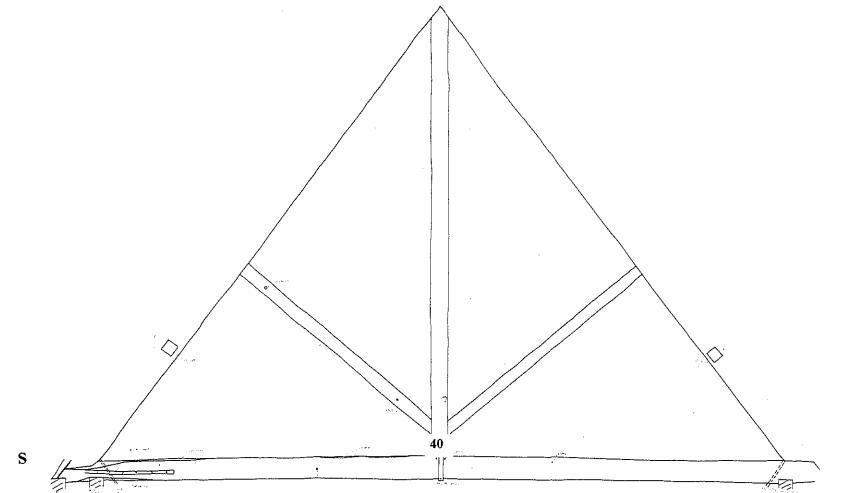


Figure 3c: Choir roof truss 3 showing position of samples







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Figure 3e: Choir roof truss 5 showing position of samples

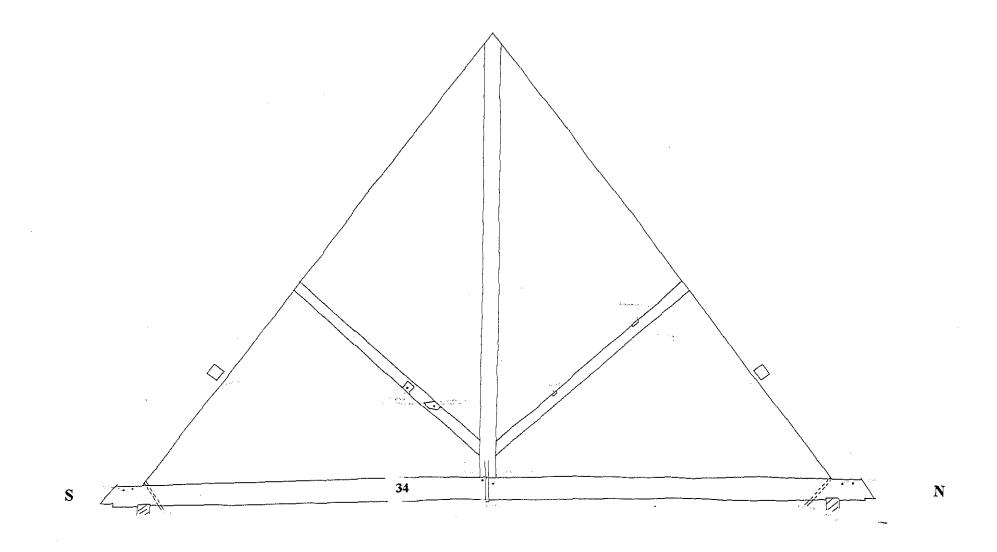


Figure 3f: Choir roof truss 6 showing position of samples

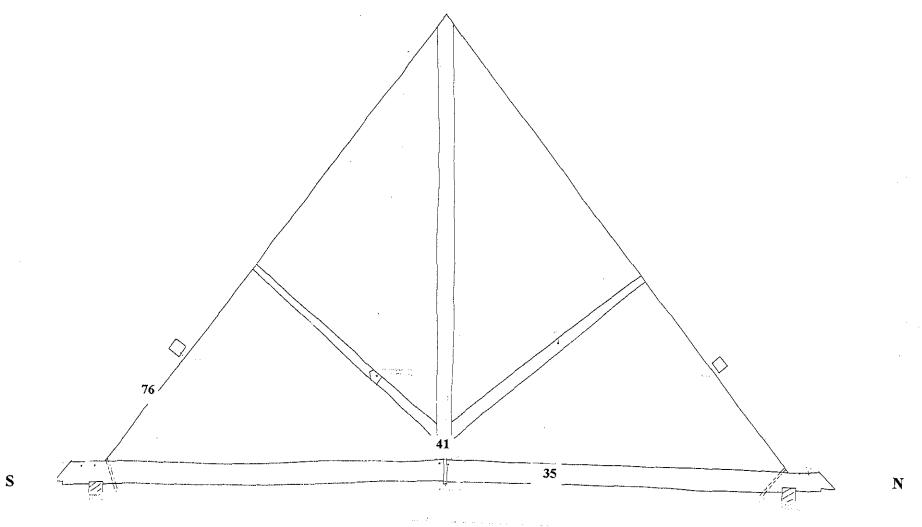
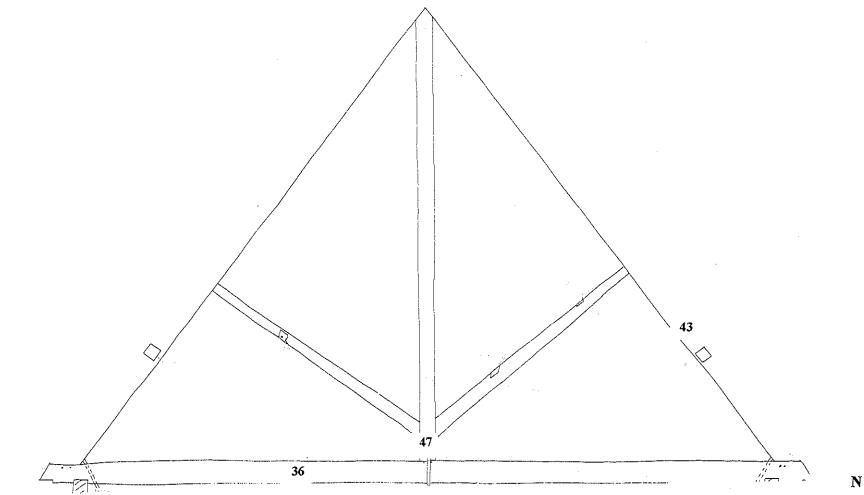


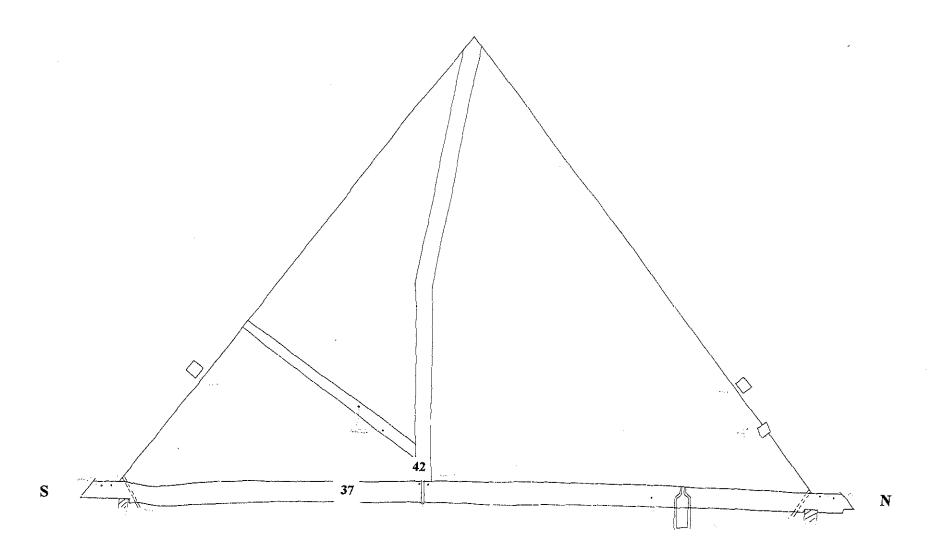
Figure 3g: Choir roof truss 7 showing position of samples

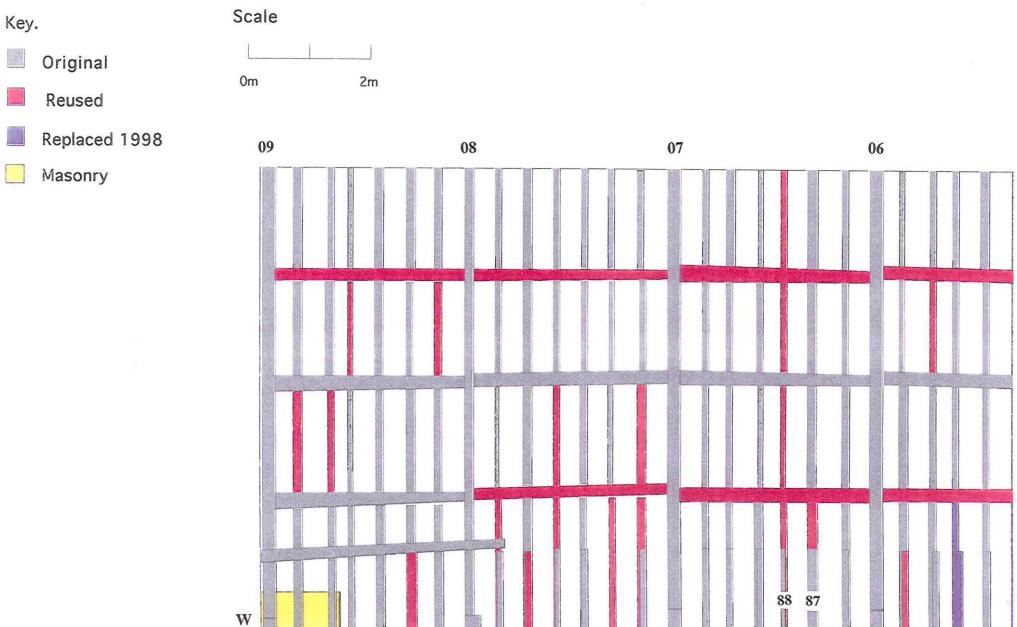
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Figure 3h: Choir roof truss 8 showing position of samples





### Figure 3i(1): North elevation of choir roof (western half) to show sample locations

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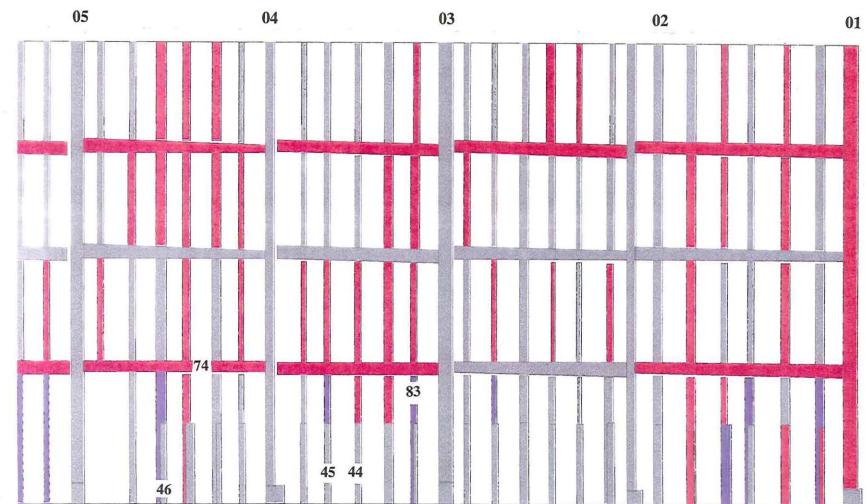


Figure 3i(2): North elevation of choir roof (eastern half) to show sample locations

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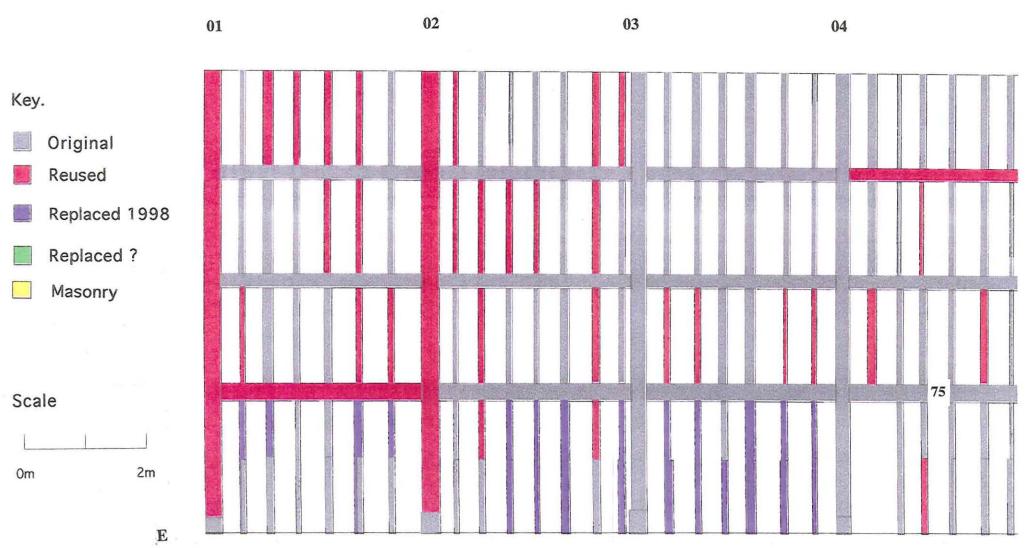
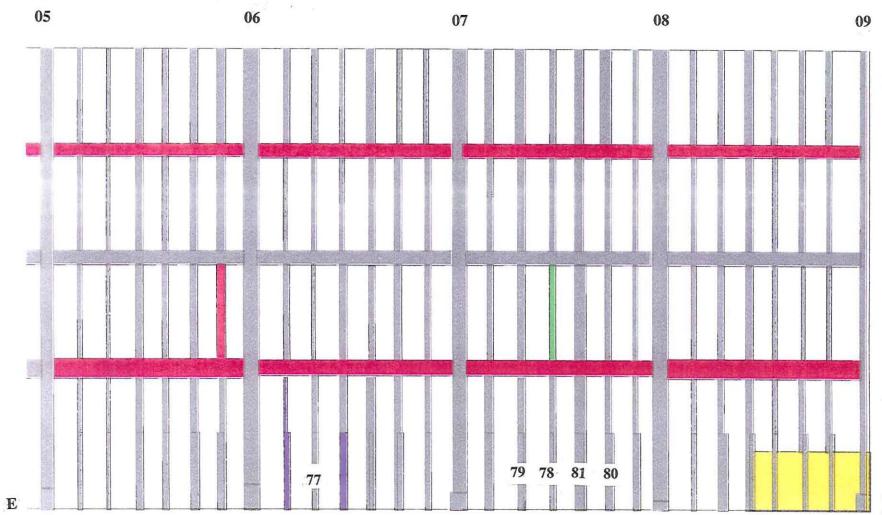


Figure 3j(1): South elevation of choir roof (eastern half) to show sample locations

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W

Figure 4a: Crossing roof truss 1 showing position of samples

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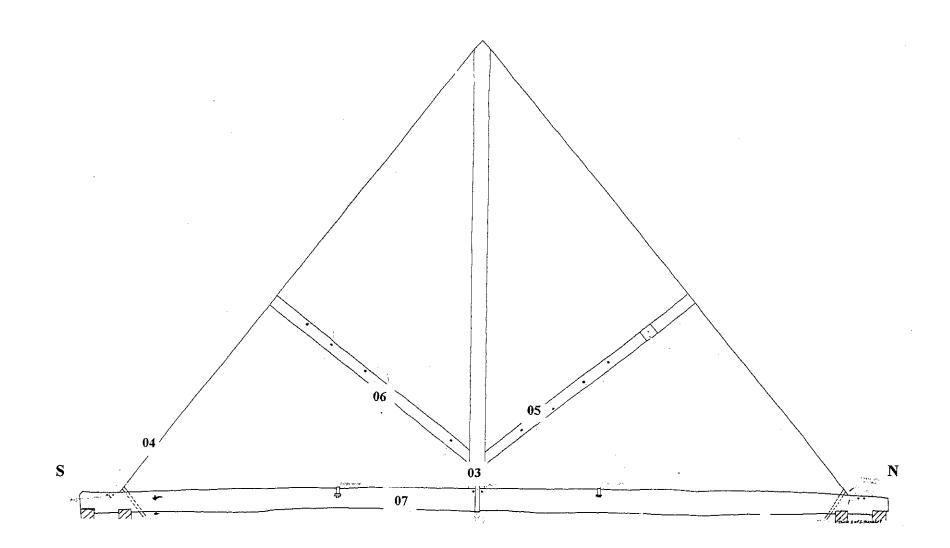
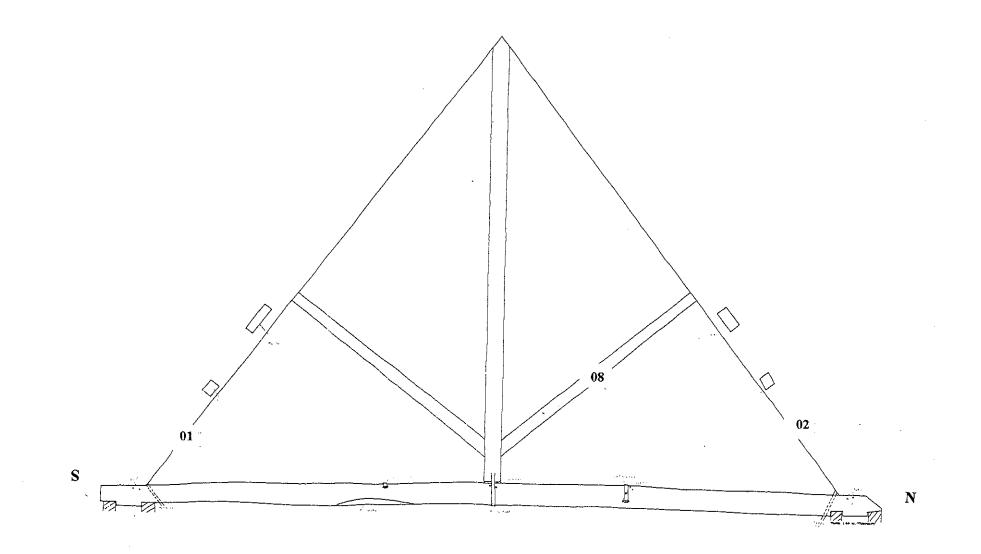


Figure 4b: Crossing roof truss 2 showing position of samples



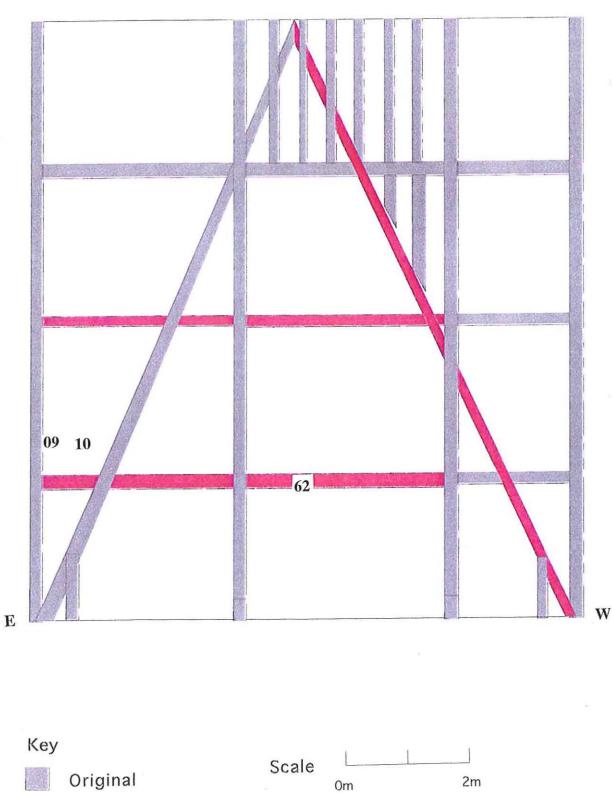
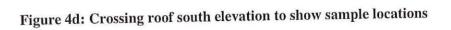
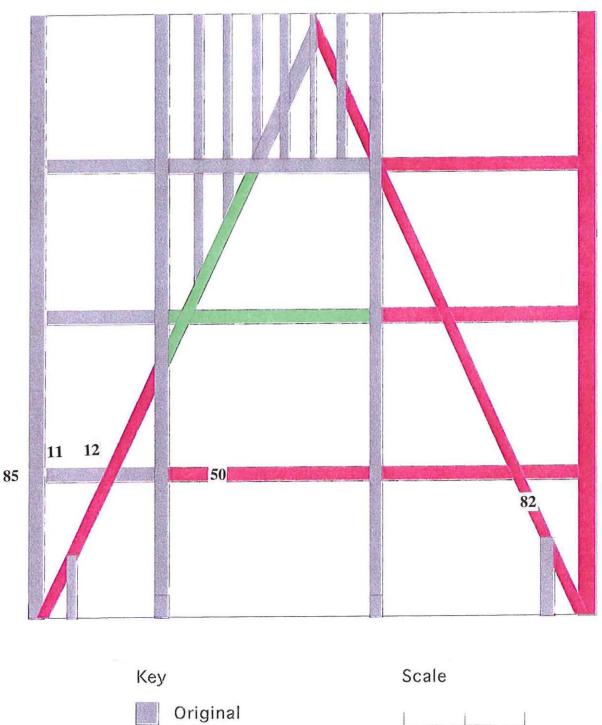


Figure 4c: Crossing roof north elevation to show sample locations

Reused





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Figure 5a: North-east transept roof truss 1 showing position of samples

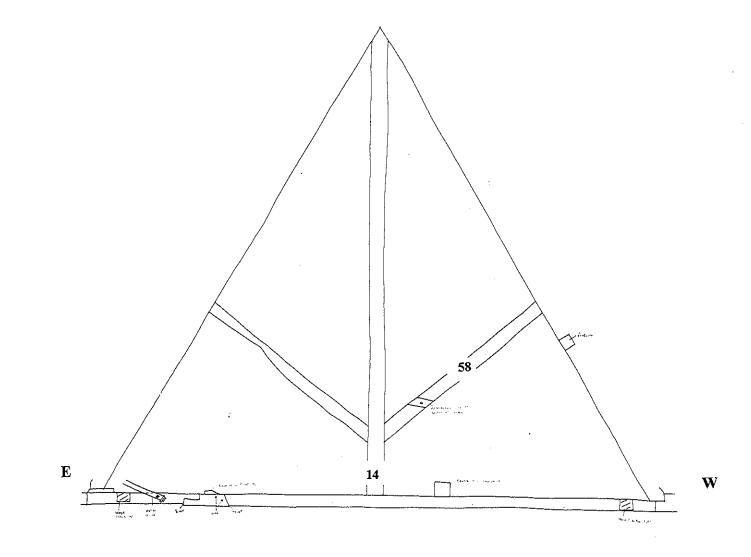


Figure 5b: North-east transept roof truss 2 showing position of samples

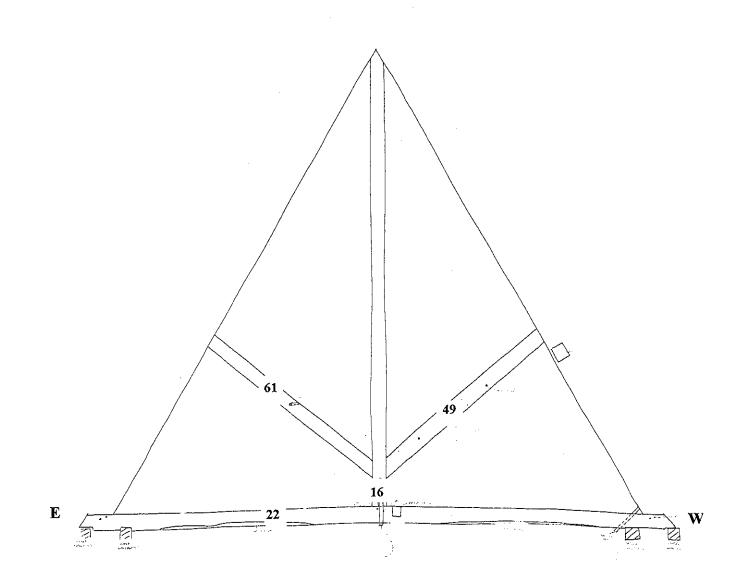


Figure 5c: North-east transept roof truss 3 showing position of samples

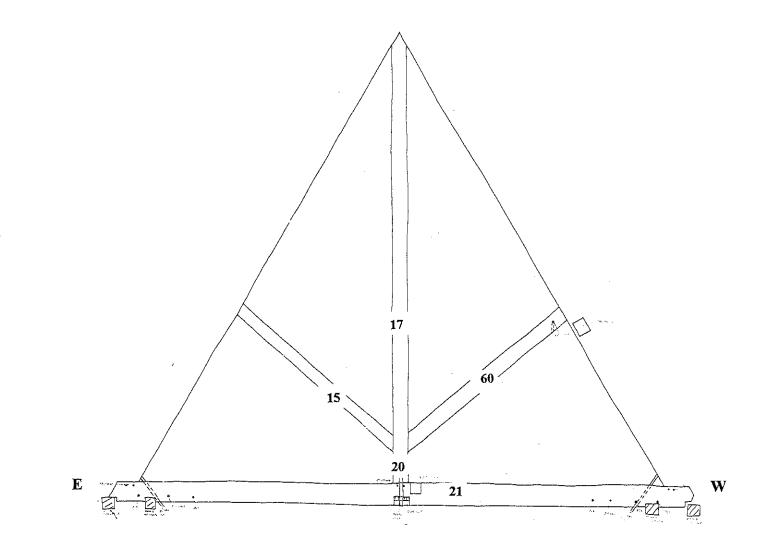


Figure 5d: North-east transept roof truss 4 showing position of samples

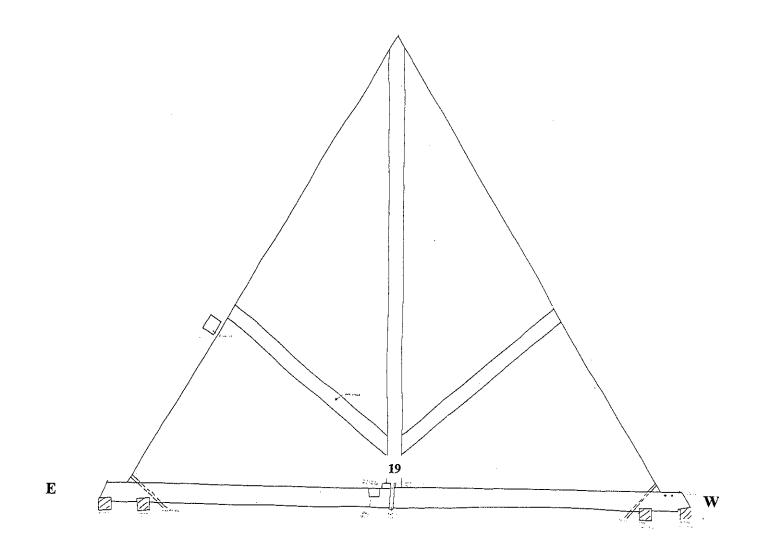
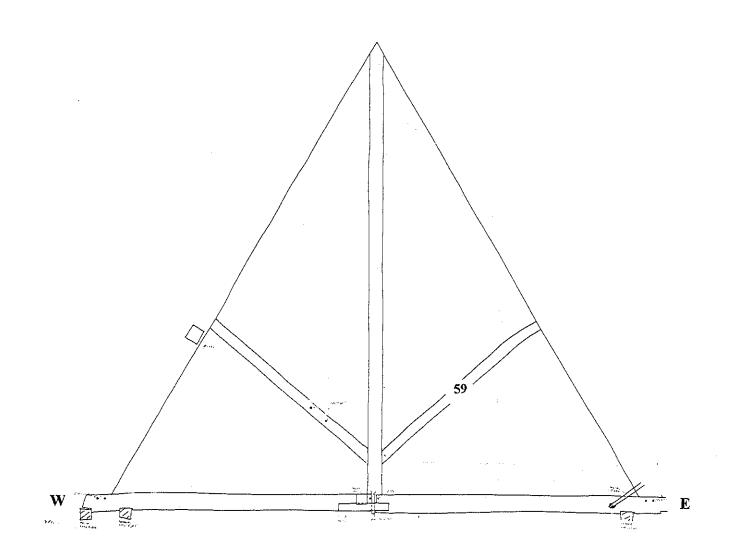


Figure 5e: North-east transept roof truss 5 showing position of samples



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	52 51	53			

Figure 5f: North-east transept roof east elevation showing position of samples

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# Figure 5g: North-east transept roof west elevation showing position of samples

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Figure 5h: Plan of north-east transept to show sample locations

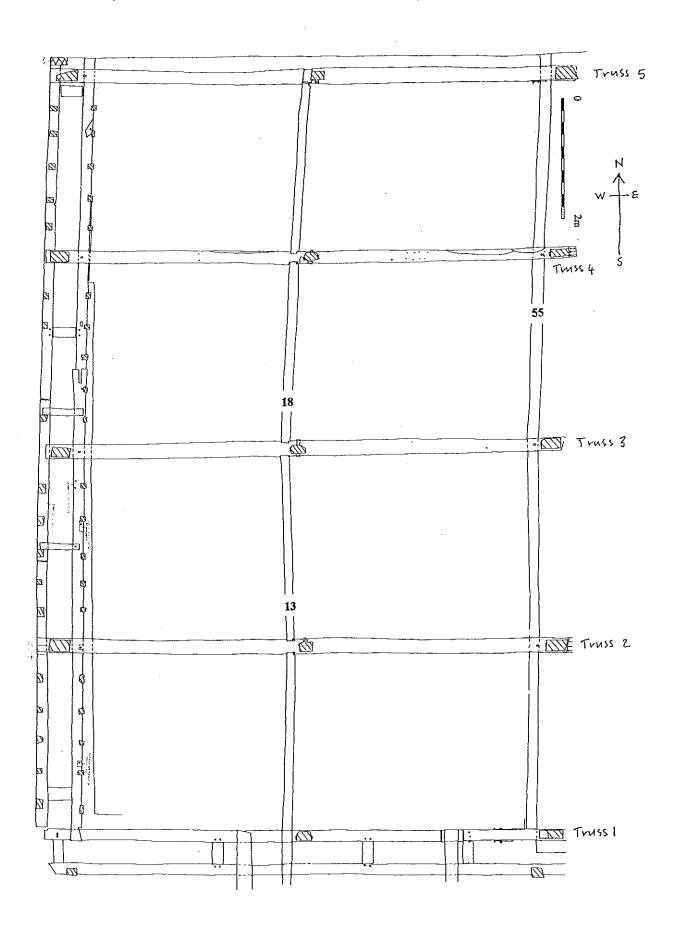


Figure 6a: South-east transept roof truss 1 showing position of samples

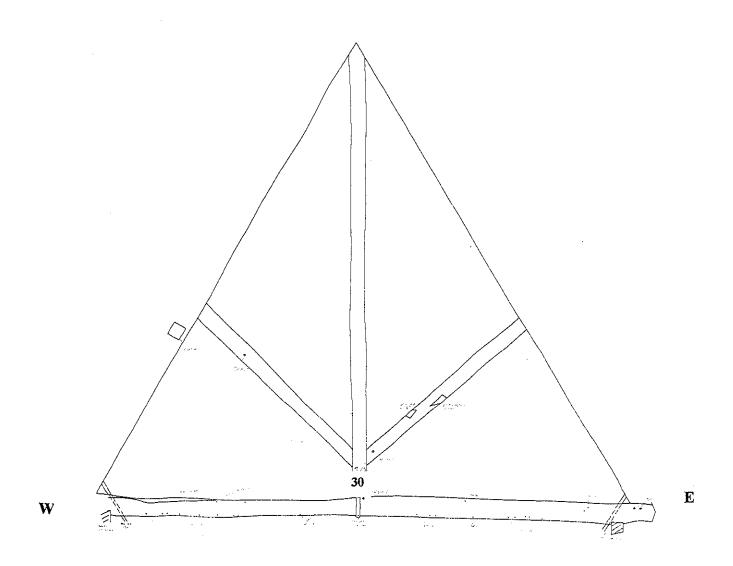


Figure 6b: South-east transept roof truss 2 showing position of samples

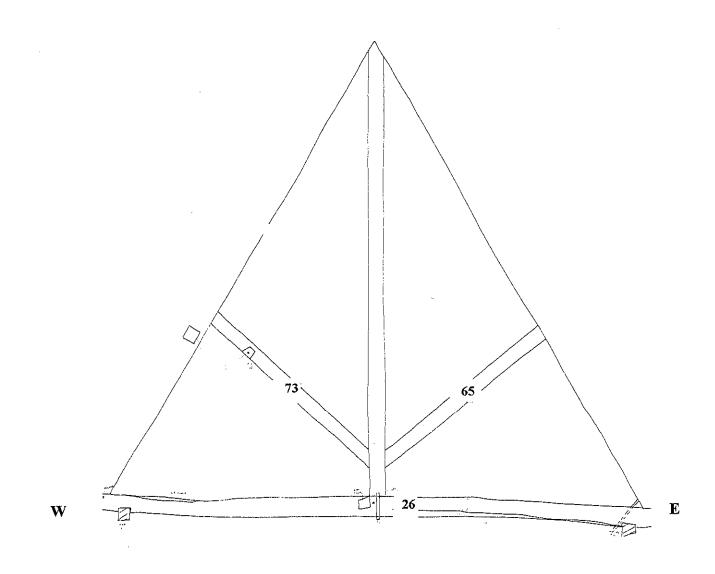


Figure 6c: South-east transept roof truss 3 showing position of samples

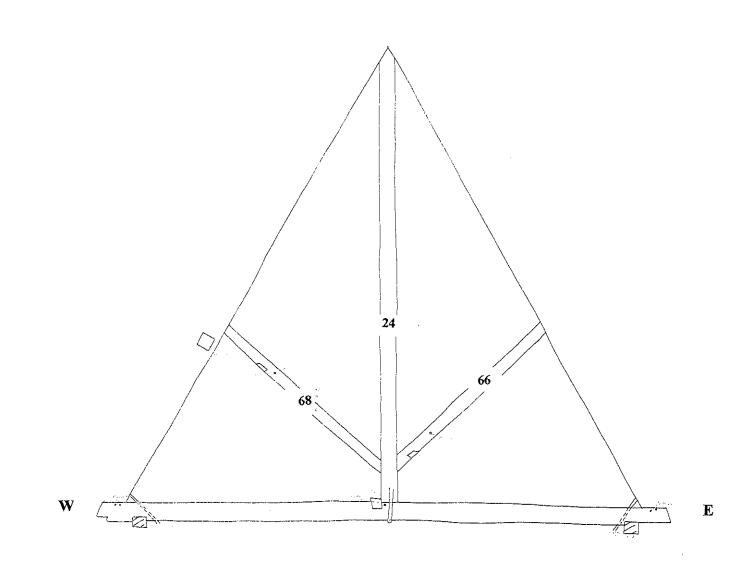


Figure 6d: South-east transept roof truss 4 showing position of samples

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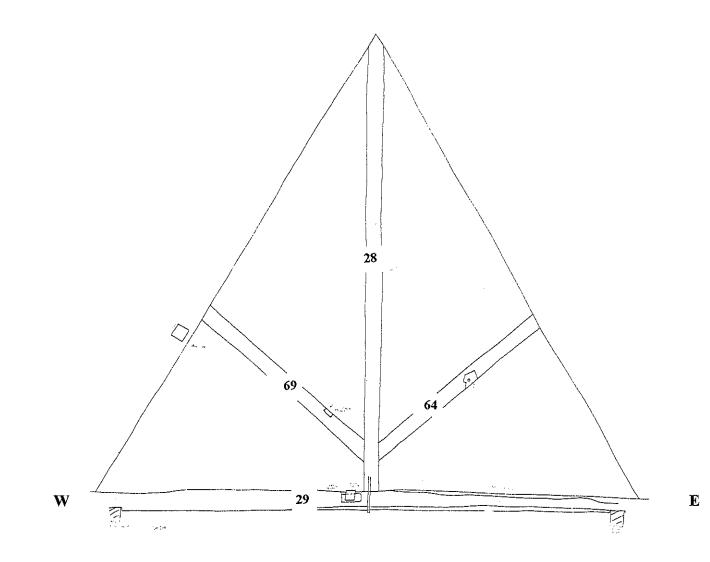
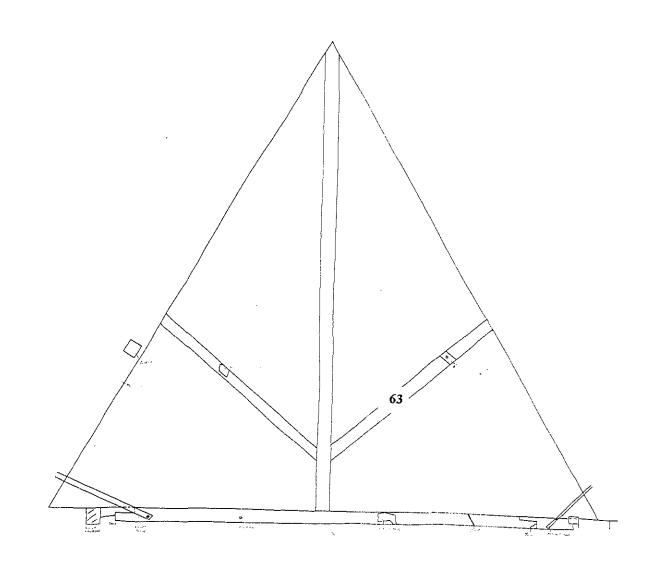


Figure 6e: South-east transept roof truss 5 showing position of samples

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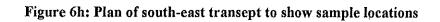


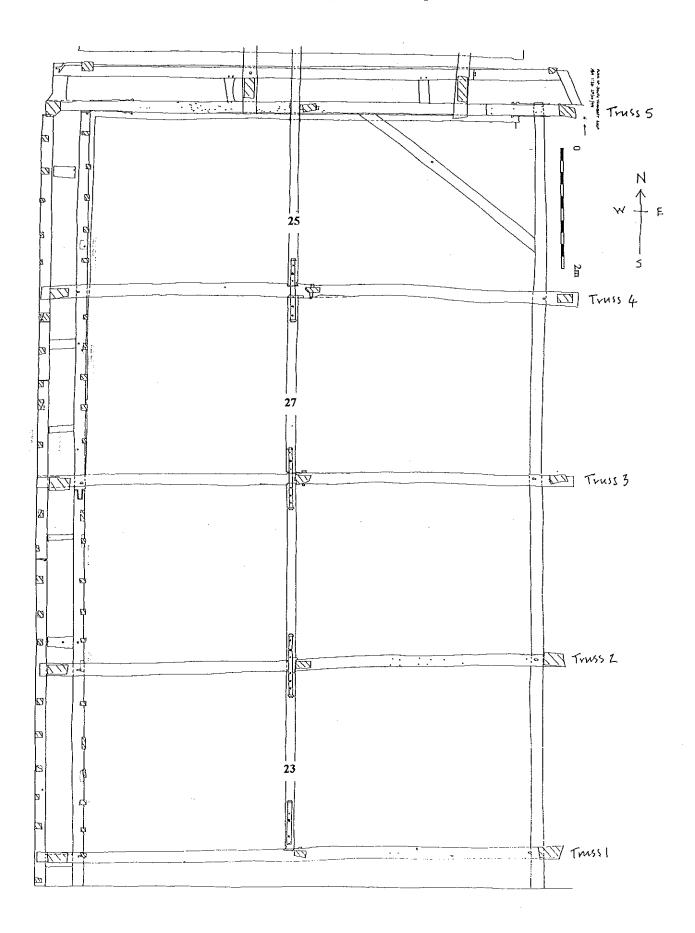
01	· 02	03	04	05
		ゆ 財! XX気! NXXA 高品 V2***		

Figure 6f: South-east transept roof east elevation showing position of samples

01 02 03 04 05 Key Original Reused Replaced 1998 Replaced ? 70 71 72 Scale 2m 0m

Figure 6g: South-east transept roof west elevation showing position of samples





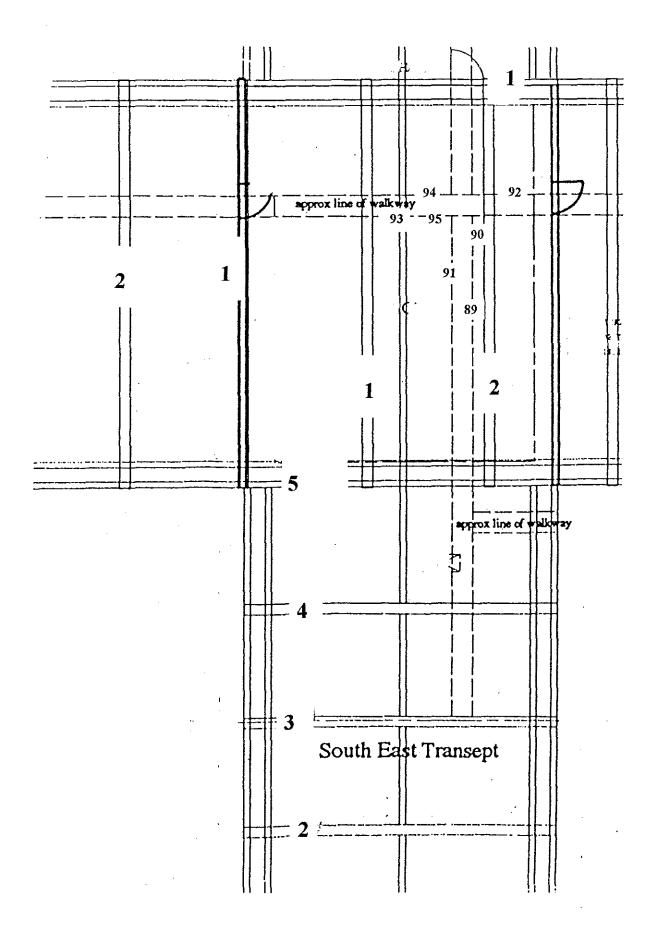
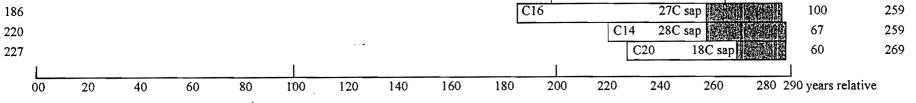


Figure 7: Plan to show position of samples 89-95 from the reused timbers beneath the walk-way of the crossing

Figur Off- set	e 8: Bar diagram of samples in site chronology WORCSQ01	Total rings	Relative last heartwood ring position
15	C24 26C sap	193	182
00	C23 19C sap South-east transept	210	191
33	C27 no h/s	178	
70	C28 14C sap	141	197
218	C30 17C sap	64	266
87	C31 h/s	79	166
132	C46 no h/s	100	***
162	C78 no h/s	77	
125	C35 h/s	122	247
183	C77 3 sap	66	243
189	C79 h/s	60	249
192	C47 h/s	59	251
123	C37 5 sap	130	248
163	C34 h/s	92	255
200	Choir C81 h/s	65	265
212	C40 h/s	54	266
136	C33 9 sap	131	258
119	C36 10 sap	150	259
206	C39 14 sap	70	262
206	C43 10 sap	72	262
200	C76 $15$ sap $10$ sap	67	266
192	C80 21C sap	90	262
205	C45 21c sap	77	262
211	$\begin{array}{c} C43 \\ \hline C44 \\ 24C sap \\ \hline \end{array}$	72	259
211		59	263
189	C42 28C sap	95	256
187	C12 no h/s	55	
188	C11 no h/s	61	
177	C06 8 sap	80	249
177	$\frac{11}{100}$	81	247
190	Crossing C08 14 sap	69	245
178	CO3 5 sap	89	262
193	C07 11 sap	75	257
213		60	269
213	$\frac{1}{100} = \frac{1}{100} $	69	269
210	$\begin{array}{ c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c$	74	257
	C51 no h/s	98	
48		56 66	
87	C53 4 sap		149
88	C22 no h/s	87 190	
04	C18 h/s North-east transept		
16	C17 26C sap	195	185
197		69 100	266

- .....



White bars = heartwood rings, shaded area = sapwood rings h/s = heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample C = complete sapwood retained on sample c = complete sapwood on timber, all or part lost in coring

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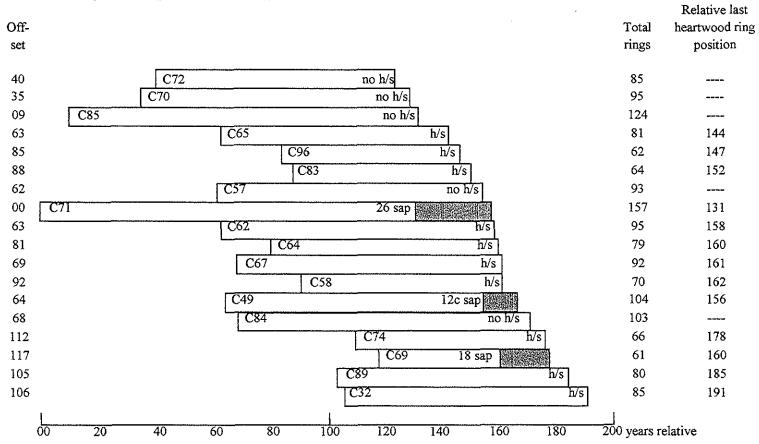


Figure 9: Bar diagram of samples in site chronology WORCSQ02

White bars = heartwood rings, shaded area = sapwood rings h/s = heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample c = complete sapwood on timber, all or part lost in coring

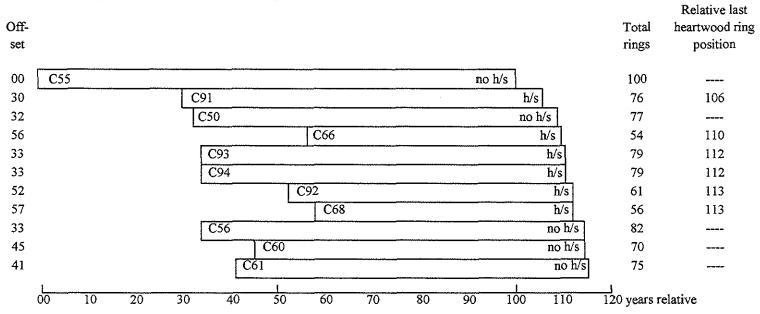


Figure 10: Bar diagram of samples in site chronology WORCSQ03

White bars = heartwood rings h/s = heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample

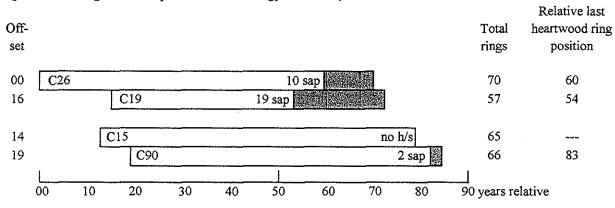
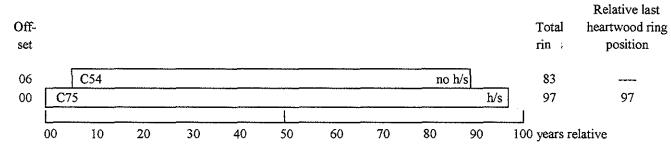


Figure 11 Bar diagram of samples in site chronology WORCSQ04

Figure 12: Bar diagram of samples in site chronology WORCSQ05



White bars = heartwood rings, shaded area = sapwood rings h/s = heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample

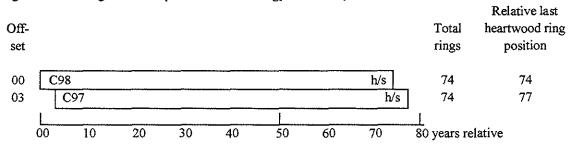


Figure 13: Bar diagram of samples in site chronology WORCSQ06

White bars = heartwood rings h/s = heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample

Data of measured samples - measurements in 0.001 mm units

WOR-C01A 60 839 735 566 436 434 282 310 347 353 379 330 322 444 341 354 429 377 360 392 425 422 368 402 398 342 428 322 272 242 225 308 325 364 323 301 431 317 463 374 292 346 296 335 238 258 234 253 266 268 157 288 314 406 437 418 248 308 317 188 376 WOR-C01B 60 847 732 551 456 430 291 295 358 353 386 361 332 456 328 349 402 370 351 422 420 420 380 397 401 352 432 299 273 232 228 309 342 345 336 281 461 316 463 369 289 374 301 343 231 258 242 254 266 255 159 279 299 418 444 421 274 315 302 179 364 WOR-C02A 69 395 410 312 331 361 368 355 278 272 355 344 364 389 365 340 428 578 424 484 413 410 324 355 278 286 241 230 349 338 275 283 300 315 268 336 329 297 309 275 336 266 292 304 311 278 321 177 232 279 319 285 222 264 306 310 232 257 266 256 308 276 307 310 276 217 304 248 260 347 WOR-C02B 69 417 419 313 331 362 376 353 283 267 354 368 356 417 369 329 433 541 439 472 409 406 323 325 290 321 236 239 355 337 283 278 299 322 282 349 337 296 305 299 337 258 297 292 295 283 311 177 241 255 346 294 223 266 302 322 219 259 249 279 289 269 307 327 263 214 270 278 264 330 WOR-C03A 89 301 249 214 137 189 197 248 166 232 184 235 250 206 141 199 157 167 314 173 242 250 188 228 230 173 234 143 233 181 168 261 200 121 149 208 162 207 262 229 300 271 279 322 366 335 274 260 308 306 262 469 362 399 225 223 193 235 323 239 247 206 192 232 138 103 128 160 144 130 162 276 301 217 107 108 161 180 205 144 155 135 147 135 188 123 159 225 155 216 WOR-C03B 89 272 262 219 145 205 199 254 161 243 178 288 241 211 136 210 128 198 306 171 237 253 185 247 212 183 234 187 250 180 170 256 208 106 140 210 163 206 261 215 316 265 283 335 368 348 215 228 322 246 246 431 364 396 247 200 201 210 286 224 247 235 186 217 140 90 128 176 125 138 145 303 288 231 117 103 154 183 206 132 166

# WOR-C04A 74

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# WOR-C06A 80

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# WOR-C07B 75

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WOR-C08A 69

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WOR-C11A 61

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WOR-C11B 61

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WOR-C14B 67

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WOR-C16A 100 316 216 334 327 335 160 188 186 171 259 206 246 149 229 239 281 245 341 196 260 116 124 81 71 92 157 178 135 222 219 237 217 177 148 197 132 112 121 151 165 104 90 118 69 122 104 182 113 157 121 68 86 89 125 118 71 75 107 81 93 76 105 93 121 136 100 89 83 118 181 99 132 140 78 140 96 62 95 76 80

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WOR-C17A 195

WOR-C15A 65 483 410 349 265 185 164 104 95 96 71 120 165 132 205 209 116 163 152 166 150 152 153 130 129 108 148 165 157 247 244 200 171 183 194 159 147 148 248 288 311 238 209 191 169 142 129 119 145 206 162 152 164 109 107 121 151 138 125 154 130

62 67 70 76 91 72 73 90 65 75 63 67 63 72 76 73 73 66 69 63 67 66 59 64 52 47 60 57 47 51 55 59 50 57 51 60 44 40 44 53 41 48 35 46 40 42 39 43 41 32 37 42 38 37 43 39 30 38 48 42 48 41 61 43 78 55 50 55 64 52 61 63 56 68 43 64 47 63 52 65 63 60 58 57 56 59 62 55 55 54 58 52 47 47 46 55 42 47 49 57 51 46 45 60 50 49 44 56 52 49 53 37 45 51 50 44 47 51 51 52 48 48 44 47 38 48 64 53 52 49 44 46 53 56 48 40 54 44 52 55 68 53 33 51 53 41 46 52 41 50 51 39 44 45 40 45 46 51 39 42 54 46 43 41 50 46 50 48 48 52 54 57 44 37 23 26 27 22 17 21 24 24 26 20 23 20 16 21 12 15 14 21 24 28 22 23 57 42 40 37 42 38 42 37 33 32 26 42 WOR-C25B 275 86 78 77 85 83 69 81 81 76 75 80 61 38 31 51 54 33 36 39 56 73 74 56 38 81 76 54 80 50 71 51 57 61 44 54 48 79 40 59 51 56 59 60 59 59 81 65 47 44 44 55 40 58 50 50 53 61 46 53 50 43 38 54 65 49 57 53 95 65 86 72 76 92 88 94 74 93 81 70 72 78 63 57 40 57 46 76 56 61 60 45 58 42 35 43 45 58 55 57 65 66 74 72 63 95 68 79 86 62 79 67 58 76 66 61 81 54 83 78 65 68 64 61 57 51 40 61 60 56 53 46 56 47 56 54 61 55 44 40 48 39 49 44 47 41 36 40 41 37 40 38 38 41 39 28 36 47 49 50 39 40 47 62 40 75 54 37 55 84 41 59 65 59 58 52 68 45 60 57 61 58 61 61 52 61 63 55 53 55 54 51 51 47 57 41 49 38 48 61 41 56 47 52 48 50 55 48 45 53 53 44 53 32 49 48 54 52 43 43 52 56 47 43 45 52 49 57 44 57 50 55 50 54 47 49 42 55 52 50 62 51 48 40 57 30 45 48 45 40 52 54 42 42 46 39 43 49 51 39 43 34 48 55 42 44 60 48 50 45 52 52 49 52 34 33 WOR-B26A 70 118 248 151 153 86 99 137 144 125 280 324 239 200 202 236 254 333 286 365 343 324 215 221 169 212 474 402 528 501 348 378 367 347 251 269 256 293 242 294 372 296 202 373 414 277 302 299 280 278 289 186 256 291 332 259 215 189 280 245 179 261 182 240 245 315 266 239 220 198 226

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WOR-B35A 122

WOR-B35B 122

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WOR-B40B 54

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WOR-B41A 76

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WOR-B43A 72

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# 85 232 247 287 136 179 198 324 311 128 265 339 382 299 185 192 219 156 255 230 215 237 186 166 200 189 169 154 217 200 149 143 155 232 152 240 256 159 150 231 275 174 172 128 171 203 174 168 165 152 119 167 137 141 130 89 102 87 108 117 73 90 105 107 73 91 95 116 69 86 116 100 106 111 84 114 116 95 103 101 89 81 88 105 65 84 92 66 121 102 109 107 79 89 104

WOR-D62B 95

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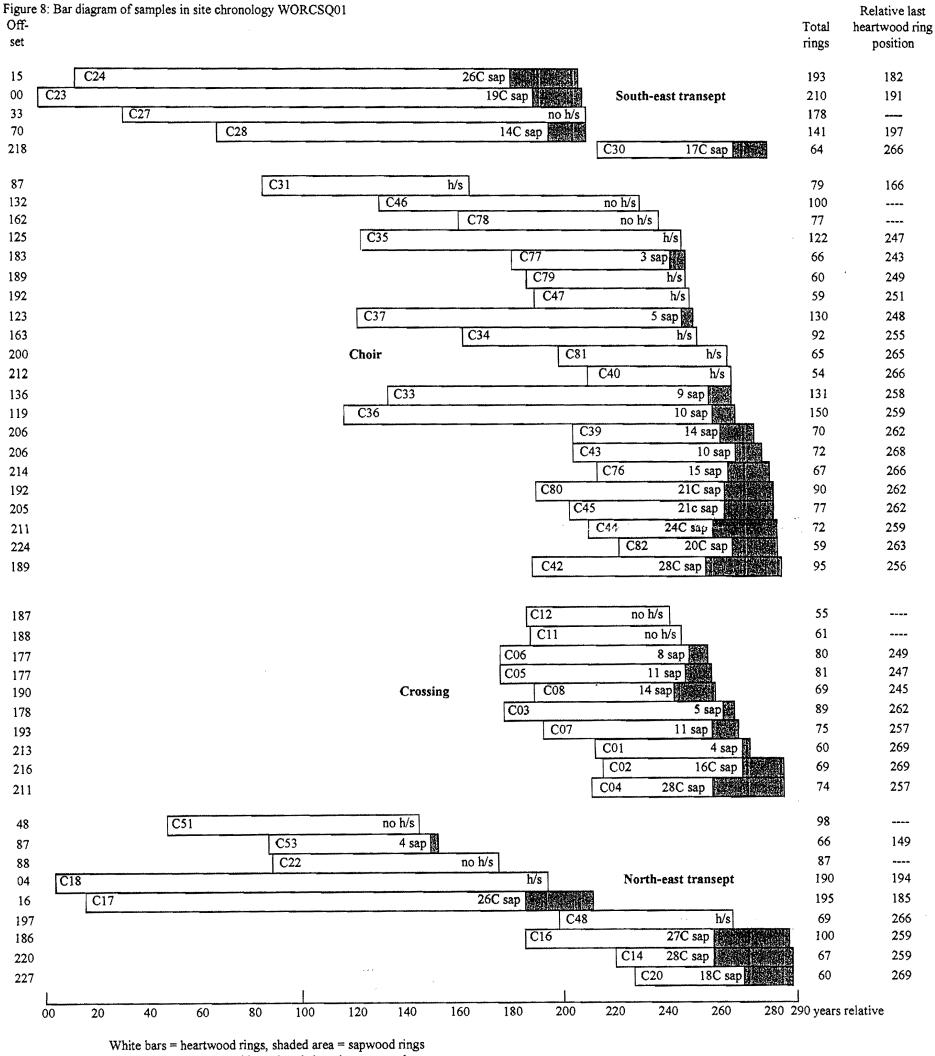
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h/s = heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample

C = complete sapwood retained on sample

c = complete sapwood on timber, all or part lost in coring

## 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 Buildings' (Laxton and Litton 1988b) and, for example, in Tree-Ring Dating and Archaeology (Baillie 1982) or A Slice Through Time (Baillie 1995). Here we will give the bare outlines. Each year an oak tree grows an extra ring on the outside of its trunk and all its branches just inside its bark. The width of this annual ring depends largely on the weather during the growing season, about April to October, and possibly also on the weather during the previous year. Good growing seasons give rise to relatively wide rings, poor ones to very narrow rings and average ones to relatively average ring widths. Since the climate is so variable from year to year, almost random-like, the widths of these rings will also appear random-like in sequence, reflecting the seasons. This is illustrated in Figure 1 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, 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 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 1, 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. 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 University of Nottingham Tree-Ring dating Laboratory

1. Inspecting the Building and Sampling the Timbers. Together with a building historian we inspect the timbers in a building 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 2 has about 120 rings; about 20 of which are sapwood rings. Similarly the core has just over 100 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 to 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.

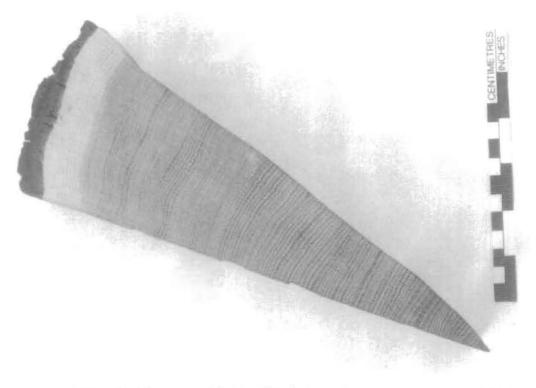


Fig 1. A wedge of oak from a tree felled in 1976. It shows the annual growth rings, one for each year from the innermost ring to the last ring on the outside just inside the bark. The year of each ring can be determined by counting back from the outside ring, which grew in 1976.

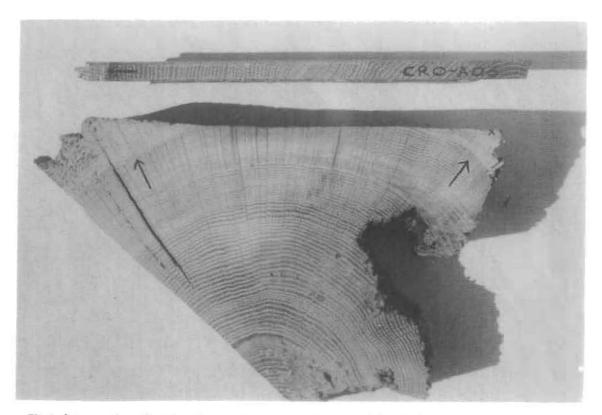


Fig 2. Cross-section of a rafter showing the presence of sapwood rings in the corners, the arrow is pointing to the heartwood/sapwood boundary (H/S). Also a core with sapwood; again the arrow is pointing to the H/S. The core is about the size of a pencil.

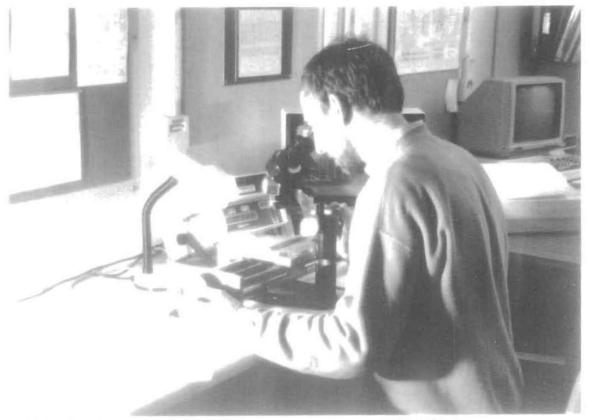


Fig 3. Measuring ring widths under a microscope. The microscope is fixed while the sample is on a moving platform. The total sequence of widths is measured twice to ensure that an error has not been made. This type of apparatus is needed to process a large number of samples on a regular basis.

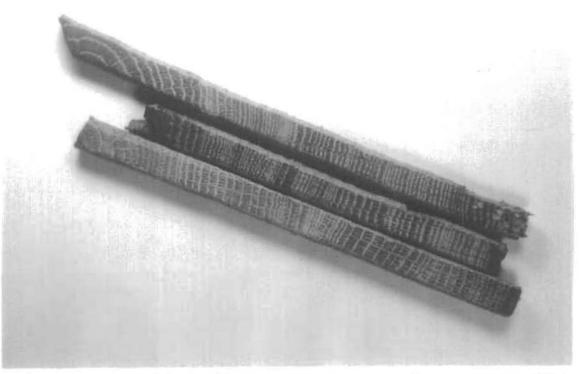


Fig 4. Three cores from timbers in a building. They come from trees growing at the same time. Notice that, although the sequences of widths look similar, they are not identical. This is typical.

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 2; it is about 15cm long and 1cm diameter. Great care has to be taken to ensure that as few as possible of the outer rings are lost. 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 inspecton 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 is insured with the CBA.

- 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 2. 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 3).
- 3. Cross-matching and Dating the Samples. Because of the factors besides the local climate which may determine the annual widths of a tree's rings, no two sequences of ring widths from different oaks growing at the same time are exactly alike (Fig 4). 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 5.0, is usually adequate for the dating to be accepted with reasonable confidence (Laxton *et al* 1988a,b; Howard *et al* 1984 1995).

This is illustrated in Fig 5 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. C08 matches C45 best when it is at a position starting 20 rings after the first ring of 45, and similarly for the others. The actual t-values between the four at these offsets of best correlations are in the matrix. Thus at the offset of +20 rings, the t-value between C45 and C08 is 5.6 and is the maximum between these two whatever the position of one sequence relative to the other.

It is standard practice in our Laboratory first to cross-match as many as possible of the 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 Fig 5. The fifth bar at the bottom is a site sequence for a roof at Lincoln Cathedral and is constructed from the matching sequences from 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. 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. average sequence of ring widths with a master sequence than it is to date the individual component sample sequences separately.

This 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'. This was developed and tested in the Laboratory and has been published (Litton and Zainodin 1991; Laxton *et al* 1988a). To illustrate the difference between the two approaches with the above example, consider sequences C08 and C05. They are the most similar pair with a t-value of 10.4. Therefore, these two are first averaged with the first ring of C05 at +17 rings relative to C08 (the offset at which they match each other). This average sequence is then used in place of the individual sequences C08 and C05. The cross-matching continues in this way gradually building up averages at each stage eventually to form the site sequence.

4. Estimating the Felling Date. If the bark is present on a sample, then the date of its last ring is the date of the felling of its tree. Actually it could be the year after if it had been felled in the first three months 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, they can be seen in two upper corners of the rafter and at the outer end of the core in Figure 2. 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 for 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. Thus in these circumstances the date of the present last ring is at least close to the date of the original last ring on the tree, and so to the date of felling.

Various estimates have been made for the average number of sapwood rings in a mature oak. One estimate is 30 rings, based on data from living oaks. So, in the case of the core in Figure 2 where 9 sapwood rings remain, this would give an estimate for the felling date of 21 (= 30 - 9) years later than of the date of the last ring on the core. Actually, it is better in these situations to give an estimated range for the felling date. Another estimate is that in 95% of mature oaks there are between 15 and 50 sapwood rings. So in this example this would mean that the felling took place between 6 (= 15 - 9) and 41 (= 50 - 9) years after the date of the last ring on the core and is expected to be right in at least 95% of the cases (Hughes *et al* 1981; see also Hillam *et al* 1987).

Data from the Laboratory has shown that when sequences are considered together in groups, rather than separately, the estimates for the number of sapwood can be put at between 15 and 40 rings in 95% of the cases with the expected number being 25 rings. We would use these estimates, for example, in calculating the range for the common felling date of the four sequences from Lincoln Cathedral using the average position of the heartwood/sapwood boundary (Fig 5). These new estimates are now used by us in all our publications except for timbers from Kent and Nottinghamshire where 25 and between 15 to 35 sapwood rings, respectively, is used instead (Pearson 1995).

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 2 was taken still had complete sapwood. Sapwood rings were only lost in coring, because of their softness By measuring in the timber the depth of sapwood lost, say 2 cm., a reasonable estimate can be made of the number of sapwood rings missing from the core, 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 40 years later we would have estimated without this observation.

# T-value/Offset Matrix

	C45	C08	C05	C04
C45		+20	+37	+47
C08	5.6		+17	+27
C05	5.2	10.4		+10
C04	5.9	3.7	5.1	$\sum$

## **Bar Diagram**

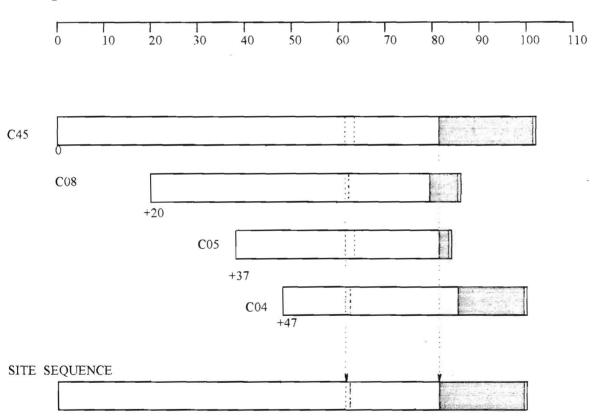


Fig 5. Cross-matching of four sequences from a Lincoln Cathedral roof and the formation of a site sequence from them.

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.

Even if all the sapwood rings are missing on all the timbers sampled, an estimate of the felling date is still possible in certain cases. For provided the original last heartwood ring of the tree, called the heartwood/sapwood boundary (H/S), is still on some of the samples, an estimate for the felling date of the group of trees can be obtained by adding on the full 25 years, or 15 to 40 for the range of felling dates.

If none of the timbers have their heartwood/sapwood boundaries, then only a *post quem* date for felling is possible.

- 5. Estimating the Date of Construction. There is a considerable body of evidence in the data collected by the Laboratory that the oak timbers used in vernacular buildings, at least, were used 'green' (see also Rackham (1976)). Hence provided the samples are taken *in situ*, and several dated with the same estimated common felling date, then this felling date will give an estimated date for the construction of the building, or for the phase of construction. If for some reason or other we are rather restricted in what samples we can take, then an estimated common felling date may not be such a precise estimate of the date of construction. More sampling may be needed 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 cross-match 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 Fig 6 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 Fig 6. We have a master chronological sequence of widths for Nottinghamshire and East Midlands oak for each year from AD 882 to 1981. It is described in great detail in Laxton and Litton 1988b, 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 1988a). 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 (1988b) and is illustrated in the graphs in Fig 7. Here ring-widths are plotted vertically, one for each year of growth. In the upper sequence (a), the generally large early growth after 1810 is very apparent as is the smaller generally later growth from about 1900 onwards. A similar difference can be observed in the lower sequence 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, hopefully corresponding to good and poor growing seasons, respectively. The two corresponding sequences of Baillie-Pilcher indices are plotted in (b) where the differences in the early and late growths have been removed and only the rapidly changing peaks and troughs remain only associated with the common climatic signal and so make cross-matching easier.

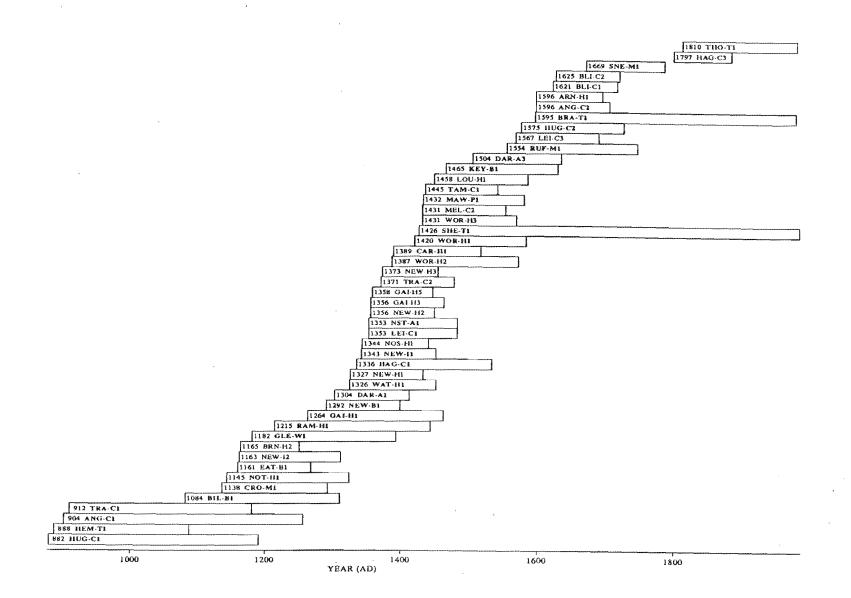


Fig 6. Bar diagram showing the relative positions and dates of the first rings of the component site sequences in the East Midlands Master Dendrochronological Sequence, EM08/87.

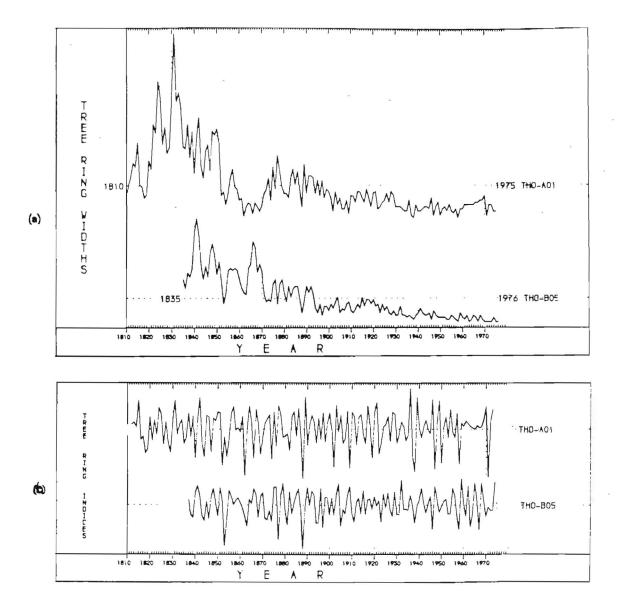


Fig 7. (a) The raw ring-widths of two samples, THO-A01 and THO-B05, whose felling dates are known. Here the ring widths are plotted vertically, one for each year, so that peaks represent wide rings and troughs narrow ones. Notice the growth-trends in each; on average the earlier rings of the young tree are wider than the later ones of the older tree in both sequences.

(b) The *Baillie-Pilcher indices* of the above widths. The growth-trends have been removed completely.

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