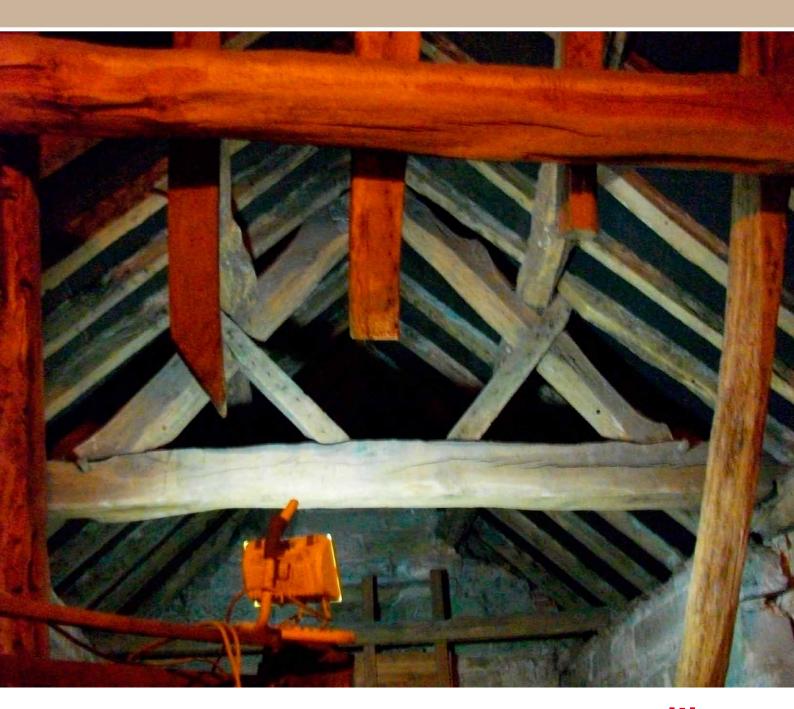
# GROBY OLD HALL, MARKFIELD ROAD, GROBY, LEICESTERSHIRE

# TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS

SCIENTIFIC DATING REPORT

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard





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Alison Arnold and Robert Howard

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ISSN 2046-9799 (Print) ISSN 2046-9802 (Online)

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#### **SUMMARY**

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

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

#### **CONTRIBUTORS**

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Laboratory would like to thank Mr and Mrs Dickens for allowing sampling to be undertaken and for their hospitality during the process. Neil Finn kindly accompanied us on site, providing invaluable guidance and allowed us access to his building report from which figures used to locate samples are reproduced in this report. Thanks are also given to the English Heritage Scientific Dating Team who commissioned the work and also for their advice and assistance throughout the production of this report.

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#### DATE OF INVESTIGATION

2011-12

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#### INTRODUCTION

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

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

# Range A (former open hall)

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

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

# Range G (cross-wing)

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

# Range E

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

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

# Range F

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

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

# Range H (stair tower)

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

# Range B (tower 1)

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

# Range C (tower 2)

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

# Range D

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

#### **SAMPLING**

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

A total of 65 timbers was sampled by coring. Each sample was given the code GRO-B (for Groby, site 'B') and numbered 01–65. Fifteen of these are from the hall roof (GRO-B01–15), 12 from the cross-wing roof (GRO-B16–27), six from the range E roof (GRO-B28–33), 12 from the range F roof (GRO-B34–45), 12 from the range H roof (GRO-B46–57), three from tower 1 (GRO-B58–60), one from the lintel of the 'lost' range D (GRO-B61), and four from tower 2 (GRO-62–5). The location of samples was noted at the time of sampling and has been marked on Figures 16–22. Further details relating to the samples

can be found in Table 1. The buildings lie on a northeast-southwest alignment but for the purpose of this report a site-north has been assigned with Range A at the north end and Range B at the south end.

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

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

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

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

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

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

## INTERPRETATION

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

# Range A (former open hall)

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

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

# Range G (cross-wing)

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

# Range E

All six of the samples taken from this range were successfully dated, two of which have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring, the dates of which suggests at least two different fellings. A common rafter has the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date of AD 1463, giving an estimated felling date range of AD 1489–1503. This felling date range allows for sample GRO-B31 having a last-measured ring date of AD 1488 with incomplete sapwood. Another common rafter has AD 1493 for its heartwood/sapwood boundary

ring date and the estimated felling date of AD 1508–33. The four samples without the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date have last-heartwood ring dates which give *terminus post quem* dates of AD 1450 (GRO-B32), AD 1451 (GRO-B33), AD 1459 (GRO-B30), and AD 1477 (GRO-B28). All of these samples were taken from timbers which showed signs of reuse.

# Range F

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

# Range H (stair tower)

Eight of these samples were dated, three thought to be primary and five reused (Table 1); five of these dated samples have the heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date. One of these, GRO-B56, taken from a beam thought to be reused, has a slightly earlier than the rest at AD 1453, giving an estimated felling date range of AD 1468–93. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date for the other four (one which was thought to be primary and three reused) is AD 1466, giving an estimated felling date range of AD 1481–1506. The other three samples (a mixture of reused and primary beams) have last-measured heartwood ring dates which make it possible that they were felled in either of the felling date ranges or represent totally different felling/s. It can be seen that in the same way as with the dates from range F, we have primary and reused timbers with the same felling date.

# Range B (tower 1)

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

# Range C (tower 2)

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

# Range D

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

### **DISCUSSION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# **TABLES**

Table 1: Details of tree-ring samples from Groby Hall, Groby, Leicestershire

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

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

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

Table 2: Results of the cross-matching of site sequence GROBSQ01 and relevant reference chronologies when the first-ring date is AD 1321 and the last-ring date is AD 1436

Reference chronology	<i>t</i> -value	Span of chronology	Reference
Thatched Cottage, Melbourne, Derbyshire	10.4	AD 1372–1530	Howard <i>et al</i> 1997
Stoneleigh Abbey, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire	10.4	AD 1398–1658	Howard et al 2000
Gotham Manor, Nottinghamshire	9.5	AD 1391–1590	Howard <i>et al</i> 1991
April Cottage, Rothley, Leicestershire	9.1	AD 1343–1443	Alcock et al 1990
Hagworthingham Church, Lincolnshire	9.0	AD 1336–1533	Laxton et al 1984
Aisled barn, Newark, Nottinghamshire	8.7	AD 1249–1399	Laxton et al 1984
Ulverscroft Priory, Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire	8.3	AD 1219–1463	Arnold et al 2008a

Table 3: Results of the cross-matching of sample GRO-B40 and relevant reference chronologies when the first-ring date is AD 1400 and the last-ring date is AD 1462

Reference chronology	<i>t</i> -value	Span of chronology	Reference
1–3 Northgate, Newark, Nottinghamshire	5.7	AD 1339–1523	Arnold and Howard 2009a
The Old Rectory, Blakeney, Norfolk	5.6	AD 1339–1518	Arnold and Howard 2012
Pembridge bell tower, Herefordshire	5.4	AD 1382–1471	Tyers 2004
Governor's House, Newark, Nottinghamshire	5.3	AD 1356–1448	Howard et al 1986
Chalgrove Manor, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire	5.2	AD 1355–1503	Arnold et al 2008b
Westernhanger Barn/Castle, Dover, Kent	5.0	AD 1346–1581	Arnold and Howard 2009b unpubl
New House Grange Barn, Sheepy Magna, Leicestershire	5.0	AD 1373–1506	Tyers 2001

23 - 20

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

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

## **FIGURES**



Figure 1: Map to show the general location of Groby, Leicestershire, circled. © Crown Copyright and database right 2014. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900

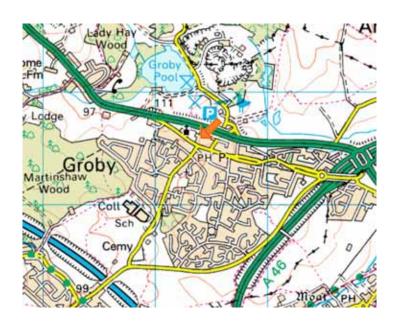


Figure 2: Map to show the general location of Groby Old Hall, Groby, Leicestershire, arrowed. © Crown Copyright and database right 2014. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900



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

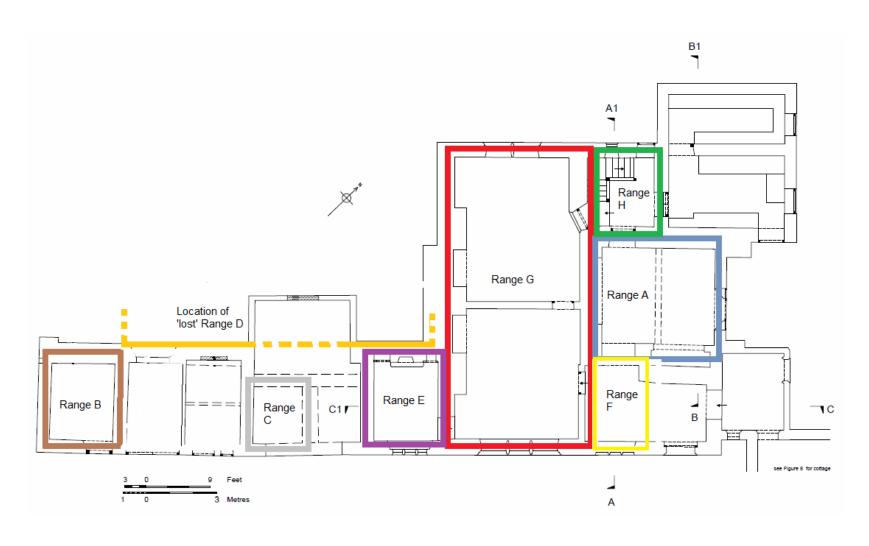


Figure 4: Ground-floor plan showing the various areas under investigation (after Finn et al 2009)



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



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



Figure 7: Roof truss 1 in the cross-wing, photograph taken from the north-west (Alison Arnold)



Figure 8: Repair to the principal rafter, truss 1 in the cross-wing, photograph taken from the south (Alison Arnold)



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



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



Figure 11: Roof of the stair tower, photograph taken from the south-east (Alison Arnold)



Figure 12: Tower 1, photograph taken from the south (Robert Howard)



Figure 13: Tower 1 door lintel, photograph taken from the north-west (Alison Arnold)



Figure 14: Remnants of the first-floor frame in tower 1, photograph taken from below (Alison Arnold)



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



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

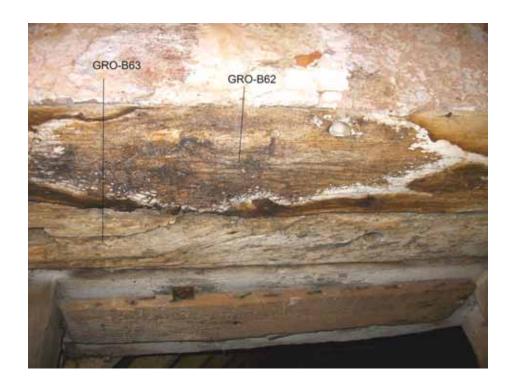


Figure 17: Tower 2 door lintels (GRO-B62 and GRO-B63), photograph taken from the southwest (Alison Arnold)



Figure 18: Remains of 'lost' range D with timber lintel (GRO-B61), photograph taken from the north-west (Alison Arnold)

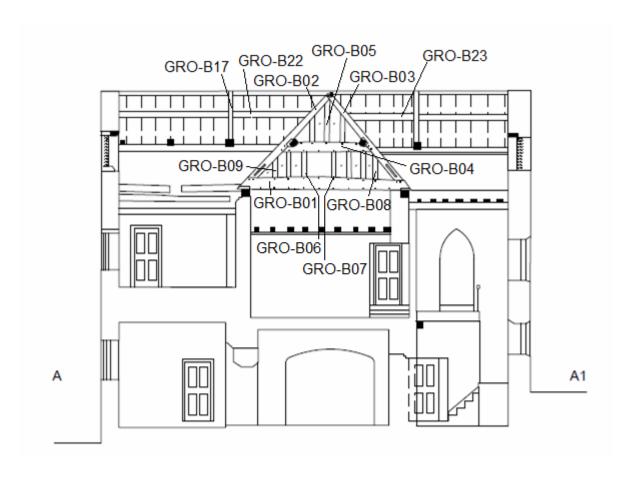


Figure 19: Section A–A, showing the location of samples GRO-B01–09, GRO-B17, and GRO-B22–3 (after Finn et al 2009)

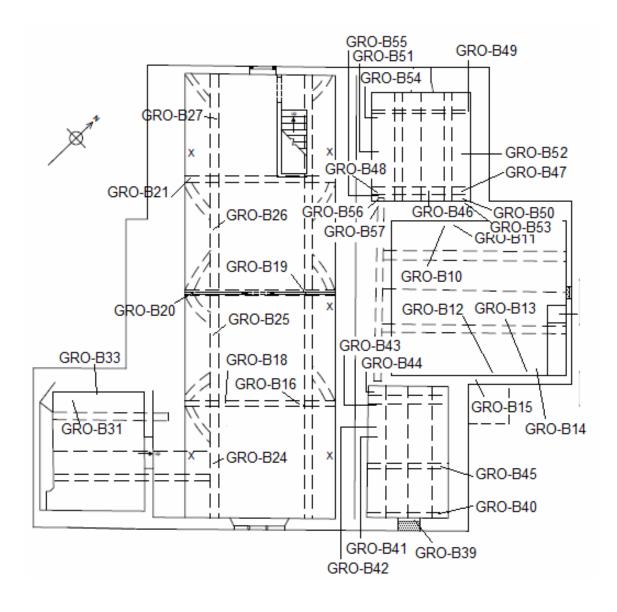


Figure 20: Attic plan, showing the location of samples GRO-B10–16, GRO-B18–21, GRO-B24–7, GRO-B31, GRO-B33, and GRO-B39–57 (after Finn et al 2009)



Figure 21: Section C–C, showing the location of samples GRO-B28–30, GRO-B32, and GRO-B34–8 (after Finn et al 2009)

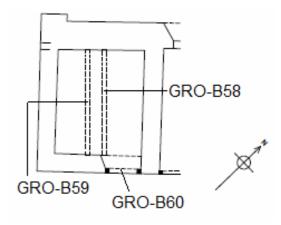


Figure 22: Ground-floor plan of tower 1, showing the location of samples GRO-B58-60 (after Finn et al 2009)

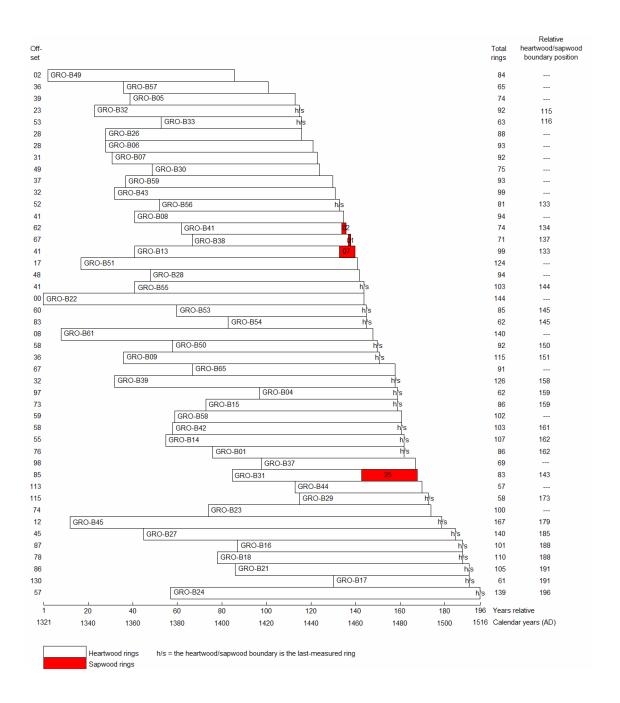


Figure 23: Bar diagram of samples in site sequence GROBSQ01

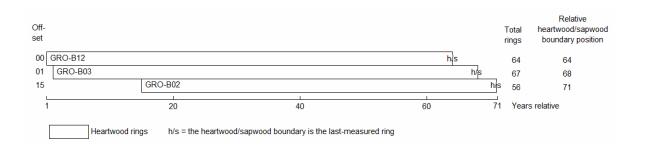


Figure 24: Bar diagram of samples in site sequence GROBSQ02

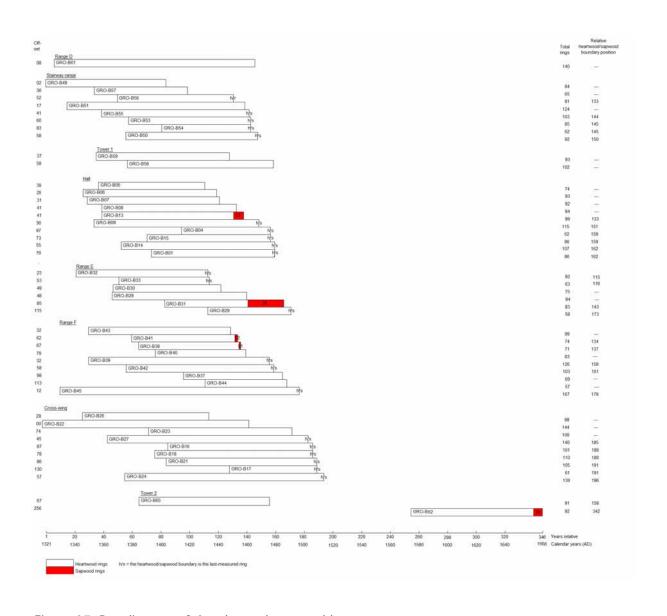


Figure 25: Bar diagram of dated samples, sorted by area

# DATA OF MEASURED SAMPLES

# Measurements in 0.01mm units

# GRO-B01A 86

203 227 169 150 148 204 218 255 165 203 163 152 164 122 101 130 113 111 86 65 35 64 48 53 62 44 71 60 37 43 46 64 53 48 73 124 70 109 115 185 91 100 153 165 292 170 186 146 114 157 225 146 183 184 181 145 204 202 234 206 184 168 105 172 165 171 222 185 172 221 195 240 269 235 227 200 235 191 287 228 186 165 193 221 203 168

#### GRO-B01B 86

207 234 167 149 142 201 228 245 166 206 159 150 167 118 94 136 119 113 95 71 43 60 43 59 60 48 72 58 37 39 53 60 54 54 67 124 65 114 105 182 96 102 145 177 302 172 180 154 103 165 228 149 198 194 196 146 201 197 232 215 184 169 111 165 174 171 209 183 169 224 201 241 258 235 229 201 234 200 285 230 191 167 194 216 200 223

#### GRO-B02A 56

288 369 358 300 472 433 364 448 348 388 295 208 172 119 163 125 174 276 344 208 110 105 161 149 250 286 298 259 383 327 281 373 142 144 107 240 358 308 403 377 299 403 409 228 78 86 118 169 169 175 204 170 327 301 216 308

# GRO-B02B 56 289 360 351 297 431 448 360 4

289 360 351 297 431 448 360 444 340 384 303 201 128 106 162 135 180 274 336 213 108 103 124 156 249 284 299 263 378 323 282 371 163 152 103 297 390 322 405 385 309 411 399 234 77 84 116 138 171 177 201 168 316 255 234 321

#### GRO-B03A 67

220 322 382 304 320 307 388 108 132 171 126 159 163 226 264 308 299 298 407 348 290 365 278 295 250 162 125 89 121 137 174 313 340 192 93 151 182 176 200 202 154 146 166 230 192 151 74 92 66 177 301 271 405 392 256 324 282 159 75 137 210 210 232 251 186 168 224

# GRO-B03B 67

247 324 376 304 319 304 406 107 137 181 109 169 154 216 255 315 311 281 413 348 285 380 277 297 243 157 120 86 121 136 171 308 345 190 92 155 181 172 200 207 149 145 170 229 193 160 73 104 77 186 325 274 407 390 248 330 280 159 82 135 211 209 228 247 195 165 225

# GRO-B04A 62

390 306 341 300 273 273 342 80 88 197 231 323 153 313 150 154 182 132 133 85 112 94 176 195 190 226 177 125 100 174 178 162 175 189 191 180 206 177 226 215 187 146 215 188 120 179 166 205 246 161 148 160 234 230 147 187 204 290 285 188 127 163

# GRO-B04B 62

393 307 337 298 273 274 340 81 106 193 229 321 149 283 172 156 181 122 132 79 114 103 174 194 170 229 172 116 97 171 179 181 176 191 166 196 186 186 234 211 165 156 202 191 122 182 165 210 248 165 142 158 238 224 150 183 199 295 281 185 126 160

# GRO-B05A 74

291 331 403 341 362 301 281 180 161 288 287 209 228 179 197 181 223 234 290 255 234 215 209 222 210 208 267 317 298 219 125 104 112 83 107 96 145 149 204 207 214 164 167 197 211 210 207 169 153 108 75 67 100 113 100 103 95 141 140 119 121 173 115 150 145 96 77 122 152 144 124 146 166 123

# GRO-B05B 74

288 320 403 346 387 292 279 194 171 278 291 208 228 177 199 179 218 235 291 254 239 214 206 223 208 212 272 317 301 211 134 111 117 80 104 101 146 147 203 210

210 162 167 196 213 207 211 169 156 107 73 72 96 113 102 97 96 141 142 121 123 167 121 150 140 94 67 112 155 149 118 145 166 127 GRO-B06A 93

350 235 201 196 307 256 362 305 360 271 257 221 245 342 301 306 263 242 174 152 191 186 143 161 117 144 134 167 173 251 238 208 190 184 200 157 188 242 250 231 157 109 86 81 78 74 68 99 111 155 149 167 113 118 143 140 145 155 148 126 94 75 49 65 91 103 87 126 136 152 110 131 176 134 159 197 118 68 114 170 210 136 194 197 138 141 122 156 97 116 86 197 154

#### GRO-B06B 93

351 234 200 172 293 261 356 306 342 272 268 228 250 336 301 298 259 211 154 145 190 189 145 172 131 144 135 164 183 242 237 199 185 188 196 156 191 243 250 230 155 111 86 83 76 71 69 98 110 154 149 170 108 113 146 143 146 148 149 123 89 66 55 70 80 86 96 120 142 156 101 126 179 136 161 194 112 65 113 162 192 140 198 201 128 143 115 155 97 110 92 188 157

#### GRO-B07A 92

118 181 125 200 339 346 323 244 198 264 403 282 287 249 181 113 79 104 95 94 127 62 94 68 93 113 148 148 139 112 109 144 147 161 214 221 195 148 132 90 76 73 74 67 115 117 162 143 172 142 164 150 200 202 164 148 105 83 59 50 95 121 92 91 114 170 147 140 133 174 162 208 203 131 93 175 223 228 164 199 178 130 114 136 177 115 130 389 355 290 251 285 GRO-B07B 92

122 186 125 219 374 351 326 245 191 271 398 282 284 257 185 116 75 103 97 93 124 69 80 69 80 114 151 155 121 109 98 147 143 167 228 215 188 152 125 96 71 74 79 68 112 98 148 154 182 140 157 158 196 200 160 148 107 81 56 54 93 126 92 85 122 161 153 137 134 171 160 207 211 133 95 186 220 229 155 189 173 142 123 131 180 126 127 375 345 275 223 286

### GRO-B08A 94

356 297 318 329 243 252 245 266 144 87 124 128 116 162 180 211 266 240 298 222 241 349 241 248 276 269 241 109 89 59 65 85 73 86 161 166 244 238 138 143 133 142 164 179 188 154 123 94 77 70 83 92 68 71 50 72 100 83 111 141 143 218 148 69 64 107 158 184 128 173 175 118 102 88 62 69 54 72 126 163 139 177 146 92 101 226 269 287 236 218 288 182 164 166 GRO-B08B 94

465 321 311 323 237 246 241 265 147 85 128 131 119 163 181 214 266 234 313 216 240 355 258 276 283 273 233 112 74 65 68 82 72 81 157 175 257 232 155 131 113 150 165 182 197 151 130 89 78 66 80 78 74 72 54 75 99 94 115 156 149 202 141 67 58 100 162 183 127 172 186 116 99 95 63 64 60 67 120 161 147 167 153 90 104 221 266 259 235 203 298 187 166 181 GRO-B09A 115

152 218 145 196 212 308 175 170 207 178 170 249 257 136 110 149 118 139 123 158 179 193 157 182 174 155 188 189 159 218 184 191 122 104 75 54 74 51 56 91 90 102 106 87 68 53 97 163 155 171 128 121 72 81 96 102 91 66 75 59 83 103 84 86 94 87 136 90 63 48 73 93 87 76 102 95 81 80 60 46 43 42 45 62 79 81 82 79 59 53 86 108 123 122 125 142 90 137 96 89 85 94 69 80 79 85 70 71 86 93 80 94 50 65 83

# GRO-B09B 115

135 218 152 197 226 296 165 170 204 172 175 237 256 145 101 151 117 111 107 164 184 198 159 189 167 156 190 190 157 225 187 186 128 99 82 54 69 55 57 92 81 106 106 87 68 55 91 172 148 189 116 114 82 81 103 101 93 63 71 64 67 110 82 84 100 81 137 90 64 50 69 92 89 82 102 110 75 79 61 55 50 47 40 76 81 88 85 83 52 54 73 102 125 115 131 153 94 130 107 98 82 103 70 84 80 84 67 70 87 103 86 95 49 78 88 GRO-B12A 64

245 246 310 433 331 336 334 474 58 46 79 45 78 122 209 219 183 226 134 209 174 168 216 233 185 173 151 174 117 142 135 268 340 447 173 84 56 131 116 140 180 99 108 164 170 170 155 107 270 161 279 361 284 255 213 86 208 208 141 88 128 166 130 127

#### GRO-B12B 64

260 243 314 432 331 356 302 477 95 46 80 51 86 137 197 218 182 230 140 202 182 167 211 212 160 179 152 165 114 132 136 263 332 426 190 90 63 109 117 139 185 119 78 167 176 171 154 103 276 162 281 360 284 256 210 83 220 203 137 95 122 161 125 130

#### GRO-B13A 99

376 332 238 179 161 92 141 183 142 126 129 135 108 82 90 156 165 130 134 117 121 110 88 113 111 120 102 84 53 39 62 48 58 60 75 75 88 74 86 79 55 68 72 59 75 47 62 83 59 38 50 52 41 42 54 27 56 38 43 50 59 117 97 62 67 116 105 137 107 100 186 78 50 68 70 60 46 65 97 98 87 105 138 75 75 72 92 92 103 141 110 94 120 109 119 88 70 83 118 GRO-B13B 99

378 331 248 189 159 106 145 168 145 125 124 132 119 71 93 143 167 134 128 129 119 88 99 100 124 115 104 88 56 43 59 53 52 55 80 65 90 76 88 74 52 71 69 59 71 44 66 80 61 42 49 47 43 47 49 28 56 48 36 48 64 112 113 60 71 114 114 130 103 98 188 74 51 72 57 66 49 61 97 99 86 103 137 82 74 73 98 98 89 154 98 109 107 105 130 92 72 85 105 GRO-B14A 107

91 81 97 91 102 70 48 66 82 86 91 87 80 77 47 28 39 35 37 35 61 52 59 52 73 60 46 67 47 62 50 50 45 56 69 75 63 54 36 63 53 76 93 56 53 70 49 88 106 93 86 149 135 98 74 91 105 126 119 135 148 172 137 138 163 198 119 111 166 101 70 188 98 104 103 111 108 109 128 108 131 98 80 88 90 129 121 150 123 137 186 172 232 211 216 130 116 121 102 186 159 126 164 112 118 168 119

#### GRO-B14B 107

91 87 93 92 105 78 61 55 67 95 94 82 89 58 49 31 42 25 41 36 63 53 59 52 70 61 54 58 51 63 43 40 50 62 64 77 70 53 41 64 45 76 96 56 53 65 53 88 108 93 85 145 139 109 69 92 95 129 123 132 143 169 144 140 163 192 117 112 164 102 66 181 111 100 106 118 102 116 132 100 131 97 80 65 114 125 122 145 122 143 177 176 231 209 224 132 110 127 99 180 164 120 169 115 119 160 121

# GRO-B15A 86

66 67 145 233 366 369 283 291 143 265 420 476 456 348 256 179 121 85 75 111 112 145 143 205 223 214 203 293 254 280 212 247 148 159 163 140 104 155 217 157 160 150 154 93 66 108 132 168 205 205 211 143 115 166 146 146 159 170 126 158 107 129 127 152 116 169 153 104 115 128 104 114 84 92 87 87 94 93 98 131 107 166 179 115 117 126

# GRO-B15B 86

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# GRO-B16A 101

36 76 81 90 74 52 51 37 35 46 61 48 49 68 55 68 76 44 62 88 91 83 67 127 121 92 80 93 104 148 128 88 142 190 131 144 139 118 82 98 114 102 98 133 140 156 179 208 186 133 87 59 86 129 116 108 99 88 117 122 134 150 148 121 81 82 64 113 132 88 81 70 78 93 94 93 110 109 172 299 223 252 262 176 217 308 427 433 488 292 196 212 215 274 258 239 204 144 161 174 231

#### GRO-B16B 101

38 73 77 94 73 58 43 33 37 51 60 52 46 68 49 76 66 48 68 87 91 73 74 122 126 97 76 86 106 148 129 85 140 187 137 131 137 114 88 100 108 107 102 138 140 147 175 210 189 138 83 64 87 132 117 104 91 95 119 119 127 151 151 118 85 76 69 113 127 92 84 83 74 92 98 98 108 110 169 296 222 247 266 174 211 292 402 423 480 296 200 211 210 276 264 241 201 150 157 168 239

#### GRO-B17A 61

226 220 161 170 244 201 174 135 105 113 138 166 137 110 98 156 163 186 162 187 146 122 113 88 127 132 128 117 107 114 126 96 106 141 121 143 221 201 165 148 146 171 176 185 234 227 187 103 109 100 114 114 101 98 79 117 91 84 153 138 185

#### GRO-B17B 61

213 220 163 174 206 193 202 144 98 119 136 154 141 115 92 141 171 194 168 170 147 129 114 81 130 129 131 121 113 106 128 94 105 140 121 153 236 201 156 149 146 158 179 181 230 236 189 101 114 105 117 115 102 106 83 116 92 86 159 139 210

# GRO-B18A 110

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#### GRO-B18B 110

213 259 253 224 298 276 207 249 184 212 171 121 138 159 179 142 217 204 150 273 169 346 298 229 235 215 155 134 190 167 215 156 204 294 189 193 207 213 126 182 151 205 248 159 256 226 143 165 190 253 207 128 78 109 92 107 120 148 145 153 182 191 155 142 148 142 105 76 82 123 79 92 87 86 84 115 147 143 112 119 137 139 153 144 115 77 65 76 116 127 128 129 140 126 122 145 83 90 64 60 73 70 87 81 100 122 71 91 71 66

#### GRO-B19A 57

119 90 155 214 227 309 282 184 215 285 210 287 197 188 157 133 73 120 106 88 118 120 107 180 166 153 189 133 135 173 188 246 263 308 232 233 176 165 228 176 167 157 127 98 186 118 136 116 119 136 136 150 188 143 162 162 195 GRO-B19B 57

116 83 157 217 232 304 308 181 220 284 213 274 195 190 150 138 77 115 112 87 121 127 93 192 180 165 205 137 145 171 212 245 265 309 229 238 183 160 237 176 170 162 119 94 181 120 147 120 117 140 131 146 189 140 173 154 169 GRO-B21A 105

117 122 129 132 155 110 118 97 98 110 185 175 118 106 138 108 165 140 109 112 190 153 137 119 148 206 185 148 141 174 230 209 160 168 249 142 184 177 125 137 121 133 120 181 195 217 202 209 223 204 219 170 172 137 134 164 160 125 149 157 176 220 216 230 144 145 131 130 179 177 119 127 92 81 128 83 89 91 96 108 105 101 102 112 98 87 90 90 94 99 96 86 103 127 108 105 105 125 114 100 91 89 124 154 127

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88 84 133 153 125

#### GRO-B22A 144

527 321 268 159 166 156 268 179 286 315 245 295 295 347 273 257 201 249 281 250 193 208 135 191 137 161 140 245 137 132 304 252 190 204 211 208 118 135 138 218 224 194 151 161 170 94 67 55 65 59 48 44 34 67 91 72 75 90 97 129 90 32 98 74 90 97 93 85 54 46 40 58 33 43 42 75 73 72 75 63 55 45 65 72 57 79 43 41 49 63 37 37 40 34 33 57 56 68 44 39 36 35 35 43 29 26 33 34 30 37 56 80 55 38 50 39 66 73 54 62 100 73 75 73 46 39 60 60 66 62 65 83 88 105 87 91 74 61 56 52 115 80 92 64

# GRO-B22B 144

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#### GRO-B23A 100

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113 167 147 95 133 161 176 123 126 117 120 100 68 79 74 99 103 85 74 48 43 55 93 114 67 57 92 55 74 67 46 47 89 100 82 65 84 124 74 59 73 97 125 121 71 116 166 121 133 135 75 71 66 98 136 101 154 174 176 186 193 152 137 77 54 76 106 104 97 116 105 124 179 149 187 176 126 76 78 64 155 200 119 118 117 79 109 107 95 107 111 189 379 223 216 223 164 257 250 320 GRO-B24A 139

106 113 185 144 69 106 102 134 137 175 175 131 104 86 78 123 101 59 120 109 140 141 103 125 94 164 152 102 106 100 87 94 104 75 75 85 66 75 112 105 101 60 43 96 50 97 87 62 54 110 109 86 59 85 130 67 60 85 59 116 75 64 80 151 92 110 87 64 64 125 86 112 94 121 141 114 112 123 148 127 53 92 91 99 80 103 78 72 110 83 121 142 104 89 69 75 63 96 100 64 70 101 77 99 61 39 62 85 67 90 113 99 112 101 123 99 96 100 135 200 87 98 113 118 84 142 104 93 103 130 95 158 151 158 286 267 237 207 170 GRO-B24B 139

136 119 203 154 77 114 110 142 154 249 179 126 112 85 98 97 102 69 126 115 138 133 105 143 82 164 155 109 111 93 82 107 113 73 72 79 52 81 125 110 113 49 48 104 49 96 92 65 53 95 97 75 66 90 126 66 54 88 66 106 70 64 83 153 98 113 89 62 68 128 83 113 83 124 142 114 114 120 149 120 55 92 93 94 87 101 76 73 112 82 132 146 93 102 66 81 64 92 111 64 75 91 76 101 64 33 68 80 79 88 108 102 111 107 117 96 87 111 137 197 92 98 112 111 76 153 105 87 107 130 96 152 157 155 286 265 234 207 176 GRO-B26A 88

222 241 371 237 203 238 261 241 226 210 138 199 225 284 321 269 219 249 155 141 259 194 133 110 83 223 128 200 157 169 187 228 194 136 120 169 173 181 231 179 194 87 86 92 97 168 112 174 208 157 167 149 113 112 125 119 152 164 136 133 120 206 221 131 121 88 87 108 183 201 78 105 151 119 210 148 105 148 231 166 167 163 203 261 145 151 164 200

#### GRO-B26B 88

217 238 327 237 195 237 255 269 228 216 149 203 216 297 308 283 222 243 157 145 257 200 137 108 89 223 122 220 158 167 184 231 201 132 122 162 169 191 230 173 195 91 84 91 98 168 117 170 191 180 177 151 124 110 127 129 141 156 122 133 123 207 220 132 121 87 89 104 184 202 79 102 150 110 214 143 106 149 224 171 167 157 194 256 140 159 160 208

#### GRO-B27A 140

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# APPENDIX: TREE-RING DATING

# The Principles of Tree-Ring Dating

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

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

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

1. Inspecting the Building and Sampling the Timbers. Together with a building historian the timbers in a building are inspected to try to ensure that those sampled are not reused or later insertions. Sampling is almost always done by coring into the timber, which has the great advantage that we can sample in situ timbers and those judged best to give the date of construction, or phase of construction if there is more than one in the building. The timbers to be sampled are also inspected to see how many rings they have. We normally look for timbers with at least 70 rings, and preferably more. With fewer rings than this, 50 for example, sequences of widths become difficult to match to a unique

position within a master sequence of ring widths and so are difficult to date (Litton and Zainodin 1991). The cross-section of the rafter shown in Figure A2 has about 120 rings; about 20 of which are sapwood rings – the lighter rings on the outside. Similarly the core has just over 100 rings with a few sapwood rings.

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

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

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

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



Figure A1: A wedge of oak from a tree felled in 1976. It shows the annual growth rings, one for each year from the innermost ring to the last ring on the outside just inside the bark. The year of each ring can be determined by counting back from the outside ring, which grew in 1976



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

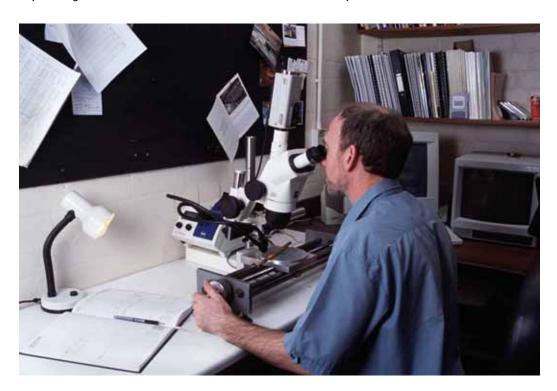


Figure A3: Measuring ring widths under a microscope. The microscope is fixed while the sample is on a moving platform. The total sequence of widths is measured twice to ensure that an error has not been made. This type of apparatus is needed to process a large number of samples on a regular basis



Figure A4: Three cores from timbers in a building. They come from trees growing at the same time. Notice that, although the sequences of widths look similar, they are not identical. This is typical

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

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

It is standard practice in our Laboratory first to cross-match as many as possible of the ring-width sequences of the samples in a building and then to form an average from them. This average is called a site sequence of the building being dated and is illustrated in Figure A5. The fifth bar at the bottom is a site sequence for a roof at Lincoln Cathedral and is constructed from the matching sequences of the four timbers. The site sequence width for each year is the average of the widths in each of the sample sequences which has a width for that year. Thus in Fig A5 if the widths shown are 0.8mm for C45, 0.2mm for C08, 0.7mm for C05, and 0.3mm for C04, then the corresponding width of the site

sequence is the average of these, 0.55mm. The actual sequence of widths of this site sequence is stored on the computer. The reason for creating site sequences is that it is usually easier to date an average sequence of ring widths with a master sequence than it is to date the individual component sample sequences separately.

The straightforward method of cross-matching several sample sequences with each other one at a time is called the 'maximal t-value' method. The actual method of cross-matching a group of sequences of ring-widths used in the Laboratory involves grouping and averaging the ring-width sequences and is called the 'Litton-Zainodin Grouping Procedure'. It is a modification of the straightforward method and was successfully developed and tested in the Laboratory and has been published (Litton and Zainodin 1991; Laxton et al 1988).

4. Estimating the Felling Date. As mentioned above, if the bark is present on a sample, then the date of its last ring is the date of the felling of its tree (or the last full year before felling, if it was felled in the first three months of the following calendar year, before any new growth had started, but this is not too important a consideration in most cases). The actual bark may not be present on a timber in a building, though the dendrochronologist who is sampling can often see from its surface that only the bark is missing. In these cases the date of the last ring is still the date of felling.

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

Various estimates have been made and used for the average number of sapwood rings in mature oak trees (English Heritage 1998). A fairly conservative range is between 15 and 50 and that this holds for 95% of mature oaks. This means, of course, that in a small number of cases there could be fewer than 15 and more than 50 sapwood rings. For example, the core CRO-A06 has only 9 sapwood rings and some have obviously been lost over time – either they were removed originally by the carpenter and/or they rotted away in the building and/or they were lost in the coring. It is not known exactly how many sapwood rings are missing, but using the above range the Laboratory would estimate between a minimum of 6 (=15-9) and a maximum of 41 (=50-9). If the last ring of CRO-A06 has been dated to 1500, say, then the estimated felling-date range for the tree from which it came originally would be between 1506 and 1541. The Laboratory uses this estimate for sapwood in areas of England where it has no prior information. It

also uses it when dealing with samples with very many rings, about 120 to the last heartwood ring. But in other areas of England where the Laboratory has accumulated a number of samples with complete sapwood, that is, no sapwood lost since felling, other estimates in place of the conservative range of 15 to 50 are used. In the East Midlands (Laxton *et al* 2001) and the east to the south down to Kent (Pearson 1995) where it has sampled extensively in the past, the Laboratory uses the shorter estimate of 15 to 35 sapwood rings in 95% of mature oaks growing in these parts. Since the sample CRO-A06 comes from a house in Cropwell Bishop in the East Midlands, a better estimate of sapwood rings lost since felling is between a minimum of 6 (=15-9) and 26 (=35-9) and the felling would be estimated to have taken place between 1506 and 1526, a shorter period than before. Oak boards quite often come from the Baltic region and in these cases the 95% confidence limits for sapwood are 9 to 36 (Howard *et al* 1992, 56).

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

Even if all the sapwood rings are missing on a sample, but none of the heartwood rings are, then an estimate of the felling-date range is possible by adding on the full compliment of, say, 15 to 35 years to the date of the last heartwood ring (called the heartwood/sapwood boundary or transition ring and denoted H/S). Fortunately it is often easy for a trained dendrochronologist to identify this boundary on a timber. If a timber does not have its heartwood/sapwood boundary, then only a *post quem* date for felling is possible.

5. Estimating the Date of Construction. There is a considerable body of evidence collected by dendrochronologists over the years that oak timbers used in buildings were not seasoned in medieval or early modern times (English Heritage 1998; Miles 1997, 50–5). Hence, provided that all the samples in a building have estimated felling-date ranges broadly in agreement with each other, so that they appear to have been felled as a group, then this should give an accurate estimate of the period when the structure was built, or soon after (Laxton *et al* 2001, fig 8; 34–5, where 'associated groups of fellings' are discussed in detail). However, if there is any evidence of storage before use, or if there is evidence the oak came from abroad (eg Baltic boards), then some allowance has to be made for this.

- 6. Master Chronological Sequences. Ultimately, to date a sequence of ring widths, or a site sequence, we need a master sequence of dated ring widths with which to crossmatch it, a Master Chronology. To construct such a sequence we have to start with a sequence of widths whose dates are known and this means beginning with a sequence from an oak tree whose date of felling is known. In Figure A6 such a sequence is SHE-T, which came from a tree in Sherwood Forest which was blown down in a recent gale. After this other sequences which cross-match with it are added and gradually the sequence is 'pushed back in time' as far as the age of samples will allow. This process is illustrated in Figure A6. We have a master chronological sequence of widths for Nottinghamshire and East Midlands oak for each year from AD 882 to 1981. It is described in great detail in Laxton and Litton (1988), but the components it contains are shown here in the form of a bar diagram. As can be seen, it is well replicated in that for each year in this period there are several sample sequences having widths for that year. The master is the average of these. This master can now be used to date oak from this area and from the surrounding areas where the climate is very similar to that in the East Midlands. The Laboratory has also constructed a master for Kent (Laxton and Litton 1989). The method the Laboratory uses to construct a master sequence, such as the East Midlands and Kent, is completely objective and uses the Litton-Zainodin grouping procedure (Laxton et al 1988). Other laboratories and individuals have constructed masters for other areas and have made them available. As well as these masters, local (dated) site chronologies can be used to date other buildings from nearby. The Laboratory has hundreds of these site sequences from many parts of England and Wales covering many short periods.
- 7. Ring-Width Indices. Tree-ring dating can be done by cross-matching the ring widths themselves, as described above. However, it is advantageous to modify the widths first. Because different trees grow at different rates and because a young oak grows in a different way from an older oak, irrespective of the climate, the widths are first standardized before any matching between them is attempted. These standard widths are known as ring-width indices and were first used in dendrochronology by Baillie and Pilcher (1973). The exact form they take is explained in this paper and in the appendix of Laxton and Litton (1988) and is illustrated in the graphs in Figure A7. Here ring-widths are plotted vertically, one for each year of growth. In the upper sequence of (a), the generally large early growth after 1810 is very apparent as is the smaller later growth from about 1900 onwards when the tree is maturing. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the lower sequence of (a) starting in 1835. In both the widths are also changing rapidly from year to year. The peaks are the wide rings and the troughs are the narrow rings corresponding to good and poor growing seasons, respectively. The two corresponding sequence of Baillie-Pilcher indices are plotted in (b) where the differences in the immature and mature growths have been removed and only the rapidly changing peaks and troughs remain, that are associated with the common climatic signal. This makes cross-matching easier.

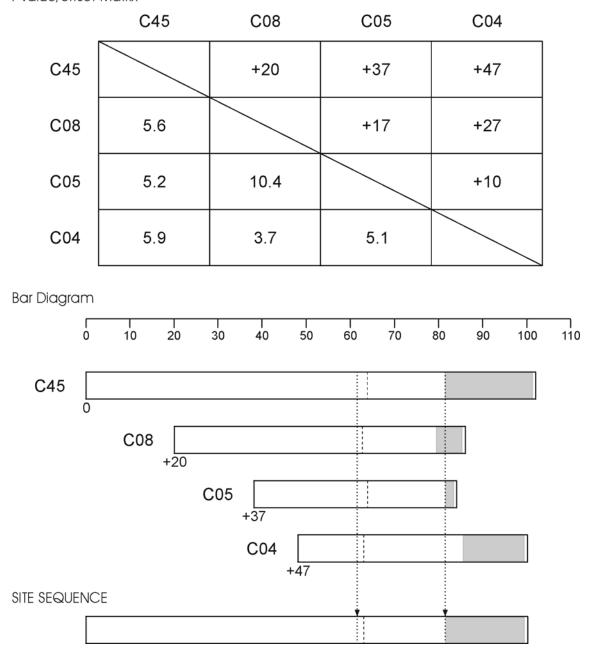


Figure A5: Cross-matching of four sequences from a Lincoln Cathedral roof and the formation of a site sequence from them

The bar diagram represents these sequences without the rings themselves. The length of the bar is proportional to the number of rings in the sequence. Here the four sequences are set at relative positions (offsets) to each other at which they have maximum correlation as measured by the *t*-values. The *t*-value/offset matrix contains the maximum *t*-values below the diagonal and the offsets above it. Thus, the maximum *t*-value between C08 and C45 occurs at the offset of +20 rings and the *t*-value is then 5.6. The site sequence is composed of the average of the corresponding widths, as illustrated with one width.

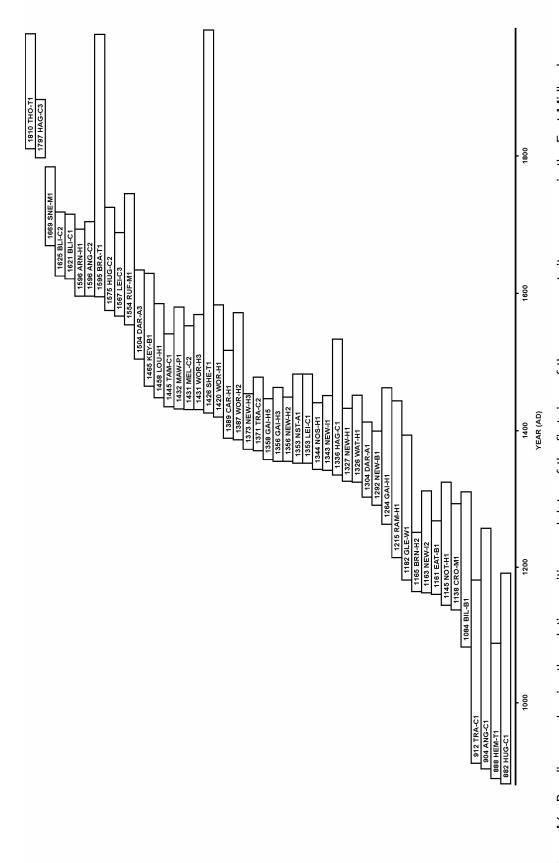
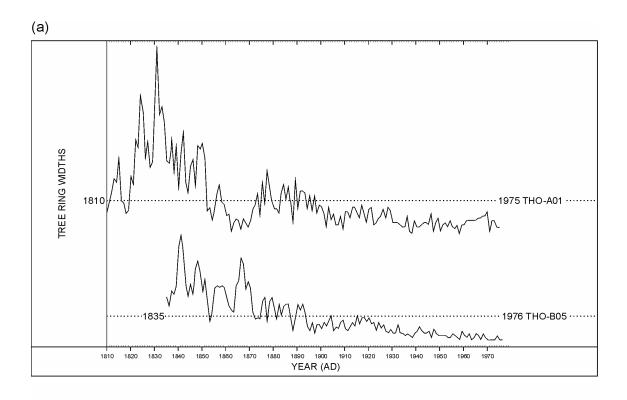


Figure A6: Bar diagram showing the relative positions and dates of the first rings of the component site sequences in the East Midlands Master Dendrochronological Sequence, EM08/87



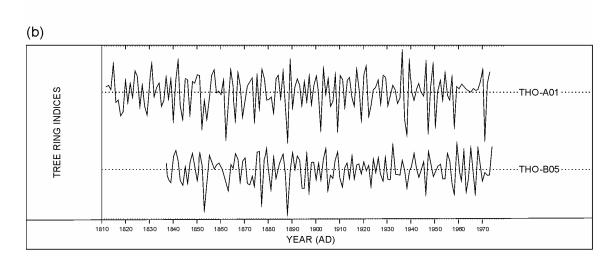


Figure A7 (a): The raw ring-widths of two samples, THO-A01 and THO-B05, whose felling dates are known

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

# Figure A7 (b): The Baillie-Pilcher indices of the above widths

The growth trends have been removed completely

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