

LIST 318: OXFORD DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT – PHASE SIXTEEN

Dr Daniel Miles, Dr Martin Bridge, and Ross Cook

This list is the sixteenth list of results from the Oxfordshire Dendrochronology Project, set up by the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society (OAHS) together with the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory. The results for the previous years' work can be found in VA **36-49**. The Oxfordshire Buildings Record (OBR) identifies and records buildings of interest in the county and OAHS offers financial assistance to the owners of the buildings which are being studied. The University of Oxford funded part of the St George's Tower, Oxford Castle, study as part of the MSc in Archaeological Science syllabus, with Oxfordshire County Council funding the other part of the research.

1. BICESTER, 9 Kings End, Home Farm (SP 5812 2241) *Felling dates: **Spring 1588; Spring 1589***
Purlins (1/2) 1588(27¼C); Rafters (1/2) 1587(24¼C); Upper collars (0/1); Lower collars (0/3); Principal rafters (0/2). *Site Master* HFBx1 1400-1588 (*t* = 8.46 HGROVNR8; 8.09 CHILLING; 7.83 SCENG).

Home Farm Bicester is a stone house built of rubble limestone, of four bays and two stories, with a later in-line extension to the east and one to the rear (south) of this extension. The original section of the building appears to have had a semi-circular staircase at the south-east corner, which is now lost; it has a series of main transverse beams with axial beams between, decorated with stepped cavetto chamfers, some with nicks. The roof is of four bays with three identical trusses between stone gable ends. Two tiers of collars clasp upper and lower purlins with simple splayed scarf joints, supported on queen struts. It has no ridge and windbraces rose to most principal rafters and purlins. One unusual feature is that for some of the mortices from the windbraces into the principal rafters, the pegs do not go through the inner cheek of the mortice. The assembly marks are chiselled. Dating commissioned by the owner.

2. HENLEY-ON-THAMES, 14A Friday Street (SU 7621 8250) *Felling dates: **Winter 1589/90; Spring 1590***
First floor girt 1589(41¼C); Principal post 1576(9); Transverse beam 1589(23C); Window jambs 1589(16¼C), 1586; Purlins 1589(33C, 27C); Rafter 1589(18C); Principal rafters 1589(24¼C, 20¼C). *Site Master* FSH 1413-1589 (*t* = 12.73 WHTOWR7; 11.95 SCENG; 11.88 NUFF).

14/14A Friday Street consists of ~~about~~ one-and-a-half bays of a substantial house probably of four bays, the greater part (western end) of which was demolished in the 1880s to allow the construction of the present Queen Street. No. 14 consists of the truncated western end, and No. 14A the original eastern end of the house. The north elevation is notable for jettied construction, close studding, and a raised gable above an impressive first floor window. This window consists of a large three-light window with smaller flanking three-light windows either side, now blocked. There also remains a three-light window on each of the three floors of the original eastern gable end, the upper ones being blocked, as well as the smaller flanking windows of the front elevation. The window mullions are ovolo moulded. The jetty joists are narrow, with moulded ends, and internally the main beams are chamfered with lamb's tongue stops. The roof structure consists of clasped purlins.

3. HENLEY-ON-THAMES, Old Broad Gates, 45 Market Place (SU 7594 8259), North range (cross-wing) *Felling date: **Winter 1353/4***
Posts 1348(15), 1347(9), 1333 (H/S); Jetty plate 1339(H/S); Transverse beam 1329(2); Wall braces 1353(14C), 1350(14), 1347(11), 1338(1); Wall plate (0/1); Central tiebeam (0/1). *Site Master* HENLEY13 1272-1353 (*t* = 8.89 READING; 8.36 THOHSQ03; 7.72 SOUTH).

No. 45 Market Place Henley is a two-bayed jettied cross-wing, presumed to have been adjacent to an open hall where the present carriageway now is, with evidence for a pair of arched doorways at this point. Although now under-built, the jetty retains evidence of the fenestration and shutters to the ground floor front. The floors have been removed, although the transverse beam mortised for joists in both bays remains. The roof uses crown-posts and is heavily soot encrusted, although little of the front (north) bay I remains *in situ*; this has been converted from a gable to a roof parallel to the street. Behind is an in-line extension (Bay III), equally soot encrusted, but with slightly lower eaves, where again the first floor had been removed; this could not be dated. Dating commissioned by the Henley Archaeological and Historical Group, the OAHs, and the owners Stuart Turner Ltd.

4. OXFORD, Christ Church, The Library, Peckwater Quad (SP 5153 0608)

Felling dates: **Winter 1735/6, Winter 1736/7, Winter 1737/8, and Spring 1738**

Principal rafters 1737(18¼C), 1735(29C), 1734(10+1-2C NM), 1733(24+3-4C NM); Tiebeam 1736(17C), 1724(22); Struts (2/3) 1737(20C), 1734(19+2-3C NM); King post (0/1). *Site Master* CCL 1565-1737 ($t = 14.17$ MASTERAL; 13.89 SCENG; 13.02 CHKSPQ02).

From documents, the Library at Christ Church was under construction for over half a century, commencing in 1717. The king-post and queen strut roof was built above the elaborate plaster ceiling. The history of the construction of the library is well described in Curthoys, J 2017 *The Stones of Christ Church*, pp. 128-139 and the published building accounts (Cook, J and Mason J F A (eds) 1998 *The Building Accounts of Christ Church Library 1716-1779*, 33). The first payment for the ‘carpenters work of the roof of the Library’ was made in July 1738, with payments for the lead covering in December 1739 and March 1740. It was hoped that dendrochronology would identify just when the building was roofed over and made watertight. Timbers were felled between winter 1735/6 and spring 1738, with construction of the roof taking place probably in 1738 or very shortly thereafter. Dating commissioned for the College by the House Surveyor, Jon Down.

5. OXFORD, Magdalen College (SP 5211 0617), Hall

(a) Primary phase

Felling dates: **Spring 1473; Spring 1474**

(b) Secondary partition below Hall

Felling date: **Spring 1583**

(a) Joists (5/7) 1473(20¼C, 19¼C), 1472(21¼C), 1459(H/S), 1446(H/S), Stud 1473(20¼C), 1414; Partition head beam 1459(H/S); Axial beam 1443(H/S); (b) Partition stud 1582(17¼C); Door posts 1577(10), 1449; Door head(0/1). *Site Masters* (a) MAGDLN12 1327-1473 ($t = 11.08$ CCFARMHS; 9.71 BDLEIAN1; 9.18 BDLEIAN2); (b) MAGDLN13 1506-1582 ($t = 8.43$ MAGDALN7; 6.77 DSDPSQ01; 6.24 SCENG).

Although the college was founded in 1458, building on the present site began in the 1470s on the acquisition of the suppressed Hospital of St John. Construction started on the Chapel and Hall range first, with the foundation stone to the former laid and blessed on the 5th of May 1474. Work continued until 14th November when stonework was up to window sill level. Most of the timber had been obtained from the royal forest of Shotover, but also from Witney, Woodstock, and the royal forest of Wychwood. It is not thought that the Hall and Chapel were completed until the end of the 1470s (Brockless, L W B (ed) 2008 *Magdalen College Oxford – A History*, pp 23-4). Felling dates of spring 1473 and spring 1474 suggest that the timber to the Hall floor frames and partitions to the ground floor below were obtained at this time. The excellent matches with timbers from Corpus Christi Farmhouse at Littlemore (south of Shotover) and from the Bodleian Library, documented to have used timber from

Shotover, makes this the likely source for most of the timber. Dates of 1474 for the Muniment Tower and 1476 and 1477 for the adjacent State Rooms would suggest this these ranges were constructed at broadly the same time (summarised in VA **49** (2018), p 143).

A later partition gave date (b). This formed a small room off the northern end of the ground floor adjacent to the underside of the stairs leading to the Hall. In the 1900s this room served as the SCR Smoking Room. Following the construction of the new Fellows Smoking Room between the Muniment Tower and Founders Tower in 1950s, the room served as a storeroom until renovated in 2019/20. Archaeological recording by Oxford Archaeology and dating commissioned by the College Surveyor on behalf of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford.

6. OXFORD, St. George's Tower, Oxford Castle (SP 5094 0614)

(a) Replacement floors

*Felling dates: **Spring 1552***

(b) Floor repairs

*Felling date range: **1790-1822***

(a) Ground floor replacement ceiling joists 1532, 1551 (12¼C, 12¼C, 23¼C, 27¼C, 33¼C); Upper floor main floor beams 1551 (15¼C, 23¼C, 23¼C, 25¼C); (b) Joist 1785(4). *Site Masters* (a) OXPRISNX 1411-1551 ($t = 11.8$ RAD-A; 9.1 BDLEIAN4; 8.4 GREYSCT2); (b) exp15 1701-1785 ($t = 8.2$ ssj51; 8.0 ORIEL1; 6.8 HANTS02).

Work in 2005 and 2019 follows earlier investigations into St George's Tower, and this entry supplements Miles and Haddon-Reece 1995, VA **26**, list 64 Part II, p. 65. During 2005 the tower was repaired following the closure of the prison, and offcuts from the main beams from the framed floors of the two upper floors confirm the spring 1552 felling date previously found. A single joist removed from the upper floor was found to relate to repairs carried out in c. 1800. Dating commissioned by Oxford Archaeology as part of a recording and watching brief and by Oxfordshire County Council.