

NAS Part III Archaeological Science Module

Dendrochronology

Aims:

This course will provide an introduction to Dendrochronology (tree ring dating) in archaeology through a balance of short lectures, demonstrations and a series of practical laboratory and on-site sessions. The course is aimed at individuals undertaking the NAS Training programme, as well as professional archaeologists wanting to increase their knowledge of the role of dendrochronology and dendroprovenancing in archaeology, with a particular emphasis on maritime and nautical archaeology.

Course outline:

- Introductory tour of the Newport Ship Centre, using available material to focus on dendrochronological issues
- Theoretical introduction to dendrochronology in archaeology – when can dendrochronology be used and what information will it provide? Consideration of the interpretation and presentation of dendrochronology dates
- Field visit to inland or intertidal site (dependent on tides and weather) to consider site assessment, sampling strategies and research design
- Practical exercise looking at the dating and provenancing of a medieval wreck to explore methods of data capture, analysis and interpretation
- Practical session on examination, assessment, packaging and recording of samples from a range of maritime sites. Introduction to dendrochronology equipment including on-site sampling and laboratory equipment

Teaching Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course participants will have been introduced to the role of dendrochronology and dendroprovenancing with particular reference to maritime and nautical archaeology. Through classroom presentations and practical sessions participants will have seen how to assess the suitability of timbers for sampling and how to extract and package samples. Participants will have gained an understanding of laboratory procedures and subsequent analysis and interpretation. Participants will also have been introduced to how tree-ring results should be presented within archaeological site reports.

NAS Part III Point allocation:

Archaeological Science module: 12 points maximum

Suggested Reading:

Dendrochronology – Guidelines on producing and interpreting dendrochronological dates. Hillam, J. English Heritage, London

Tree-ring dating and archaeology. Baillie, M G L. 1982. London

A Slice through time – dendrochronology and precision dating. Baillie, M G L. 1995. London