



By Appointment
To Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
Damp Proofing and Timber Treatment Specialists
ProTen Services Ltd., Bath

York Minster: 25 Years On From The Fire

25 years after a raging fire destroyed parts of York Minster, ProTen Services look back at their involvement in the restoration process

On 9th July 1984, a blaze tore through the South Transept at York Minster. It is believed that the fire was started by a bolt of lightning striking an electrical panel in the roof.

The roof was constructed of large tinder dry oak beams, which burned rapidly. 150 fire fighters battled to bring the fire under control for two hours, and at around 4:00am, the roof collapsed. Apart from the roof, severe damage had been caused to the masonry and the famous Rose Window.

The restoration process quickly got underway, using only traditional materials and methods. The total reconstruction took four years and cost £2.25m.

ProTen Services, known then as Protim Services, became involved when the architect specified that the English green oak beams that had been installed to create the new roof trusses must be treated with preservative. Due to the nature of the oak used, specific technical difficulties were presented, meaning that normal preservatives were not suitable for use on the beams.

This was not a problem for Protim, however, as the firm's technical department often worked closely with chemical manufacturers to develop new products. In this instance, a fungicidal paste of a specific consistency was developed, so that it would adhere to the green oak timber.

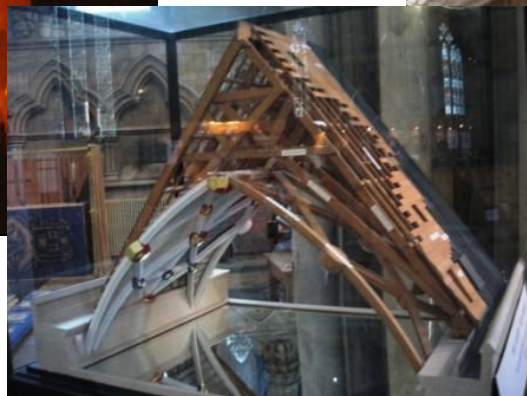
Throughout the company's 80 year history, innovation and the ability to adapt materials and methods to meet specific clients' needs has been central to the firm's success. David Marshall, Chairman, who has been with the firm for over 30 years commented, "Although I wasn't directly involved with the restoration work at York Minster, I can clearly remember discussions with my colleagues regarding their involvement. They were pleased to be playing a part in the restoration work after the fire, which had been a devastating blow to the local community. The whole company felt proud that we were in a position to develop a solution to the problem that no other firm could offer. We continue to offer this level of service to clients today, and have yet to be presented with a problem we can't find a suitable solution for."



Above: The fire takes hold of York Minster in 1984 Courtesy: BBC / Nick Hilton-Scott



Above: The new roof trusses, treated by ProTen Services in place under a temporary roof during the restoration process Courtesy: BBC / Dean & Chapter of York Minster



Right: A model of the reconstructed roof is displayed inside York Minster