

Y WENALLT, NANT GWYNANT, GWYNEDD INTERIM REPORT

Report on Excavations in 1998 & 1999.

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Y WENALLT, NANT GWYNANT, GWYNEDD INTERIM REPORT

Report on Excavations in 1998 & 1999.

SUMMARY

This report records the results of two seasons of a training / research excavation of one of seven structures at Y Wenallt, a post-medieval domestic site in the heart of Snowdonia, known from documentary evidence to date from the sixteenth century. Excavation revealed two phases of a building, probably agricultural in use, the earlier with a roughly paved floor and southern entrance, the later with a roughly cobbled floor, an eastern entrance and exterior paving. The western annexe could have been related to either phase. Over 1,600 finds were recorded, the majority being pottery sherds. The earliest clay pipe bowls and pottery date from the mid-seventeenth century and, excluding the post-occupation finds, the latest pottery dates from the early nineteenth century. Excavation will commence in July 2000 on the presumed site of the main house.

1. INTRODUCTION

Y Wenallt [in English: The Whitecliff] is a post-medieval domestic site whose main house is situated 110m. above sea level near the foot of a very steep slope at the base of Gallt y Wenallt, an outlier of Y Lliwedd, itself part of the Snowdon massif in the heart of North Wales [NGR SH 649528]. The site is situated on shallow postglacial subsoil composed of morainic deposits along the side of a steep U-shaped valley in mountainous terrain. The subsoil is composed of a mixture of orange-yellow clays, gravels, pebbles and stones of various sizes. The site is quite well drained and is just above the present flood plain of the Afon Glaslyn which now meanders within a wide valley bottom. The site lies between the major round hut settlement at Muriau'r Dre (NGR SH 65485415; RCAHMW, 1960, Caernarvonshire Vol II, No 745) and Llyn Gwynant lake. Y Wenallt is also close to the junction of several medieval trackways through Snowdonia.

Y Wenallt is first referred to in the 16th century. The steeply sloping site consists of seven closely associated structures now all reduced to their foundations. For convenience, these are designated A-F on the accompanying plan [Fig 1]. Structure F, the lowest site, situated just above the floodplain and nearest the river, was selected as the site of the first excavation. It was considered that, as it lay at right angles to the slope, it might have been on the site of an earlier building possibly associated with one of the Aberconwy Abbey Cistercian granges which existed in the valley. [C.A. Gresham, 1983, The Aberconwy Charter: further consideration, BBCS XXV, p337]

The site has become the subject of a training/ research excavation for members and friends of Cymdeithas Hanes Beddgelert, the local history society, with permission from Mr W. O. Williams, a society member, and the landowner of Y Wenallt and the neighbouring Hafod Rhisgl farm. Advice and practical support were gratefully received from Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It has been possible to trace the owners and tenants of this land-holding in considerable detail. The following summary covers those aspects which may relate to the evidence revealed during excavation. Around 1199 the township of Nanhwynain was given by Llewelyn ap Iorwerth (Prince Llewelyn the Great) to the Cistercian Abbey of Aberconwy. [R. W. Hays, *The History of the Abbey of Aberconwy*, 1963, pp 174-75, C.A. Gresham, 1983, *The Aberconwy Charter: further consideration*, BBCS XXV, p337.] It was farmed as a collection of monastic granges until 1537 when the Abbey was dissolved. From 1508 Maredudd ab Ieuan ap Robert, founder of the Wynn of Gwydir dynasty and steward of these granges, had leased much of Nanhwynain from Aberconwy Abbey. [NLW ms 9052E.210, also Hays & Gresham] Before his death he had also obtained the lease of Hafod Rhisgl grange within which land Y Wenallt later stood. On his death in 1525 Maredudd left Hafod Rhisgl to his youngest son Cadwalader who was only 1 year old; his oldest half-brother John Wyn ap Maredudd of Gwydir was the lessee in 1536, possibly as Cadwalader's trustee. [NLW Ms 905E.132; RCAHM, Caernarvonshire, vol II, 1960, monument 715; John Ballinger, *Calendar of Wynn (of Gwydir) Papers 1515-1690*, 1926, No 132]

After he came of age in the mid-1500s, Cadwalader built or extended Y Wenallt as his home; his other inherited land consisted of dispersed upland pasture in Eifionydd. A pre-1829 lithograph seems to indicate that it was a two-storeyed house with chimneys at each gable, in the Snowdonia sub-medieval storeyed end-chimney style. [H Longueville Jones, *Illustrations on the Natural Scenery of the Snowdonian Mountains*, 1829; P Smith, *Houses of the Welsh Countryside*, 1988, pp 158 & 174] It seems that Y Wenallt was a substantial house with associated wings and outbuildings but that the land holding was always managed by the occupants of Hafod Rhisgl, itself a late sixteenth century farm.

In the 1590s, Cadwalader's widow, a cousin of the famous Plas Du Catholic recusant family, failed in the Chancery Court to retain Hafod Rhisgl farm which, including Y Wenallt, then became the property of the Wynn family of Gwydir. Later Y Wenallt was leased to Richard Griffith, a gentleman and probably a bachelor, who died there in 1646. By 1703 the Wynn lands in Beddgelert parish had been acquired by John Rowlands of Nant, Betws Garmon and through marriage they later became part of the very extensive Baron Hill estate in Anglesey. From the eighteenth century Y Wenallt was occupied by sons of tenant farmers from Hafod Rhisgl and later by their farm labourers. After a major rockfall around 1800 the main house seems to have been abandoned but a subordinate building remained occupied until the 1860s.

Soon after this the new tenant of Hafod Rhisgl had all but the foundation stones carried away for re-use as walls and field drains. No re-used dressed stone has been identified elsewhere on the farm although three chamfered beams re-used in a barn may have come from Y Wenallt. The site is still called Plas Wenallt (in English: Whitecliff Hall) by the owner of Hafod Rhisgl within whose land the site is situated.

In summary the house and associated buildings are most likely to have been built or extended by the youngest son of one of the most powerful families in sixteenth century Caernarfonshire and to have then declined in status over the following centuries. The excavation was intended to ascertain the original nature and extent of Y Wenallt.

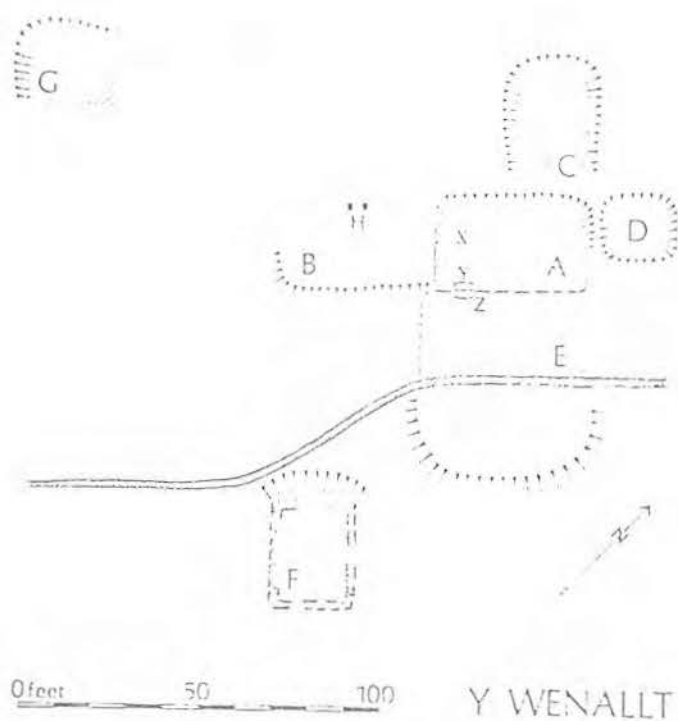
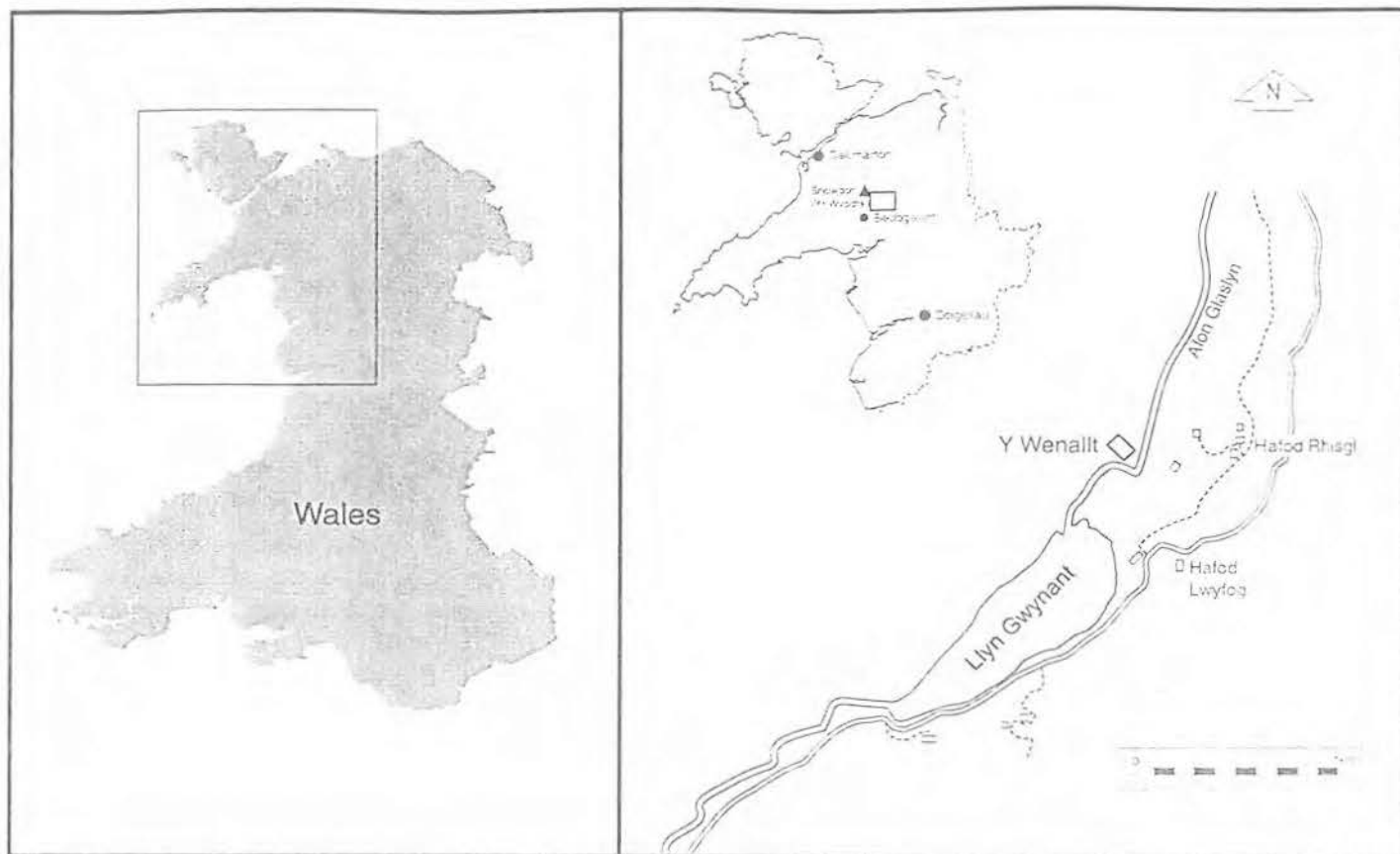


Fig. 1. Y Wenallt, Nantgwynant
SH 649 528 (Sketch Plan)

3. THE SITE

From ground survey it appeared that Structure F was a rectangular stone-built building measuring 4.70m by 7.70m internally, with heavily robbed walls, an approximately level interior and a central gap visible in the east wall. Its long axis ran approximately north west /south east with the north wall dug into the hillside. In the southern half of the building the remaining walls were of very substantial blocks of local stone [1.80m by 0.90m] sitting on even larger footings. To the west of the southern half of the building there was an area revetted by a stone wall in line with the south wall of the building and sloping away to the west. During the excavation this area was known as the west annexe. There was a massive boulder partially astride the west wall which did not appear to be part of the structure of the building and which had probably been part of a rockfall from the crags high above the site.

4. THE EXCAVATIONS : Methodology

It was decided to adopt the strategy of opening as large an area as possible to obtain a more complete picture of the whole structure. It was also decided that during Season One in 1998, all finds would be individually recorded, the positions tagged on the site and the finds retained. A full photographic record was made. The positions of the excavation turf stack, the soil and stone dumps were carefully arranged within the fenced off area erected for animal management, and by agreement with the farmer for his future use of the materials.

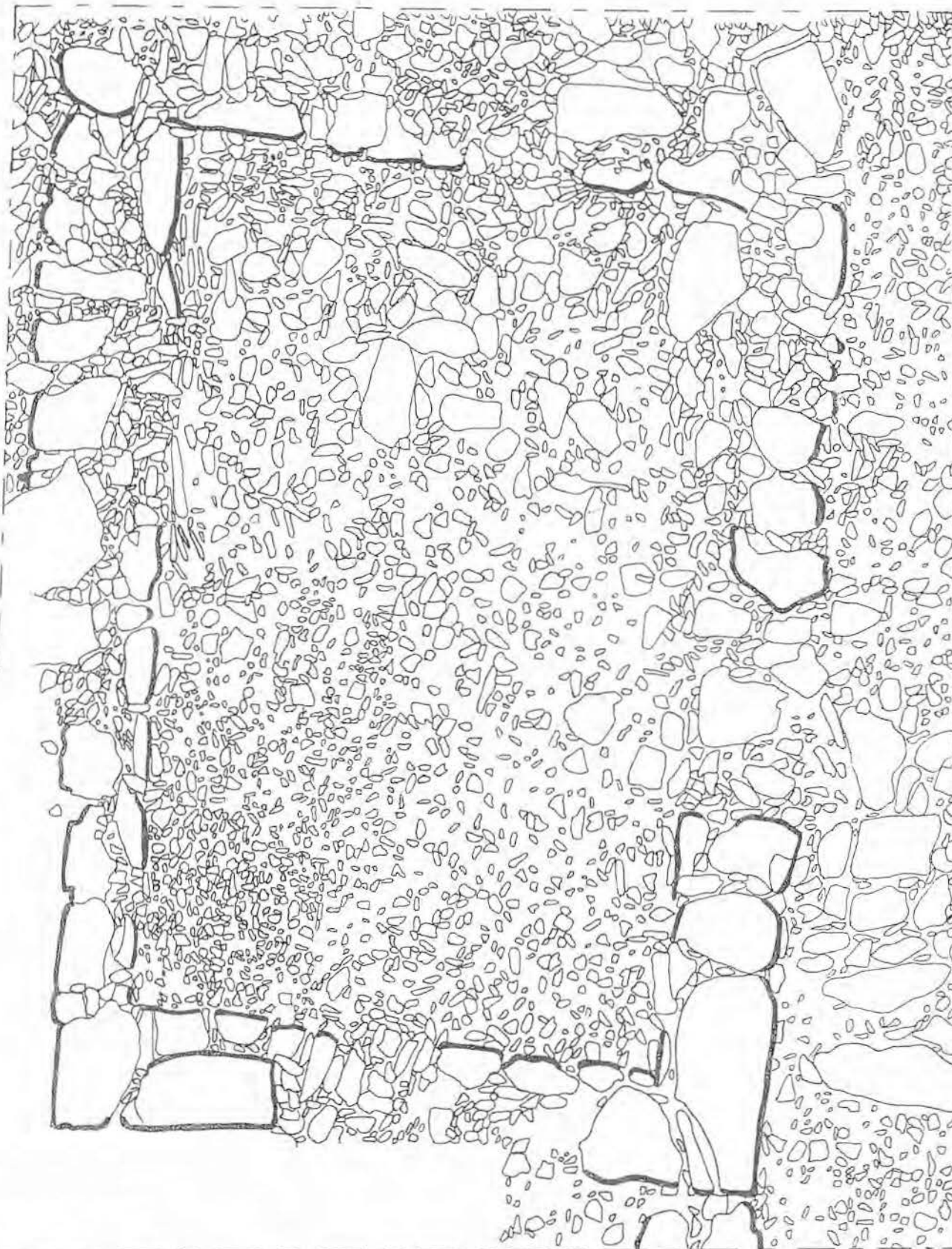
SEASON ONE [July – December 1998]

Due to the small size of the team, the area to be excavated was subdivided into three sections. These were as follows: the southern portion of the building, the west annexe and the half of the building north of a line between the rockfall boulder on the west wall and the gap in the east wall.

The south portion of the building and the west annexe were deturfed, cleaned and planned. The west annexe was left covered until the second season. The south portion of the building was excavated to reveal more details of the walls and loose stones were removed from the interior, uncovering a rough cobbled floor at the level of an eastern entrance. Within the limits of the excavation a paved area was uncovered outside and east of the building, extending south from the entrance in the east wall almost to the south-east corner of the building.

The north portion was then deturfed and cleaned. There was so much tumble from the north wall and hillside above that it was decided not to plan at this stage. Excavation continued and a large amount of stone was removed from the interior revealing more of the same rough cobbled floor uncovered in the south portion and an inner face to the north wall.

The whole of the interior of the building, the walls and eastern paved area were then planned (Fig. 2). The site was covered with black plastic sheeting for the winter. Season One (1998) covered 52 working days and 474 person hours of work were undertaken. 27 contexts were identified. 1,141 finds were recorded excluding the 156 kg of slate. These finds are summarised below (Fig. 3) and described later in this report.



0 3
metres



Site plan at end of Season 1 (1998)

Y Wenallt
NGR SH649 528

Fig 2

Fig. 3

Y WENALLT : SUMMARY OF FINDS : SEASON ONE 1998

TOTALS:	Nos. of FINDS	WEIGHT
W of West wall :	21	1.5 kg
West Wall :	18	0.1 kg
South wall & S :	7	0.1 kg
North wall & N :	100	1.4 kg
North edge of central area :	21	0.5 kg
Central area :	613	4.5 kg
East wall :	64	1.2 kg
E of East wall :	297	3.7 kg
TOTALS	1,141	13.0 kg

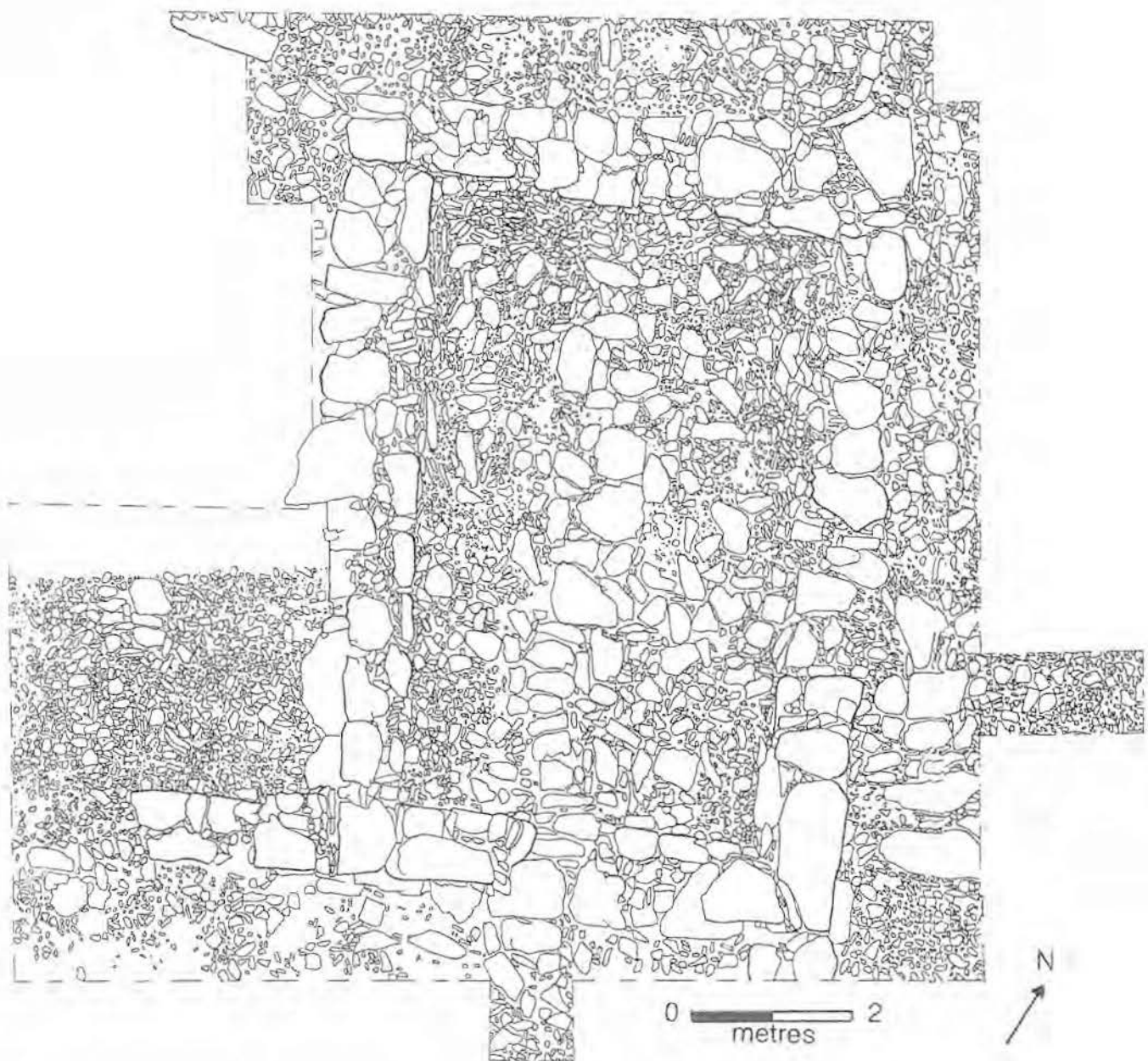
SLATE sherds : weight : 156.0 kg. 20 contained complete / part holes.
3 thick stone slates also contained holes.

FINDS BY TYPE OF MATERIAL

	Nos.	% of total
POTTERY non-Buckley Ware 422}	714	37.0 %
Buckley Ware 292}		25.6 %
METAL	144	12.6 %
CHARCOAL	101	8.8 %
GLASS	92	8.0 %
BRICK, STONE, some slate	51	4.5 %
CLAY PIPE	19	1.7 %
BONE	10	0.9 %
PLASTIC	10	0.9 %
TOTAL	1,141	

SEASON TWO: [JULY – NOVEMBER 1999]

It was decided to collect finds within 1 metre square areas during this season rather than to individually plot each find. The west annexe was left covered while the remainder of the site was uncovered and cleaned. A 1 metre section was excavated through the centre of the building along its long axis. This uncovered a substantial paved area about 0.60m below the 1998 floor level. This paved area lead to an entrance through the centre of the robbed south wall. The remainder of the southern two thirds of the interior was excavated to reveal a lower floor level. The northern third was then excavated. It appeared to be slightly raised above the level of the southern portion and be comprised of a more uneven floor surface.



Site plan at end of Season 2 (1999)

Fig. 4.

A new 1 metre trench was excavated along the north of the site down to the level of the north wall exposed in 1998 in order to reveal the northern limit of this wall. Small excavations were continued outside the walls to east, north-west and south, in some areas extending beyond the original excavation boundary in order to clarify aspects of the building. The west annexe was then excavated down below the numerous slate sherds, to what appeared to be the natural subsoil.

The whole of the area excavated was then planned (Fig. 4). Season Two covered 50 working days and 703 person hours of work were undertaken. 23 contexts were identified. 525 finds were recorded excluding 211 kg of slate. These finds are summarised below (Fig.5) and described later in this report.

Fig. 5

Y WENALLT : SUMMARY OF FINDS : SEASON TWO 1999

FINDS BY TYPE of MATERIAL

	In building.	N of N wall.	West annexe.	Total	% of total
POTTERY	245	132	53	430	81.9 %
METAL	29	6	5	40	7.6 %
CHARCOAL	8	4	1	13	2.5 %
GLASS	2	4	1	7	1.3 %
STONE	2	1	3	6	1.2 %
CLAY PIPE	9	4	5	18	3.4 %
BONE	5	3	3	11	2.1 %
TOTAL	300	154	71	525	

SLATE sherds **weight : 211.0 kg**

127 slates sherds included a complete or part hole.

3 thick stone slates also contained holes.

SITE PROFILES:

Figs. 6a, 6b & 6c indicate the profiles across the site at the completion of Season Two.

Profile A – A1 along the line of the north wall indicates the change in the ground level from west to east and shows the degree of survival of the north wall.

Profile B – B1 across the centre of the site from west to east shows the footings and base of the west wall, the Period One floor level, the east wall entrance and the level of the Period Two exterior paving.

Profile C – C1 along the line of the south wall from west to east shows the variation in survival of this wall. The remains of the extension wall south of the annexe abut the substantial south west corner of the building. East of the south door the wall has been severely robbed. The massive horizontal stone forming the lowest course of the south east corner remains in situ.

Profile D – D1 across the centre of the annexe from south to north shows the south wall and the ground level. The excavation here continued beneath the fragments of roofing slate to the subsoil.

Profile E – E1 along the line of the west wall from south to north shows the marked change in ground level and the large displaced boulder which probably fell from the cliffs above the site. The substantial south west corner of the building contrasts with the north west corner which is built into the hillside.

Profile F – F1 across the centre of the site from south to north passes through the south entrance in the south wall. The slight change in floor level two thirds of the way from the south wall to the north wall, can be identified. The inner facing of the north wall appears to have a rubble fill behind it. The extent to which the building has been cut into the hillside is clearly shown.

Profile G – G1 along the line of the east wall from south to north again shows the change in slope. It also shows the position of the east entrance. To the north of this the site of a cross section through the east wall is recorded, as is the buttress south of the south east corner of the building.

5. THE EXCAVATION : ANALYSIS

Phase 1: PRE-SETTLEMENT

There were indications of a local pre-settlement phase. Two undatable flint blades were identified during the excavation. One was found to the east of the east wall and another in the west annexe. These were probably casual losses, possibly by pre historic hunter gatherers passing along the valley or by early farmers. Several undatable almost spherical and ellipsoidal stones were found. These may have been special mementoes or naturally occurring in the subsoil.

No finds or structures could be attributed to habitation in the pre 1200 township of Nanhwynain nor to the period from c1200 – 1537 when the valley was part of a monastic grange belonging to the Cistercian abbey at Aberconwy.

Phase 2: BUILDING F : FIRST PERIOD

2.1 Introduction.

Structure F was a sub-rectangular building built with its north gable end cut into the steep hillside. A short length of walling linked the north-west corner to the nearby field wall which may itself have been rebuilt and contained altered openings. There appear to have been two phases and in the earliest there was an entrance through the middle of the south wall. Access may have been from the house site higher up the hill slope, from the field in which it now stands, or from the nearby ford and footbridge. Immediately adjacent and to the west of the building there is a level area bounded on the south by a wall. This has been named the “annexe” and is described later.

2.2. Foundations and Walls

The profile of each wall is recorded in Fig 6. The material used appeared to be local boulders and stones of shaly slates, quartzite and volcanic tuffs of natural occurrence. The wall building technique in the southern part of the building revealed the use of very large foundation stones which projected beyond the exterior wall line in the south and west walls. This was probably to provide a sound foundation on the “made” ground level. There appeared to be no foundations on the northern part of the east wall, with the roughly shaped medium sized boulders lying on the subsoil at a level higher than the interior floor. These dry stone walls frequently contained a fine reddish clay, probably used as a bonding agent.

The northern part of the west wall was built from very large boulders lying east-west as through stones, with selected straight sided stones forming a north-south edge along the interior of the building. This edging of smaller straight-sided stones continued along the southern part of the west wall, along the south wall and along the southern part of the east wall. It was not possible to identify its purpose as so much of the walling had been robbed for use elsewhere on the 19th century farm. Nothing similar was noted along the north wall or the northern part of the east wall.

The interior face of the north wall survived to a maximum height of 1.40m. It appeared to be built with smaller stones near the base with larger boulders above them. However some parts of the north wall had slumped and other parts had been heavily robbed. Substantial boulders had been used to form the exterior corners of the north gable at the level of the exterior subsoil. It was not possible to clarify whether the north wall had been erected in front of a cut made into the hillside or whether the inner facing had been erected with boulders dropped between the facing and the hillside.

The south-west corner of the building had been less severely robbed, still retaining large cuboid boulders up to 0.62m in height. The south end of the east wall contained a large flat-topped, straight-edged stone 1.80m in length lying on a wider foundation stone. Two boulders just south of the south-east corner appeared to form a buttress or possibly a gate jamb or even the start of a wall. They continued beyond the edge of the excavation and were not fully revealed.

2.3 Openings

There was one entrance placed roughly centrally in the south wall at the same level as the lowest floor. There appeared to be a large flat threshold stone. The stone robbing had been particularly severe along the south wall as that was the most accessible, and thus the width of the entrance is not clear. There was no evidence for a hearth in the north gable. Insufficient walling remains to determine the position of any window or other openings. It seems likely that this was an agricultural building, and there may have been an opening in the north gable end to a hayloft. Similarly sited field barns / byres with such arrangements occur in this valley.

2.4. Floor

The lower floor surface which was level with the southern entrance was composed of a line of worn flattish stones lying along the centre of the long axis of the building. (See Fig.4) This paving was lifted in one area within the building and in the area immediately south of the south entrance, to look for evidence of a drainage channel ; however, none was observed.

The northern third of the interior appeared to be slightly raised compared to the remainder of the interior. This northern portion had a less even surface and contained numerous large stones now much shattered, with river-gravel and small pebbles used to form the rough surface. The north west corner sloped up towards the walls and the floor was made up of narrow stones bedded like cobbles with the long axes of those by the north wall running east-west and those by the west wall running north-south.

In the southern two-thirds the area west of the central paving also sloped slightly up towards the west wall. This area contained many flattish worn stones bedded in soil with small stones, but did not form a paved area. The area east of the central paving was of a different character with fewer large flattish stones bedded into a stony base with considerable patches of river gravel, but again not forming a paved area.

2.5. Roof

This phase must have included a slated roof as a large number of slate fragments were found, 20 of which still had peg holes. There were also numerous metal finds which appeared to be rusty nails. Some of the slates were narrow and chunky whilst others were wider and thinner. Three slates were of a much thicker stone [0.17m by 0.12m by 0.025m thick] Charcoal fragments were found, as was some decayed wood, often in association with the slate. This could indicate that a fire may have been responsible for the abandonment of this phase.

2.6. The "Annexe"

Immediately to the west of the building there was a fairly level area stretching 4m westwards to the top of a slope down to the flood plain and the river. To the south it was bounded by a substantial dry stone wall continuing the line of the south wall of the building but not bonded with it. To the north of the area excavated, a levelled area was bounded by a substantial dry stone field wall with a much higher land surface beyond the wall. The unexcavated area contained numerous scattered stones and two large boulders which had probably rolled from the crags above the site. A range of pottery, clay pipe, glass and stone artefacts were recovered from the annexe. Many large slate fragments were revealed, especially adjacent to the building and at a lower level just above the clayey subsoil. The purpose of this annexe has not been identified. It may have been a slated shed, an animal pen, or part of the entrance area when approaching from the river, which was fordable.

2.7. Area north of the building

The north face of the north wall was identified at a depth of 0.80m below the current turf level on this steeply sloping hillside. North of this wall a considerable number of artefacts were found, mainly pottery but with some glass in addition to slate and associated charcoal. It seems probable that the slate came from the roof whilst the pottery etc could have travelled down-slope in soil creep from the other structures further uphill on the complex site.

To the west of the north wall there was a short stretch of partly robbed walling joining the north-west corner of the building to a massive boulder at a change of angle in a nearby field wall. Such a connecting wall would have been significant in stock management in the immediate vicinity of this building and its annexe.

2.8. Area east of the building

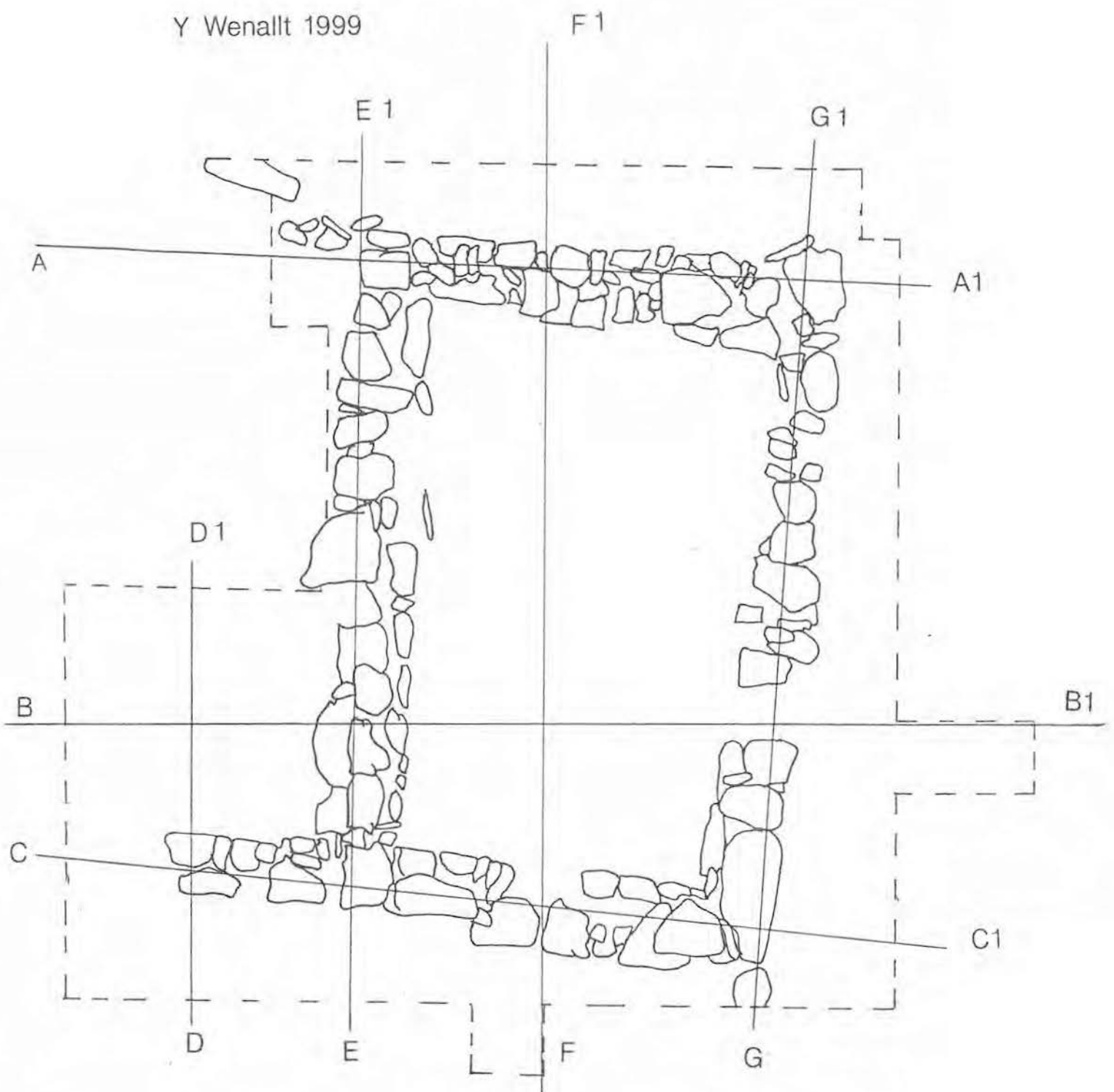
The area outside and east of the northern part of the building was excavated up to a depth of over 0.50m until no further artefacts were found and a clayey subsoil containing quite large stones was reached.

Phase 3 : BUILDING F : SECOND PERIOD

This was associated with a rough cobbled floor and eastern entrance level with an exterior paved area.

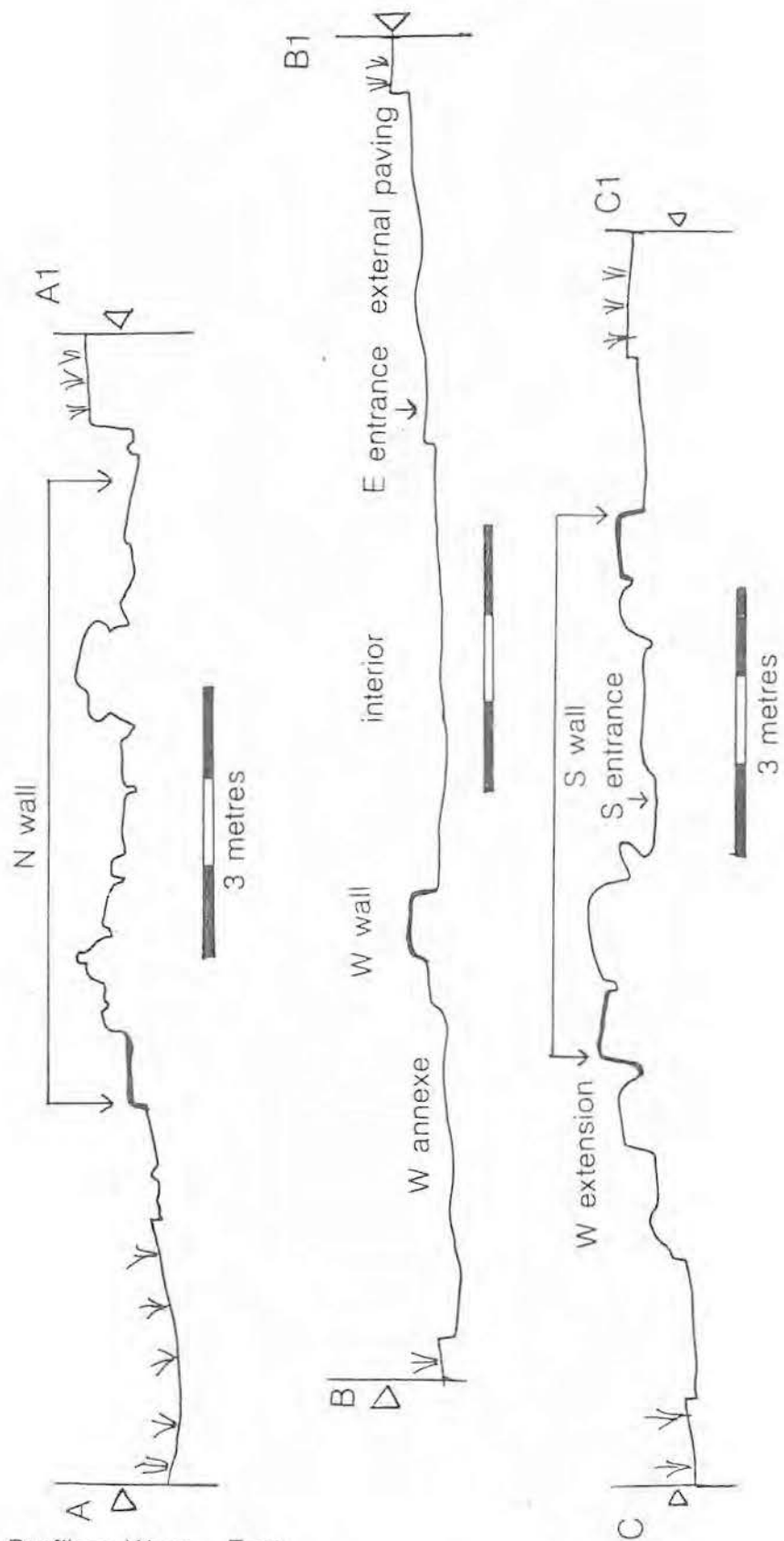
3.1. Walls

It was not possible to identify from the remaining walls and foundations what if any alterations had been made to the walls during the second period of use.



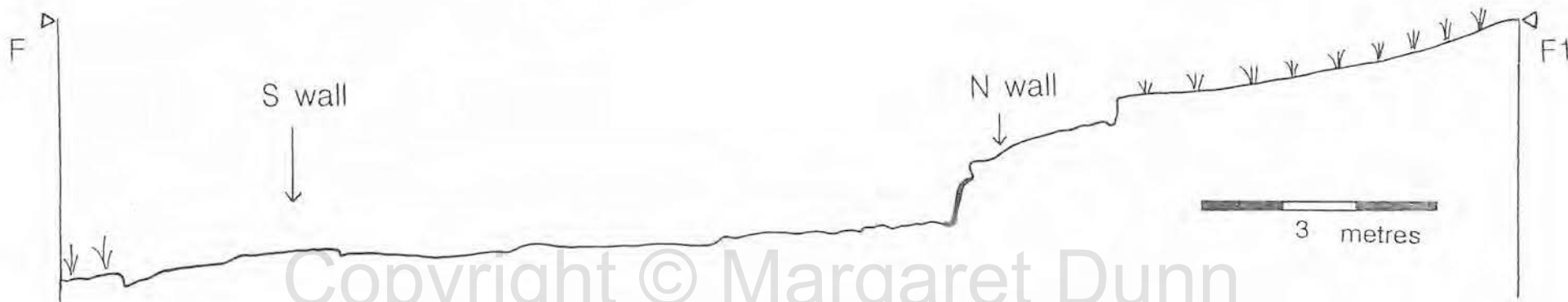
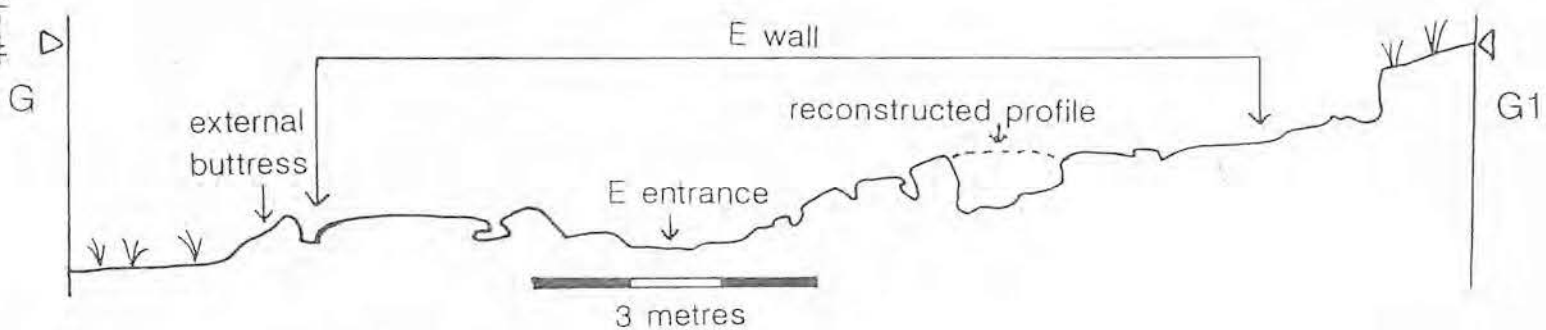
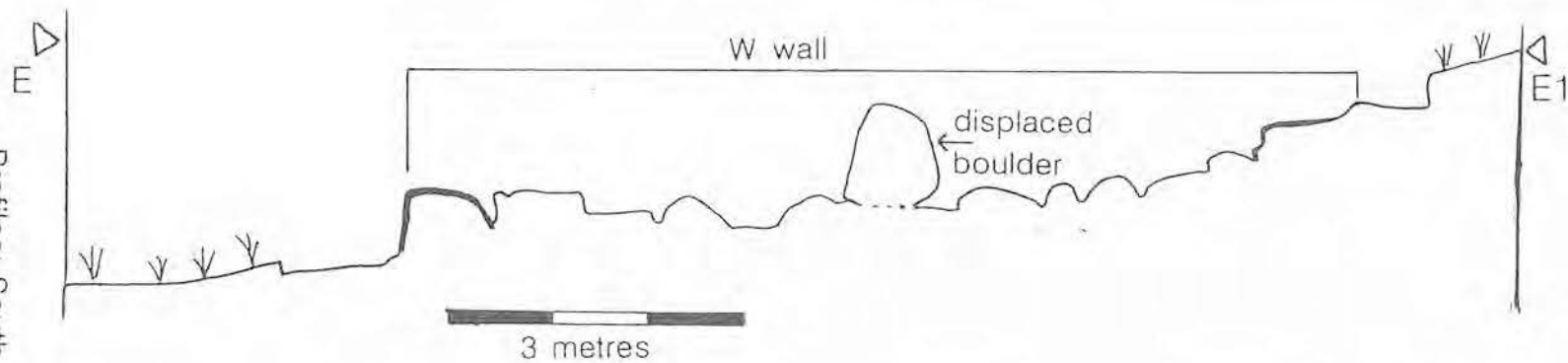
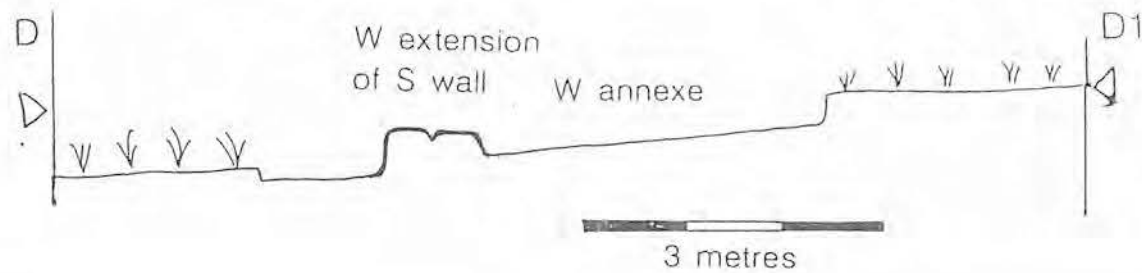
Plan indicating location of profiles

Fig. 6a



Profiles: West - East
at end of Season Two - 1999

Fig 6c
Profiles: South - North
at end of Season Two - 1999



3.2. Openings

As the south wall had been almost all robbed out to the foundations, it was not clear whether the entrance in the south wall had again been used during the second period. It seems unlikely. The stones remaining in the south wall did not seem large enough to have been part of what was most likely a gable end wall. They were probably left when the larger stones in the walls were removed during demolition. The 0.60m higher floor level during the second phase would not necessarily have ruled out use of this entrance, but the paved area leading to it was no longer in use in the second period. There was no indication of a hearth at this level, nor of any window openings.

During the second period there was a 1.20m wide entrance almost centrally situated in the east wall. This was positioned where the level of the floor surface was the same as the threshold and level with an exterior paved area. To the north of this entrance the hillside became steeper and much higher than the level of the interior of the building. Immediately inside the entrance there was an area of worn thick flat stones laid against the threshold stone, presumably to make a good surface at this much used position (See Fig 2).

3.3. Exterior paving

Immediately outside the entrance in the east wall there was an area of large worn flagstones extending 1.10m to the east and some 3.30m to the south, almost to the south-east corner of the building. This area / pathway would have formed a useful route to the eastern entrance.

3.4. Floor

The floor was 0.60m above the floor of Period One. It was made up of small stones well packed in a soily matrix making a loose cobbling. This cobbling was more homogeneous in the southern half of the building. The northern half contained a number of larger stones and was more uneven.

3.5. Roof

A large number of slate fragments were found indicating that the building must have been slated during its second period of use. 127 slate fragments contained either a complete or part hole. Three additional slates were of a much thicker stone. Charcoal was also found, sometimes in association with the slate. Corroded metal, probably nails, was also found across the site, often fused to stones, probably by corrosion. It was not clear whether the building had slowly fallen into disrepair, had been damaged by a rockfall and abandoned, or had burnt down.

Phase 4 : DEMOLITION

In this locality the steep valley sides are prone to rockfalls. Around the end of the eighteenth century one such fall is reputed to have caused the abandonment of some, if not most, of the buildings at Y Wenallt. To the north of the annexe are several large boulders which have probably fallen from the crags above the site. The massive boulder (1.05m high by 1.45m wide and 0.80m deep) which lies across the footings of the west wall of the building may have fallen after the building was abandoned, possibly even being the cause of abandonment, or alternately may have fallen after the walls were deliberately demolished.

The 1861 Census Return is the last census showing anyone living at Y Wenallt, but it is not known which buildings were still habitable at that date. Around 1864 the young

tenant reached his majority, no longer needed to follow the dictates of his trustees, and started making changes on Hafod Rhisgl land. His descendants relate that he removed much of the stone from structure F and from the remainder of the Y Wenallt site for re-use on the farm. It is clear that much stone was taken, particularly from the walls on the east, south and west of the building. The north wall was reduced to the height of the turf line up slope of the wall. Some large stones had slipped into the building from the north wall. A horse and cart or sled may have been used to carry stone away; such activities might explain the unevenness of the floor surface of the northern part of the interior.

Phase 5: RECENT USES

Once the abandoned site had grassed over, its fairly level interior made it a suitable place for a variety of leisure as well as agricultural activities in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These are described in more detail under the section on miscellaneous and 20th century finds.

6. THE FINDS

6.1. STONE

a) Flint

Two undatable flakes were found. W98.c212, a curved triangular flint or chert flake, was 0.03.5m by 0.01m and was found outside the building at its north east corner among soil infill / soil creep on the steep hillside. One edge was quite abraded and the flake might have been utilised.

W99.02.07.01, a thin translucent tertiary flint flake, was 0.02.5m by 0.01.5m and was found in the annexe area. It was probably derived from a fluvio-glacial pebble rather than imported.

W99.11.07.01. A very small piece of burnt flint with thermal fractures, and W99.11.07.02 a very small sliver of stone, were found close together during pre-season cleaning in 1999.

W99.03.05.01. An elongated river pebble of hard igneous stone, possibly dolerite, 0.14.5m in length, was found not far from the flint flake in the west annexe. It may be natural or may have been utilised for flint knapping.

These finds suggest casual losses by people using the lower slopes of the valley sides whether they were passing through or were settled nearby.

b) Spheroidal stones

W98.c184. An undatable almost spherical smooth stone, 0.09m by 0.80m, appears to show signs of battering at both ends and may have been used as a hammer stone.

W98.c23. Another smaller off-white 0.06m by 0.05.7m spherical quartzite stone showed some signs of wear but this may have been due solely to river action

W99.01.06.01. A rounded ellipsoidal pebble approximately 0.04.5m long was found in the west annexe. These may have been keepsakes, tools or merely natural stone.

c) Limestone

The one large (W98.c188) and one small (W98.c191) piece of limestone found were probably remnants of material brought by cart from Porthmadog to lime the fields. They were lying to the north east of the building.

d) Mortar

W98.b73. One small piece of stone with what appeared to be mortar attached was found in the walling near the south east corner of the building.

e) Slate

This material has been described above under "Roofs". The findspots of a large number of slate pieces were not recorded as, apart from the walls, slate was found scattered across the site.

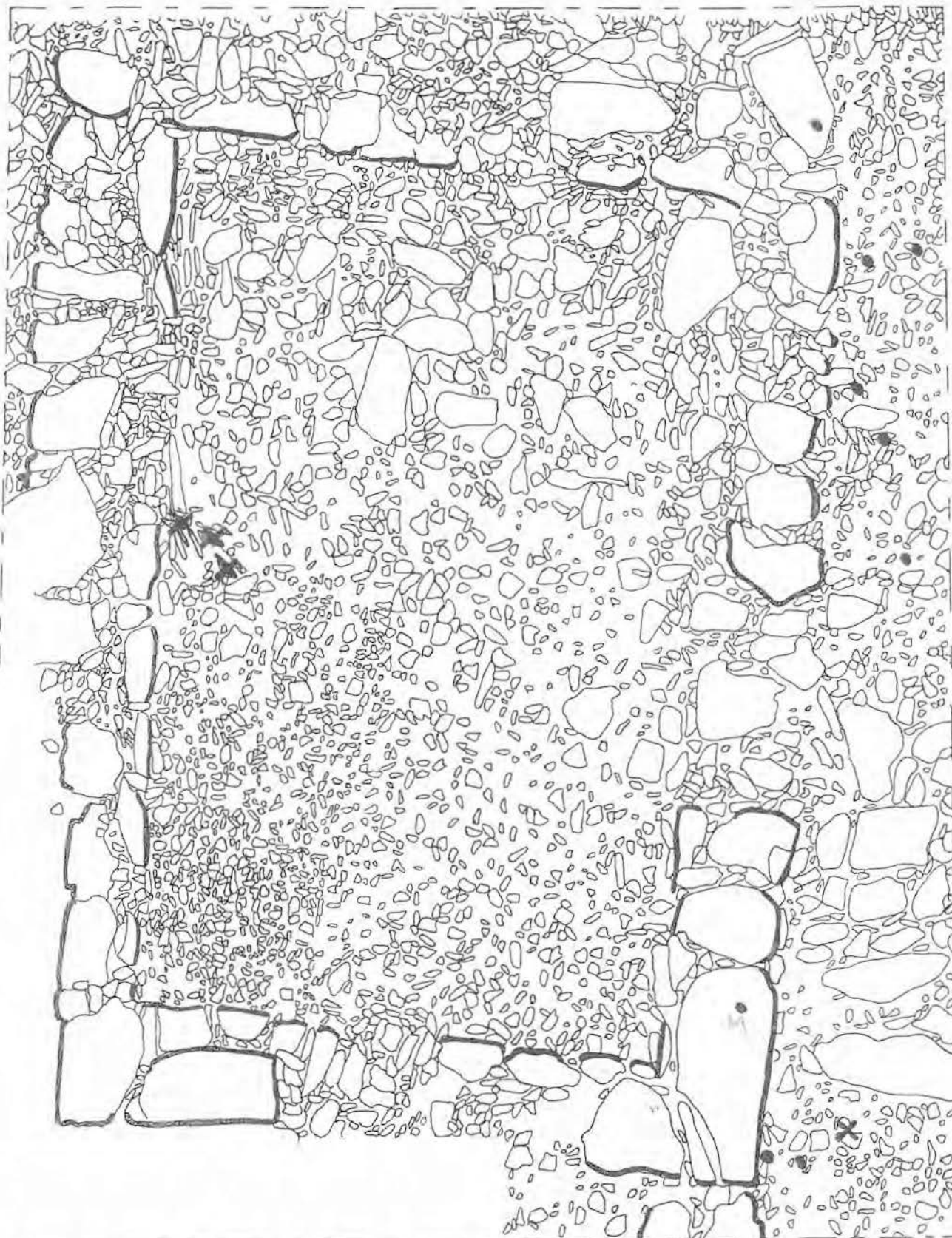
W98.b104. Only one piece of the purple Llanberis slate was found. All other slate was of a blue-grey colour.

W99.10.09.01. A smoothed slate disc, 0.03.5m by 0.02.9m, incised with a capital "H" with a projecting horizontal line was found. It may be a counter marked with H or it could be that lines divide the flat surface into six very small sectors for some game.

f) Burnt stone

W99.06.13.c4 was retained as an example of the scatter of burnt stone found on the site.

Distribution plans of stone finds in 1998 and 1999 can be seen in Figures 7a & 7b respectively.



0 3

metres

Distribution of Stone Finds
Season One 1998

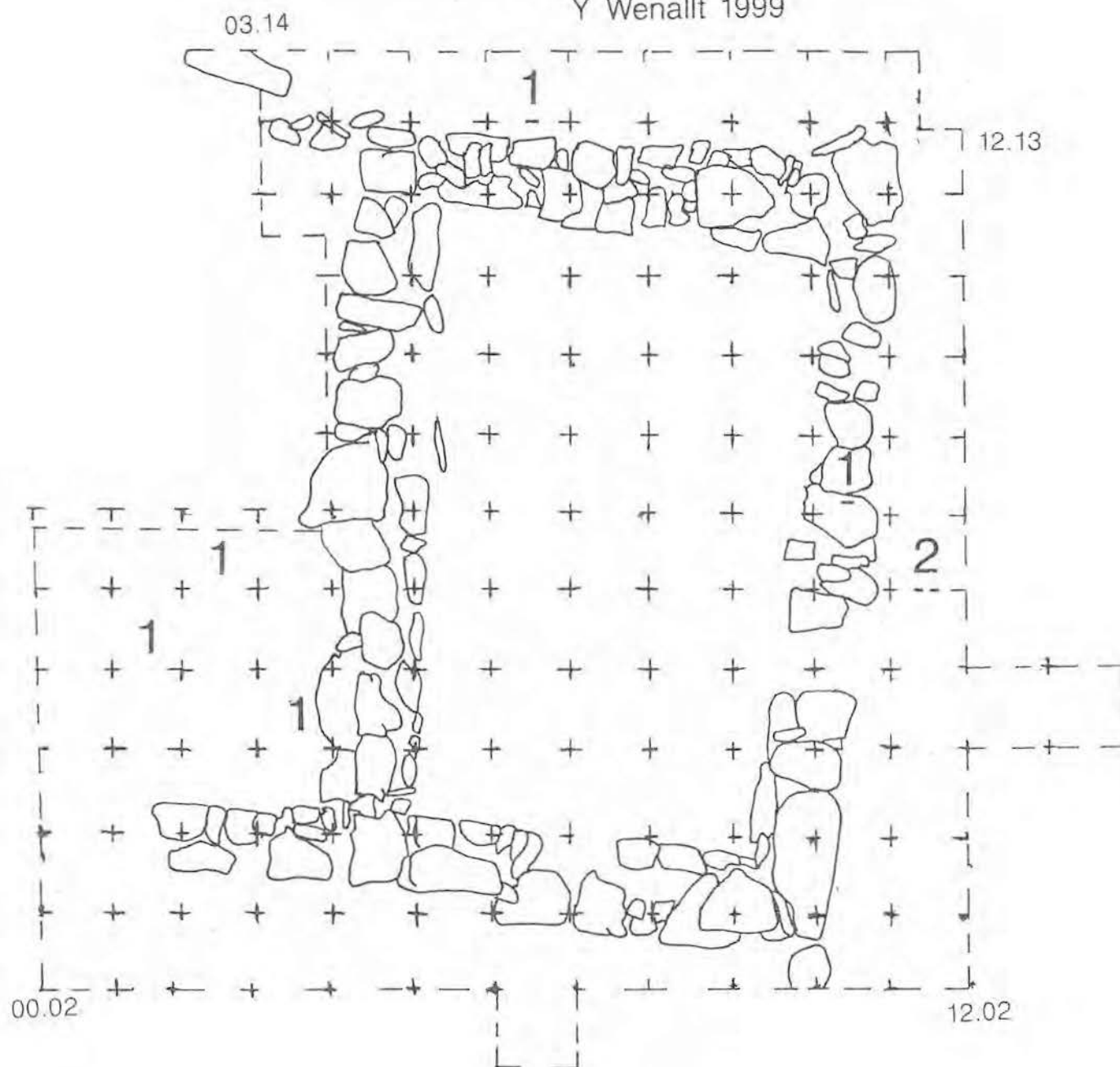
● stone X brick M ? mortar

Y Wenallt

NGR SH649 528



Fig. 7a



Distribution of stone finds

Fig. 7b

6.2. CLAY TOBACCO PIPES

Three almost complete and two much damaged pipe bowls, 13 bowl fragments (two of which had rouletted rims) and 19 pieces of pipe stems were found. Of these, 19 artefacts were found in Season One, 1998 and 18 in Season Two, 1999. The distribution of findspots is shown in Fig 9a & 9b.

W99.03.07.1

This almost complete bowl has no maker's mark but from its shape dates from the early seventeenth century, maybe 1640 – 1660. The bowl rim is rouletted and has a flat heel. It is made from an off white beige-coloured clay. The black tobacco staining which has diffused out from the bore suggests that the pipe had been much used. It must have been cared for and looked after for a long time. This may suggest that it was an expensive or rare possession which would be difficult to replace. Dr David Higgins noted that it did not look like a Broseley or Chester form and may have been produced in the Rainford area of South Lancashire or in Buckley. It was found in the annexe west of the building. It may be in displaced tumble but alternately may indicate 17th century use of the west "annexe".

W98.c64

This almost complete very small bulbous bowl has a plan ring around the rim and a flat heel. It is made from a clay with a brownish hue. It has no maker's mark but from its shape dates from the early seventeenth century, maybe 1640 – 1660. Dr David Higgins noted that it did not look like a Broseley or Chester form and may have been produced in the Rainford area of South Lancashire or in Buckley. It was recovered from the inside walling in the south west corner of the building and, if lost during the construction of the walls or of the later floor, may be the best dating evidence found.

W98.c198

This fragment is from the junction of a very small bowl and stem with a flat heel. It is made from a white-beige coloured clay. It has no maker's stamp but by its shape dates from the seventeenth century, maybe 1640 – 1670. It was recovered with three other pipe bowl fragments in the exterior fill outside the east wall. Dr David Higgins noted that it did not look like a Broseley or Chester form and may have been produced in the Rainford area of South Lancashire or in Buckley.

W98.c269a

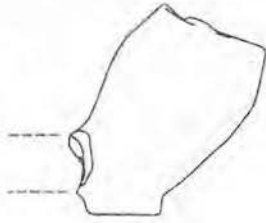
This is another fragment from the junction of a bowl and stem with a flat heel. It is made from an off-white clay. It has no maker's stamp but from its shape dates from the seventeenth century, maybe 1650 – 1670. It was recovered in the north east corner of the excavation, east of the east wall. Dr David Higgins noted that it did not look like a Broseley or Chester form and may have been produced in the Rainford area of South Lancashire or in Buckley.

W99.01.05.1

This almost complete rouletted pipe has a maker's mark on the base of the spur indicating that it was made by one of the three Samuel Deacons of Much Wenlock, Shropshire, who were a prominent pipe making family. Dr David Higgins notes that their marks range from c1650 – 1720 in date and are widely distributed. The mark with a dotted border tends to occur on pipes of c1660 – 1680 and this bowl form is one of the latest which he has seen it on. David Barker (Stoke Museum) has also suggested a date of 1680 – 1700. Much Wenlock was part of the Broseley area which specialised

W99.03.07.1

1.



1640-1660



W98.C64

2.



1640-1660



W98.C198

3.

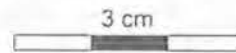


1640-1670



Y WENALLT
Beddgelert, Gwynedd

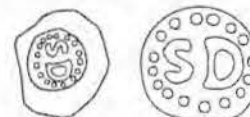
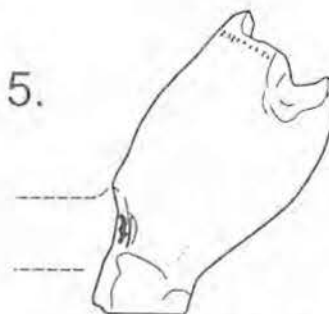
CLAY PIPE BOWLS



scale 1:1

W99.01.05.1

5.



W98.C269a

4.



1640-1670



*probably 1660-1680
possibly as late as 1720*

Fig. 8



Y Wenallt
NGR SH649 528

Distribution of Clay Pipe Finds
Season One - 1998
X bowl ● stem

Fig. 9a

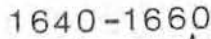


Fig. 9b

in pipe production and had an unusually wide distribution for their products. They used the river Severn to distribute right down the Severn Valley and into South Wales. They also penetrated the markets in the Midlands and Mid-Wales (for example, Montgomery Castle) and as far north as the Mersey. Distribution into North Wales has not yet been studied.

A number of the 20 pipe stem pieces contained larger bores indicating that they were probably pre-1825 in date. One (W98.c264a) had a raised lattice-work pattern along the stem. The stem pieces were of a variety of thicknesses and were of shades of colour from white to light tan. One (W98.c92) was made of a reddish clay. Only six of the 18 pipe bowl finds and six of the 20 pipe stem pieces were recovered from within the building.

In Season One three pipe bowl fragments and five pieces of pipe stem were found within the building. The other six pipe bowl fragments and seven pipe stem pieces were found east of the east wall, especially where there was soil creep from further up the steep slope near the mansion site.

In Season Two only three bowl fragments and one piece of stem were found within the building. Two bowl fragments and seven pieces of pipe stem were found outside the building plus the two bowls and three pieces of pipe stem which were found in the west annexe. The two clay pipe bowls were dated 1640-1660 (W99.03.07.1) and circa 1680 (W99.01.05.1) as described above. This may suggest a mid-to-late seventeenth century date for the annexe and possibly the whole building.

Grateful thanks are extended to Dr David Higgins (Liverpool), Mr David Barker (Stoke) and Mr Rex Key (Broseley) for their assistance in identifying these finds and to Mr Danny Dutton (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust) for drawing the pipe bowls (see Fig 8).

6.3. POTTERY : BUCKLEY WARE POTTERY

The many household processes undertaken in rural agricultural areas frequently utilised wood and horn until well into the eighteenth century. These utensils however rarely survive in archaeological sites in the area. From the establishment in the late Middle Ages of the pewter industry in the West Midlands, pewter competed with earthenware at a higher social level. Pottery is far more fragile and difficult to transport, and was usually sold within a twenty mile / one day's walking radius of the place of manufacture. Specialist wares could be traded over a longer distance, especially if being imported with other goods, for example, wine. However pottery making sites within Gwynedd have not yet been identified for the post medieval period.

The nearest centre was Buckley in Flintshire, which was itself close to supplies of clay, coal and also lead for use in the production of glazes. The earliest known kilns date from the medieval period. From around 1640 – 1780 perhaps a dozen family groups were producing pottery. The early seventeenth century wares they produced were of high quality, exhibiting many of the sophisticated techniques then current in Staffordshire, which at that time had not yet acquired predominance. The Civil War had interrupted communication between established sources of supply and demand was providing new, wider markets for rural potteries, with upper society now preferring pewter.

In the industrial period of 1780 – 1860 Buckley produced coarse black glazed kitchen wares and industrial products. Domestic wares were either wheel thrown or formed on convex press moulds. The fabric when fired ranged in colour from buff through to pink, red and purple. The forms were simple in shape but well thrown and eminently suited to their purpose. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries the main product continued to be coarse domestic ware for use in the kitchen, dairy and around the house. Such items included jugs, pitchers, bowls, basins, colanders and a whole range of storage vessels. Large jugs were produced in traditional form, a direct development from late seventeenth century types. These were lead glazed over a red body giving the pots a brown colour. In addition similar items were produced with a black glaze which owed their colour to the presence of iron / manganese. This glaze was used on the large pan mugs so typical of Buckley.

It is this continuity of successful functional products which makes the numerous sherds of vessels found at Y Wenallt difficult to identify and date. Buckley pottery production covers the known period of habitation at Y Wenallt. Thomas Pennant noted on his 1780 tour of Wales that “The ware is mostly exported to Ireland, and the towns of the Welsh coast”. Buckley pottery would have been available at the market fairs at Caernarfon and Criccieth and also sold from house to house where orders were also sometimes taken. There was at least one family of Welsh travellers, the Evans family, who were pot sellers throughout rural north Wales from around 1580 until the 1940s. They sold from farm to farm as well as at large fairs, smaller weekly fairs and they supplied shops.

At Y Wenallt over 700 sherds of Buckley pottery were recovered during the two seasons of excavation of this small portion of the larger complex of the mansion and associated buildings. The distribution of finds of Buckley pottery each season is shown in Figures 10a and 10b. The finds varied in size from large pieces of rims and bases, some up to 0.13m by 0.10m, to hundreds of tiny fragments. 47 parts of bases (27 in Season One and 20 in Season Two), 30 pieces of rims (11 in Season One and 19 in Season Two) and several pieces of handles were identified. In Season One there

was a concentration of finds near the eastern entrance of the building and to the east of the east wall. A thin scatter of finds was also recovered, mainly from the rubble fill within the northern portion of the building. It is not possible to clarify what proportion of these finds have migrated down slope since the buildings were abandoned or were disturbed or added during the demolition of the buildings in the 1860s. In Season Two there was a concentration of finds in the southern portion of the interior of the building under the later floor level.

Examples of finds in chronological sequence:

So many Buckley designs were successfully utilised for very long periods that the dating of vessels, let alone sherds, is imprecise.

W99.07.04.5 is the largest of 16 sherds, mainly rim pieces, found scattered across the lowest level of the southernmost metre of the interior of the building in Season Two. They appear to be from one or more wide shallow slipware dishes probably of mid eighteenth century date. There is a wavy yellow sliptrail pattern round the rim.

W99.10.13c4 from north of the north west corner outside the building and W99.03.08.8 from the west annexe also have sliptrail patterns.

W98c85b from the centre of the interior and W98c79a from the west edge of the south of the interior, fit together and are part of a rim of a dish with a wave white slip decoration. W98c35 (south part of east wall), W98c67 (southern part of interior) & W98c153 (northern part of the interior) are similar sherds with waving slipware decoration.

W98b30, from the outer edge of the eastern wall just south of the eastern entrance, is a collection of 7 sherds of a jug base measuring 0.13m diameter similar to a known 1650s example. The fine red clay body has a dark glassy glazed interior with the glaze reaching almost to the ridged base on the exterior.

W98c146a from the northern part of the interior is part of a large slightly flaired jug base of the mid seventeenth century showing where two finger tips grasped the jug when it was dipped in the glaze.

Most of the remaining jug sherds seem similar to examples from the "Hope and Anchor" site in Buckley dated circa mid 1700.

W98c72 from the southern part of the interior is a sherd of slipware showing the yellow decoration almost reaching the base. The tan coloured glaze covers the exterior and base. It is dated around 1700 and is probably from Buckley rather than South Lancashire or Stoke.

W98d2, from the base of the inner face of the north wall, is a fine jug base of buff clay which dates from the seventeenth or early eighteenth century; it may not be from Buckley but could be from Staffordshire.

Around 1700 a new type of ware appeared which was press-moulded, often with flanged rims and trimmed with well defined scalloped denticulation, and with slip-trailed designs, often combed or joggled, which have been applied on top of, and sunk into a yellow slip background. 28 pieces of press-moulded dishes, including 12 pieces of rim have been identified, over half being found in Season Two in the southern part of the building and possibly coming from the same vessel.

W98c70, from the centre of the building, comprises five sherds which form part of an internally glazed large shallow press-moulded dish with parallel lines of yellow slip and a pie crust rouletted rim. It is very similar to the Brook Hill pottery dishes dating from 1700-1720.

W98c278a is a sherd from a pressed dish, with three coloured slips, with good twin layers in the clay and probably of eighteenth century date.

W98c125c, from the northern part of the interior, is a small black rim of a very finely thrown delicate domestic vessel, possibly a jug or flanged vessel and maybe of the eighteenth century.

Some of the smaller thinner smooth sherds could well be from cups, very small jugs, beakers, bowls or other domestic vessels. Bowls were more common at Buckley earlier in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The bodies of many of the sherds have a mix of 'red' and 'white' clays, and seem marbled internally; this is typical of Buckley pottery.

Many of the sherds come from large milk pots (up to 24" [61cms] by 24" [61cms] diameter at rim) and pan mugs / pancheons (straight sided bowls up to 30" [91.5cms] diameter at rim) of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Many of the side pieces have marked throwing rings indicating earlier eighteenth century dates. Pan mugs were fired upside down in stacks, so the glaze runs down towards the rim. Jugs were fired standing on their bases so the glaze runs down towards the base. Runs of glaze thus help identify vessel types.

W98c138 from the northern part of the interior is part of the rim of a large black Manganese glazed earthenware milk pot.

W98c180b is part of the thick rim of a different black glazed earthenware milk pot and was found against the exterior of the northern part of the east wall.

W98d4a is a horizontal handle from a pan mug/milk pot found at the base of the inner face of the north wall, and W98c97 is a handle from a large jug from the northern part of the interior.

W98c8a is part of the thick ridged rim of yet another, but this time very thin sided, black glazed earthenware pan mug. It was found with 24 other sherds to the east of the east wall in the southern part of the site amongst the paving.

W98b55a is the only example of a later pancheon with interior white slip for milk storage. It was found near the inner face of the south wall below the cleaned surface beneath the turf.

There appears to be a lack of the typical later Buckley pots, such as storage pots, pan mugs and meat dishes. It has been suggested this may indicate gaps in habitation from the early to mid 1700s to the late nineteenth century. However this is not supported by the documentary evidence for the site as a whole. The function and use across the centuries of the part of the site so far excavated is not certain, and as has been previously indicated, neither is the degree of migration and demolition disturbance of sherds recovered from the soil around this building. The relationship between the finds and this building may not always be clear, but the vessels would have been used and discarded within the whole Y Wenallt complex.

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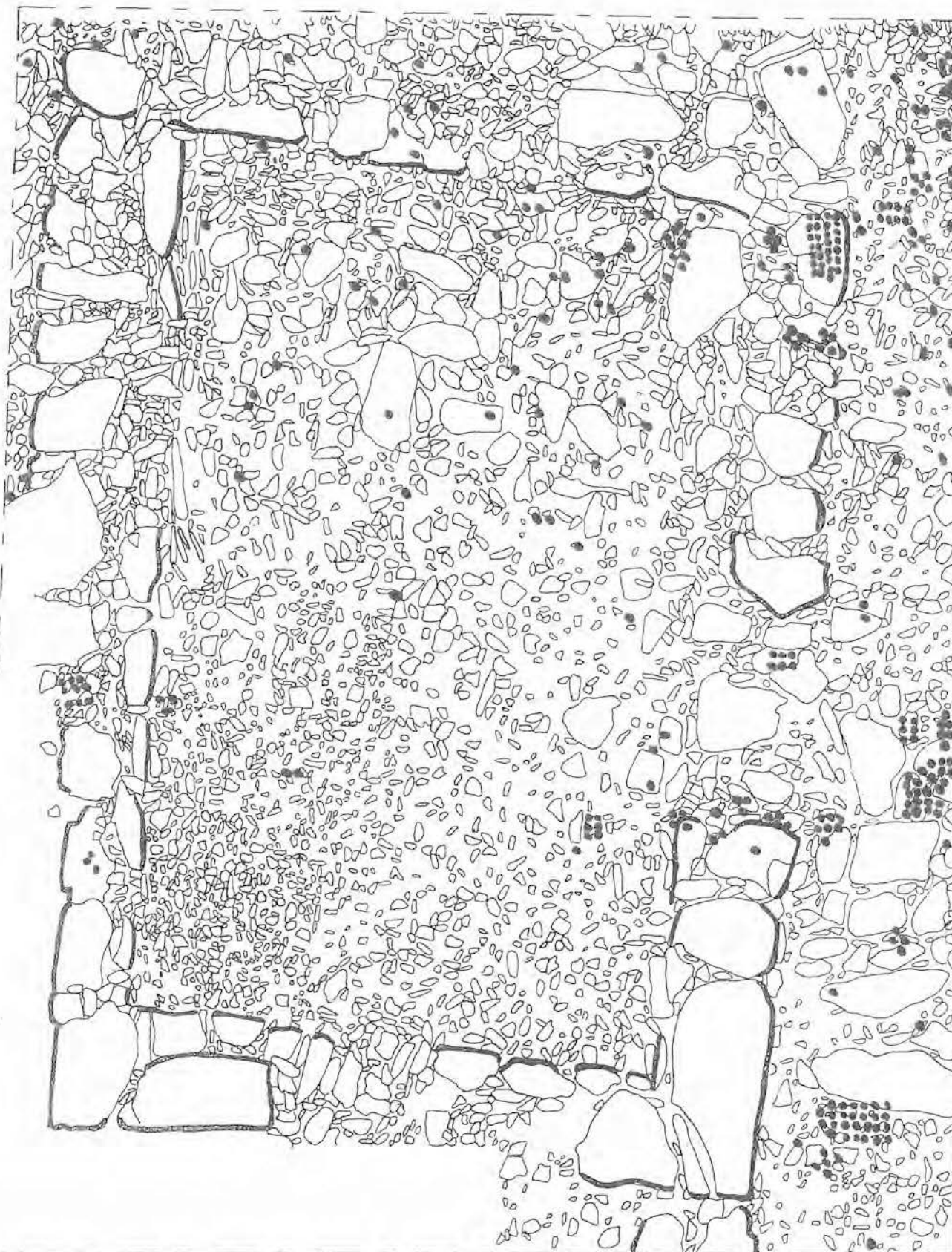
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Buckley Library Exhibition.

Adrian Childs & Sheila Tyler (pers. comm.)



0  3
metres

Distribution of Buckley Pottery Finds
Season One - 1998

Y Wenallt
NGR SH649 528



Fig. 10a

03.14

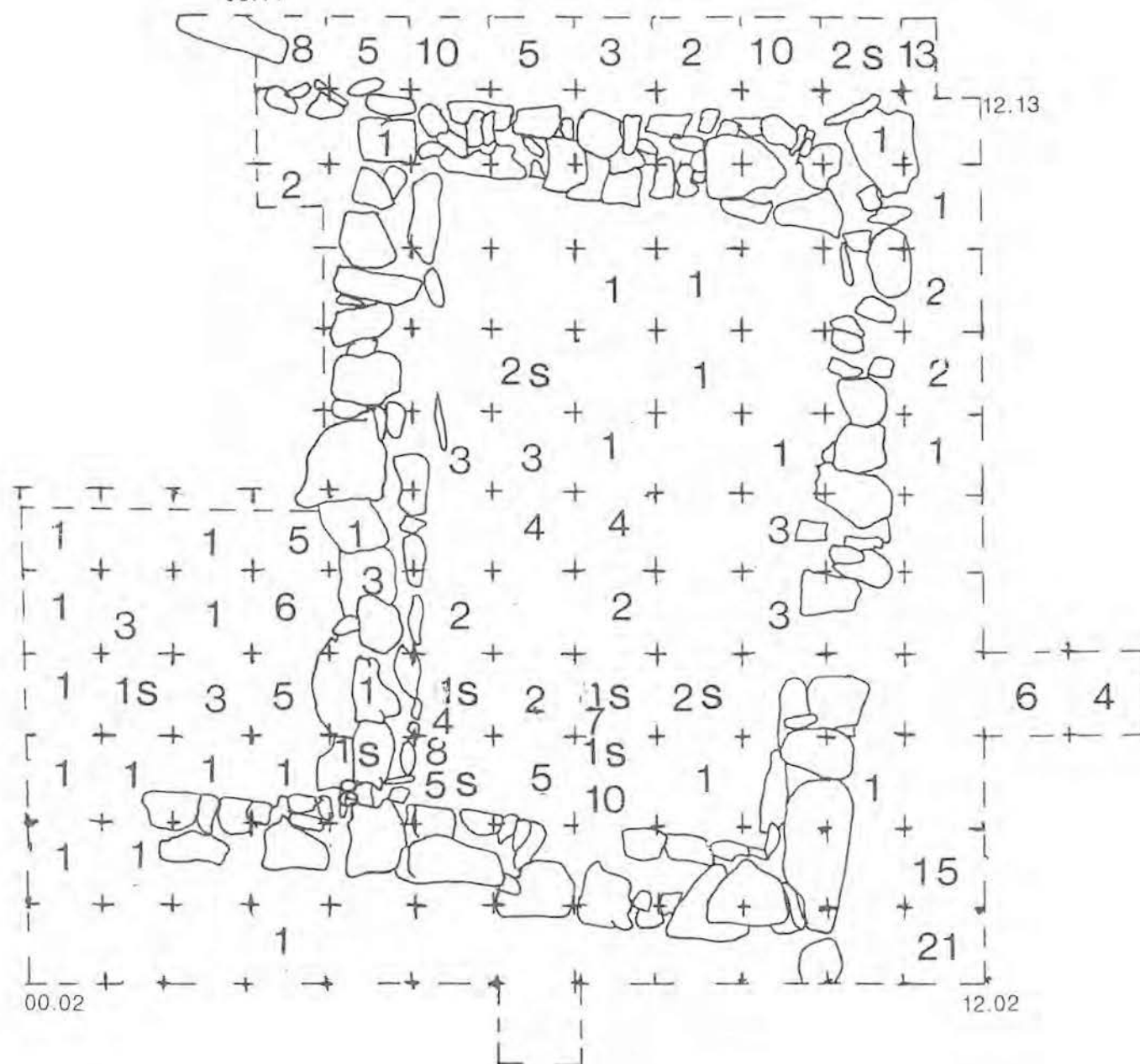


Fig. 10b.

6.4. OTHER POTTERY

Plan 11a indicates the distribution of non-Buckley pottery found in Season 1. The majority of the finds were from the northern upper side of the site and many were associated with the later movement of soil down slope from the main house. Plan 11b indicates the distribution of non-Buckley pottery found in Season 2. The finds from the northern metre were again mainly associated with the later movement of soil down slope from the main house. Elsewhere the finds were concentrated in the southern half of the structure and in the annexe.

Background information concerning the range of pottery is given as it aided the report writer who lacked experience of pottery types and processes.

NORTH DEVON WARE

In the 16th century there were three main fabrics: 1) gravel-free with crushed shell; 2) gravel-free without shell and 3) gravel-tempered wares, sometimes micaceous but with abundant quartz. There was a wide range of forms, all wheel-thrown, including dishes, jugs, bowls, tripod skillets, porringers, chafing dishes, chamber pots, tankards, saucers, tall jars, crocks, cups, baking pans, cisterns and handled cooking pots. Closely dated at Exeter, Polsloe Priory and Okehampton Castle, North Devon wares were in production by 1500–1540 and continued using the same jar forms into the 17th–18th century. The earliest known potter in Bideford died in 1609 but, as in Barnstaple, production probably began in the 16th century.

Gravel-tempered ware was a 'coarse utilitarian kitchen ware whose red paste was heavily tempered with a gross water-worn gravel or grit ... it is remarkable for its lack of refinement ...'. The surfaces are normally a pinkish-buff with a hard grey core. The paste is basically a smooth light-firing clay, to which has been added waterworn quartz and feldspar gravel up to 12mm in size, in varying quantities. These can vary from gravel-free wares, which contain little or no grit, to fully gravel-tempered wares, in which the gravel can amount to anything from 15 to 40% of the fabric. All the vessels are wheel-thrown except for the ovens and basting dishes which are moulded. All vessels are glazed internally; jugs are glazed externally, sometimes over a white slip. Glaze colours range between light greenish brown, brown, green and a dark green which is almost black. It can be smooth and glossy or extremely thin and give the surface a lightly varnished appearance. On gravel-free wares the same glazes are used, though their smoother body makes the glaze appear more even.

North Devon pottery was reaching south and west Wales by water by the sixteenth century, and possibly reached north Wales amongst ballast in boats bound for the lead mines of the area. Coarse wares and ovens from North Devon continued to be imported into south Wales into the nineteenth century. A clay oven was found at Plas Mawr near Llanfairfechan. Two body sherds of 17th century North Devon gravel-tempered ware were found in Caernarfon Castle.

At Y Wenallt in Season One there were seven abraded sherds of gravel-free North Devon Ware of types from late 15th to early 17th century. All had a light greenish brown glaze on the inner concave side. W98b1 was unevenly ridged, as was W98c101; W98c31a also had a very dark brown vertical line. W98c31b and W98c30 were smaller sherds, as were W98c264a and b.

In Season Two nine sherds of North Devon Ware were found. Five thick body sherds, W99.00.07.1, W99.01.04.4, W99.01.06.6, W99.03.08.2 and W99.03.11.6 were of a similar very coarse gravel-ware with a streaky brown glaze on one side. All were found within the west annexe except W99.03.11.6 which was found north of the north wall.

W99.01.04.3 and W99.01.06.5 were thick body sherds of a less coarse gravel-tempered ware, both with a shiny greenish brown glaze on one side and both found within the west annexe.

W99.03.06.7 was very similar to the gravel-free ware found in Season One, with the same coloured glaze on the concave interior and on the wider and possibly pattern-incised rim. It was found in the west annexe.

W99.06.13.b3 was a small gravel-tempered sherd with a yellowish green glaze on one side and was found north of the north wall.

W99.08.13.c2, found north of the north wall, may be North Devon gravel-free ware possibly of the 17th to 18th century. It may be part of the base of a small jug with brown glaze internally which drips down to the base externally.

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Ms Julie Edwards, Grosvenor Museum, Chester. (pers. comm.)

EWLOE WARE. Buckley, Flintshire.

Major post-medieval pottery production is well known in the area, and potentially local 15th century finds exist. The main inclusion is quartz occurring in different quantities in fine white, grey-white and red-pink fabrics and coarse red and grey wares. Forms include cooking pots, bowls, storage jars, skillets, jugs, a costrel (bottle) and roof furniture. (*Medieval Pottery in Britain A.D. 600-1600* p 476)

At Y Wenallt in Season One, seven abraded sherds and four fragments were found which may be of the Ewloe type of transitional early post medieval pottery. Two had a mid-brown glaze and the remainder had no surviving glaze. The body of Ewloe ware was Coal Measures clay.

Possible CISTERCIAN WARE

W99.14.05.2 is black bodied and fine walled with a rim, possibly of 16th century date. It was found just under the turf in the eastern-most extension of the excavation east of the exterior paving.

TIN-GLAZED earthenware

This is also known as 'Delftware'. The skill was brought to England by Low Countries potters in the late 16th century. In this process, pink or buff earthenware was given a coating of lead glaze which was made opaque and white by the addition of tin oxide to it. Decoration was then painted on to the powdery white biscuit fired surface before the pot was fired again. Imitation Chinese designs were popular. This ware was never made in Staffordshire but was made in centres such as London (from late 16th century), Bristol (c1650) and Liverpool (early 18th century). It was not very durable and during the mid-18th century other, stronger pottery replaced it.

W99 05.06.7, found in the southern part of the building in period One, is part of a blue & white tin-glazed dish of the seventeenth century

W98.c280 is a blue & white tin-glazed ware of the 'Delft' type, dating from the late seventeenth – eighteenth century. It has white glaze on the convex side.

W99.07.04.16 is a pinky-cream bodied sherd of tin-glazed ware with white glaze on the concave side and manganese mottle on the convex side. It may be from a cup or jug of the mid-1600s.

W98.c245 a, b and c are three abraded tin-glazed sherds of a pinky-cream clay body of un-identified type which have lost their glaze.

W99.05.06.3, W99.05.06.4 and W99.05.06.6 are similar very abraded unglazed fragments found within the same metre square as the previous piece.

SALT GLAZED STONEWARE

Much more durable than tin-glazed earthenware, salt-glazed stoneware came to Britain from Germany during the early 1600s. It was made in London from the 1670s. The most common type was brown stoneware with an iron oxide. The glaze was made by throwing common salt into the kiln during firing where it vaporised in the high temperature and settled on the surface of the pots. In the early 18th century Staffordshire potters perfected the method of making fine white salt-glazed stoneware. From the 1720s affordable, decorated and practical wares were made all over Britain. Fine earthenware took over from salt-glazed stoneware in popularity in the 1770s.

W99.11.09.1 is a base sherd of a white bodied white salt glazed stoneware mug or jug from around the 1760s. It was found north-east of the building.

W98.c15 is a sherd of a white salt-glazed dipped stoneware jug from the mid-1700s.

W98.b123a, b and c are sherds from a thin fine brown bodied salt-glaze eighteenth century stoneware beaker from Derbyshire or Liverpool.

W99.03.11.10 is a base sherd from a fine brown bodied salt-glaze eighteenth century stoneware vessel found north west of the building.

GERMAN STONEWARE

W98.b92 is a sherd of pale bodied German stoneware of the early to mid 18th century, with a grey glaze on the concave side and a richly patterned and incised glaze of deep and pale blue. It may be from a tankard from Westerwald, or from near Cologne or the Rhine.

Probable seventeenth century pottery

W99.10.12.1 is a concave sherd of fine red ware with an incised linear pattern and an orange glaze on both sides. It could date from the late sixteenth to early eighteenth century.

W98.b71 is a fine dark clay and is part of a ridged handle with a dark glaze, probably of the seventeenth century.

W98c290 has a refined red body and a raised edge with a beaded or flanged rim. It has a rough dark and light glaze on both sides and may be a dish of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century.

W98.c271 is a dark bodied sherd of a ridged tankard-like vessel with a brown glaze on the concave side and a mottled brown-black glaze on the convex side. It may be Blackware of the second half of the seventeenth century.

W99.11.13.b1 is a sherd of yellow ware, possibly from a candlestick, maybe made in the Midlands in the seventeenth century. It was found north-east of the building.

W98.b50, W98c75c, W98.b104, W98.c34, W98.c286, W98.c304a, W99.07.05.8 and W99.01.05.5 are very small sherds of yellow ware with a cream clay body and a yellow/ tan glaze. They may be from seventeenth / early eighteenth century cups, possibly of a Staffordshire type.

W99.00.06.3 is a sherd with yellow glaze on both faces and a raised line of brown spots. It may be from a porringer, or small divided dish or bowl with a handle of the mid-seventeenth to early eighteenth century.

W98c273a has a sandy earthenware body and streaked yellow glaze on one side. It may date from the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century.

W98.c68a is a coarse earthenware sherd with brown-mottled glaze stained by iron flecks on the convex side. It is probably utilitarian domestic ware of the mid-to-late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, and is similar to Self-covered ware noted in the report of the South Castle Street excavation, Liverpool.

SLIPWARE

Slipware was slip decorated lead-glazed earthenware. English slipware appeared in the late 16th century in Somerset. Large quantities were made in the Staffordshire potteries from the 1640s for about a hundred years. Decorated North Devon slipware made a great impact in the 17th century and Barnstable and Bideford had a thriving coastal trade around the Irish Sea. Essex was another early centre for slipware of the 'Metropolitan' type.

By the 1640s slipware began to be produced at Buckley, North Wales. Excavated pottery of this period includes dishes, cups, mugs, jars, porringers and chafing dishes with slip-trailed decoration, feathered slipware cups, press-moulded wares and dishes with *sgraffito* decoration in the style of North Devon slipwares. During the 17th and 18th centuries Buckley pottery was distributed throughout North Wales and north-west England, and to Ireland and North America, but subsequently it came to serve a more local market.[see BUCKLEY section above]

EWENNY, Vale of Glamorgan: a small but well-known pottery industry developed here from the early 18th century. The best known wares date from the late 18th to the 19th century and are mainly *sgraffito*-decorated slipwares which are often dated, initialled or inscribed. The wares include jugs and puzzle jugs, wassail bowls, bowls and posset pots, money boxes and large storage vessels.

No Eweny ware has been positively identified at Y Wenallt.

By the late 17th century slipware was being made at potteries all over Britain. Slipware was usually once fired and was never a high status ware, but found a place amongst the useful and novelty wares of the majority of the population. The pots were decorated with coloured liquid clay 'slip' by trailing, or drawing a point, comb or feather across the slip to make 'feathered' patterns and by using dots, outlines, lines etc.

W98c256 is a red fine-bodied sherd of combed slipware with a dark slip trailed over a yellow slip on one side, dating from the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century. It is of a porringer-shape and is more likely to be from Buckley than Bristol or Stoke.

W98c239 is another red fine-bodied sherd of combed slipware of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, with three parallel lines trailed across a cream-yellow slip.

W98c263 is a ridged thick red-bodied sherd of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, with a brown glaze on one side and a yellow slipware trail curving across it.

W98.c199 has a red-yellow clay body with a rich brown glaze on one side with two thick yellow curves standing in relief above the surface. It is of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century date.

W98.c289b and W98.c202 may be from the same curved slipware vessel of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, with brown glaze on both sides and a raised yellow lattice work pattern on the convex side.

W98.c69a has dark slip-coated bands alternating with yellow on its convex side. It is probably from the 1720s–1740s and is more likely to be from Buckley than Stoke.

PRESS-MOULDED slipware dishes were being made over a convex mould by the middle of the 17th century and became even more popular through the 18th and 19th centuries.

W98.b98, W98.c278a, W99.03.12.3 & W99.1.13.b1 are four sherds of slipware dishes with a trail decoration in cream and tan over a dark brown slip coat.

W99.c278b may be from a cup or similar vessel of the eighteenth century.

W98.c34 is a sherd of press moulded early slipware of the late seventeenth century.

PORCELAIN

Chinese porcelain was eventually copied in Europe and artificial soft-paste porcelain was made in England by the 1750s. By the end of the 18th century hard-paste porcelain was manufactured in Staffordshire and elsewhere. Fine strong very white porcelain - bone china - became very popular in the 19th century.

W99.08.05.1 is part of a Chinese porcelain plate of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century date, with a varied pattern of shades of blue. It was found near the south wall of the building.

W98.c 120 is a sherd of a soft paste porcelain, possibly rather poor quality English of circa 1810. It contains a dark purple –grey flower pattern on the concave side and includes part of the rim.

BONE CHINA

Bone china 'takes off' from 1815 to become 'the' quality ware, the porcelain of the day. The London shape cup was made from circa 1810 to 1860.

W98.c275 includes ten sherds, seven of which fit together to form part of a soft bone china London shape cup of the 1820s. The unusual red and blue pattern hand painted over the white glaze mainly on the exterior suggests it may be a South Wales piece.

W98.c252 is a London shape cup sherd of the early nineteenth century.

W98.c7 and W99.04.04.1 are sherds of circa-1820s bone china saucer or cup with a pink pattern painted over the white glaze on the concave sides.

W98.b53, W98.b138b, W98.c49, W98.c69g, W98.c127 and W98.c189c are sherds from similarly decorated circa 1820s bone china saucers with a fine dot-and-line pink and grey pattern painted over the glaze on the concave sides. Four sherds include part of the foot-ring and two include parts of a rim.

W98.c2a, b and c, W98.c33a and b, W98.c44 and W98.c123 are sherds of a soft quality bone china with a pink flowery pattern painted over the glaze. All four sherds include parts of a rim. They are unusual in that they are creamy rather than white in colour and are probably of a cheaper, more shabby quality.

W99.10.13.c11 may be a soft bone china; it was found north of the north wall of the building.

CREAMWARE

By the late 1740s creamware, an attractive cheaper alternative to porcelain, had been developed. At first it was often decorated with simple patterns in green, yellow, brown and purple which were applied to the body before being fired with a clear lead glaze. By the 1760s and 70s, fashions had changed and creamware had improved and decoration had become more varied.

W98.c233 is a white-bodied thin sherd of mid-eighteenth century creamware jug or teapot. The concave side is glazed white and the convex side has a mottled brown / white glaze.

W98.c99 has a pale body with dark flecks. It is a 10" diameter dish of the Wheildon type of the 1750s –1760s described as "shabby" and heavy". The glaze has oxidised to become tortoiseshell on the underside and is green, white & brown on the upper side with slightly curved incised lines. Due to its relatively poor quality, it may be from South Wales rather than Staffordshire.

W98.c41 is a thick pale bodied sherd including part of the foot-ring of a saucer or dish. It is tea ware from the 1760s – 1780s and has a rich green glaze which has an indistinct white band across it.

PEARLWARE

This is an earthenware similar to early creamware but rendered white or very pale grey by the addition of some cobalt stain to the glaze to neutralise the yellow effect

caused by the lead. This was the most common sort up to about 1830 and may often be identified by the blue colour of surplus glaze around foot rims or handles or on the underside of dishes.

Later under-glaze painted pearlware was economical to produce because all the colours used could be fired together with the glaze.

W98.c145 is a pearlware sherd with under-glaze decoration in blue-green and tan on white. It may be part of a cup circa 1800–1820.

W98.c213c and W98.c124 are sherds of under-glazed painted pearlware circa 1800–1820.

W98.c129 and W98.c132 are small sherds of hand-painted pearlware circa 1800–1820. Both include a blue rim and contain a blue linear decoration on white on the convex side.

W98.b16 is a pearlware sherd with over-glaze painted tan on white decoration and includes a shoulder ridge. It may be from a small covered dish circa 1800–1820.

W98.c122 is part of a white glazed pearlware teapot spout circa 1820–1830s.

W98.c241 is from the base of a sauce-boat, circa 1830, which may have had a “willow pattern” top.

W98.b39 fits with W98.c40 and, together with W98.c60 and W98.c274, they are from a shell edged blue decorated plate circa 1820s. W98.c234 is a sherd of a similar plate with a green decoration. W98.c260, W98.c261 & W98.b122 fit together to form part of a plate base which could be from such a plate.

W98.c62 is from a red and blue decorated bowl or saucer, circa 1820–1830s, with an unidentified M incised in the base.

W98.c75 is a thin sherd of white glazed pearlware, circa 1840 with “China” printed in black. This may have read “Stone China”.

W98.c63a is a thick sherd of a white glazed London shape cup with blue decoration, circa 1820s. W98.63b & c are similar sherds with green leaf like decoration, as is W98.c240 and six other small sherds.

W98.c129 with three small sherds are from a London shape cup or bowl, circa 1820.

W98.138a, W98.cc225 and ten smaller sherds with under-glazed blue on white pseudo Chinese floral leaf pattern date from circa 1820. They are probably from jugs, teapots, coffee pots and saucers.

Another fifteen small sherds of blue on white painted pearlware are dated from circa 1820.

W99.08.13.c3 is a sherd from a pearlware teapot rim of post-1820 and was found north of the north wall outside the building.

W98.c3 includes five sherds of late printed deep blue-and-white pearl ware with a floral pattern, circa 1830.

W98.c143 is probably a jug sherd of blue and white ware with a floral pattern circa 1820–1830.

Six similar sherds of comparable date may be parts of saucers.

RED EARTHENWARE

W98.b108 and W98.b102 fit together and are part of a fine-bodied red-ware brown glazed jug with pearl glaze inside and a blue strip trailed band on the shoulder.

W98.c37 includes four small fragments and four sherds which fit together to form the base of a pedestal salt of the early to mid nineteenth century.

MOCHA SLIPWARE

This was one of several decorative types of pottery which became popular in the 19th century because they were economical, practical and attractive. Mocha ware was earthenware decorated with coloured clay slip bands, dots, trailed lines and curious tree-like patterns and was often used in inns and wherever useful jugs, mugs and wares were required. These patterns are formed by the application of a mixture of

tobacco juice, urine and a colouring pigment to a freshly slip-coated pot. The acid mixture then fans out, spreading into the slip, to produce the feathery motif.

W98.c222 is a sherd of pearlware with tan-blue slip decoration and a dark mocha motif on the convex side, the concave side being white glaze.

W98.c99 also has coffee coloured streaks of a Mocha motif.

INDUSTRIAL SLIPWARE

By the early nineteenth century some pearlware and creamware became known as 'industrial or factory-made' slipware, being fine twice-fired earthenware. They are common on poor rural sites, being the cheapest type of refined earthenware.

W98.b22 is a sherd of multi-coloured decorated industrial slipware circa 1800–1820s.

W98.c73a & b, W98.b105 joined with W98.c242 and W499.10.13.c8 all include a rim and are from a banded and decorated black white & tan bowl circa 1800-1820s.

W98.b14a & b and W98.c51 are three sherds from a London shape bowl with a swirling tan, black & blue decoration on white, circa 1820s. W98.c167 is very similar with olive green replacing the tan colour. They may be from a tea set slop bowl, or soup or porridge bowls.

Sixteen brown or tan sherds of nineteenth century horizontally stripped / banded industrial slipware and one large sherd coloured blue and white were found in 1998 and three in 1999.

Forty six sherds of mainly white nineteenth century sherds from small plates and saucers were found in 1998 and six in 1999.

LUSTRE WARE

This was decorative earthenware or bone china with shiny metallic effects. Pinks, silver and copper were the most common colours, applied overall or with patterns painted, splashed or stencilled over the glaze. None was identified at Y Wenallt during 1998 and 1999.

HAND PAINTED WARE

Hand painting can be under-glaze or over-glaze.

W98.c130 a & b are probably sherds of a hand painted under-glaze cup from the early nineteenth century.

TRANSFER-PRINTED POTTERY

This was the most important invention for pottery decoration. Printing in under-glaze blue on earthenware was not perfected until the late 1790s, but once this happened highly decorative and economical tableware could be produced in huge quantities. In 1784 tax on tea imports was reduced from 119% to 12.5% so more teaware was needed. Duty on silver was increased and imports of chinaware declined. Cobalt blue and white oriental patterns on porcelain and pearlware took the place of Chinese tea services. These oriental patterns were popular at first, followed by views and landscapes, some specially designed for export to America. Other colours were introduced in the 1820s and 30s and in the 1840s a way of making multicolour prints was invented.

Chinese and chinoiserie patterns were popular in the late 18th and early 19th century.

Spode produced the Mandarin pattern which, with added bridge with people leading to a pavilion, fence and tea-house became modified to the various 'Willow' pattern designs. This was copied by over a hundred potteries. Other popular designs were 'Rock', 'Temple Landscape' and 'Two Temples'.

W98.c257 is a small sherd including a rim of the 'Two Temples' pattern circa 1820.

W98.c61a is a sherd of a blue European pattern circa 1820s-1830s.

W99.11.10.1 is a small sherd of the 'Willow' pattern design showing the end of the bridgeway, circa 1820s.

W98.b103 is part of a 6" (15.25cms) diameter Willow pattern plate circa 1820.

W98.c59 is a sherd including a rim, with a picture of part of a lady on the convex side, circa 1820.

W98.b113 is a knob from the lid with a dark green-blue transfer printed decoration.

W99.03.11.1 is the largest of twelve sherds of a blue and white transfer printed meat plate with a floral pattern, circa 1830s.

W98.c159a, part of a London shape bowl, was the largest of fifty six sherds of a separate blue and white floral transfer print bowl or bowls circa 1830.

W98.b112a was the largest of ten sherds of one or more geometric patterned blue and white transfer print bowls of the early-mid nineteenth century. Several sherds include parts of the rim.

Ten small sherds of assorted blue and white transfer printed ware were also recorded.

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Blue and White Transfer-Printed Pottery, R Copeland, Shire Album 97, 1998.

Slipware, D Barker, Shire Album 297, 1993

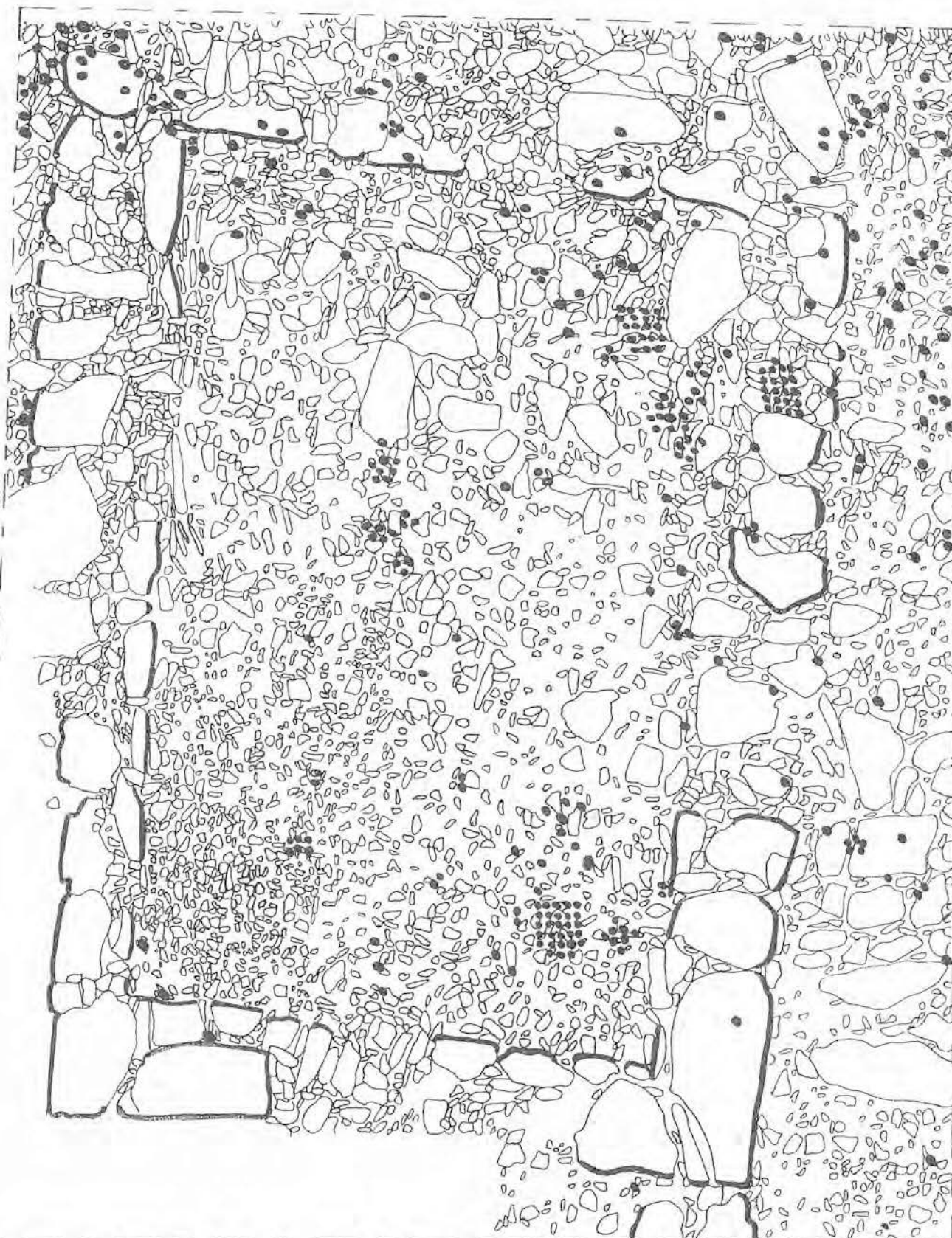
Acknowledgements:

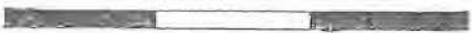
Grateful thanks are due to the following people for the time they spent examining the pottery finds:

Mr David Barker, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke on Trent.

Ms Julie Edwards, Chester Archaeology, Chester.

Mr George Smith, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Bangor.



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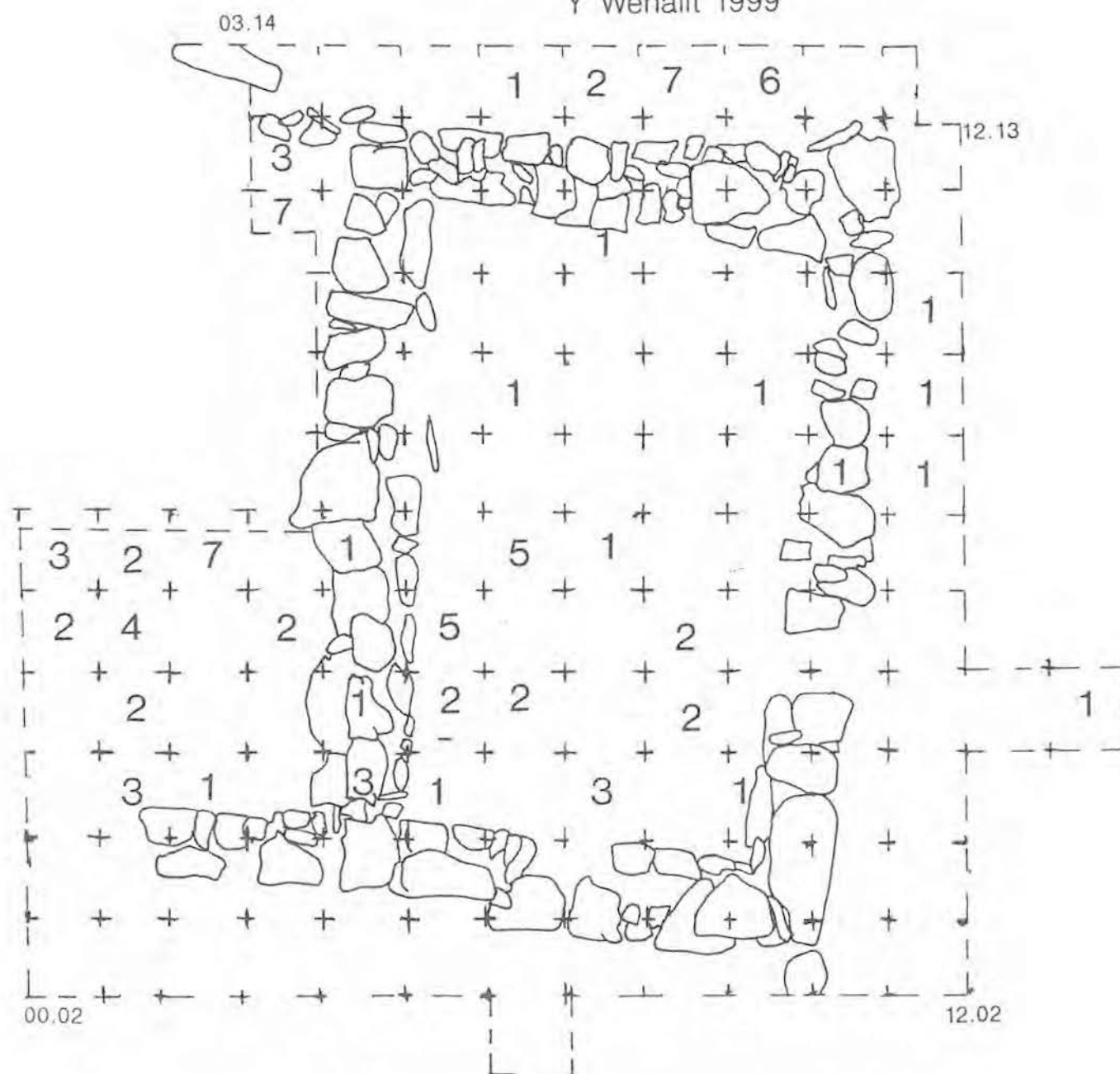
Distribution of non Buckley Pottery Finds

Y Wenallt 1998
NGR SH649 528



Fig. 11a.

Y Wenallt 1999



Distribution of non Buckley Pottery Finds

Wenallt 1999

Fig. 11b.

6.5. GLASS

In Season One, 1998, 92 pieces of glass were found. Around 67 of these came from the central fire just beneath the turf and many were pieces fused or molten by heat. Twenty find spots for glass were scattered around the exterior of the building to the north and east and five shards of glass were recovered from within but near the edges of the building. These are shown on the plan in Figure 12a.

Fourteen thick shards, plus one from Season Two, were olive green and appeared to come from the same bottle. This had a concave base and had straight indented lines towards the neck.

W98.c287 was a bluish shard of varying thickness comprising part of the outer edge of a concave base of a vessel.

W98.c47, W98.b97 & W98.c201 were three other thin flat shards of a similar bluish hue.

W98.c109b, W98.c235 & W98.c293 were thin flat shards of a more olive green glass which may have come from the same artefact.

W98.c56 a – d, W98.b27, W98.c237, W98.c246a-b, W98.b100a-e were 13 thin flat shards of very pale green glass. Two shards contained a straight change of angle formerly so common in many bottles of animal medicine. They could all have come from the same of similar vessels.

In Season Two none of the glass finds were from within the building. Two shards were found in the new excavation north of the north wall. Four came from just outside the west wall or south wall and one from within the annexe. The largest was 0.02.5m in length and the smallest was 0.01m. All but two seemed to be from separate vessels of different green- blue hues. It is not possible to identify whether these were from vessels but they seem too thin for window glass.

W99.09.13.b1 was an olive green shard from north of the north wall which appeared to belong with 14 similar shards found in Season One [see above].

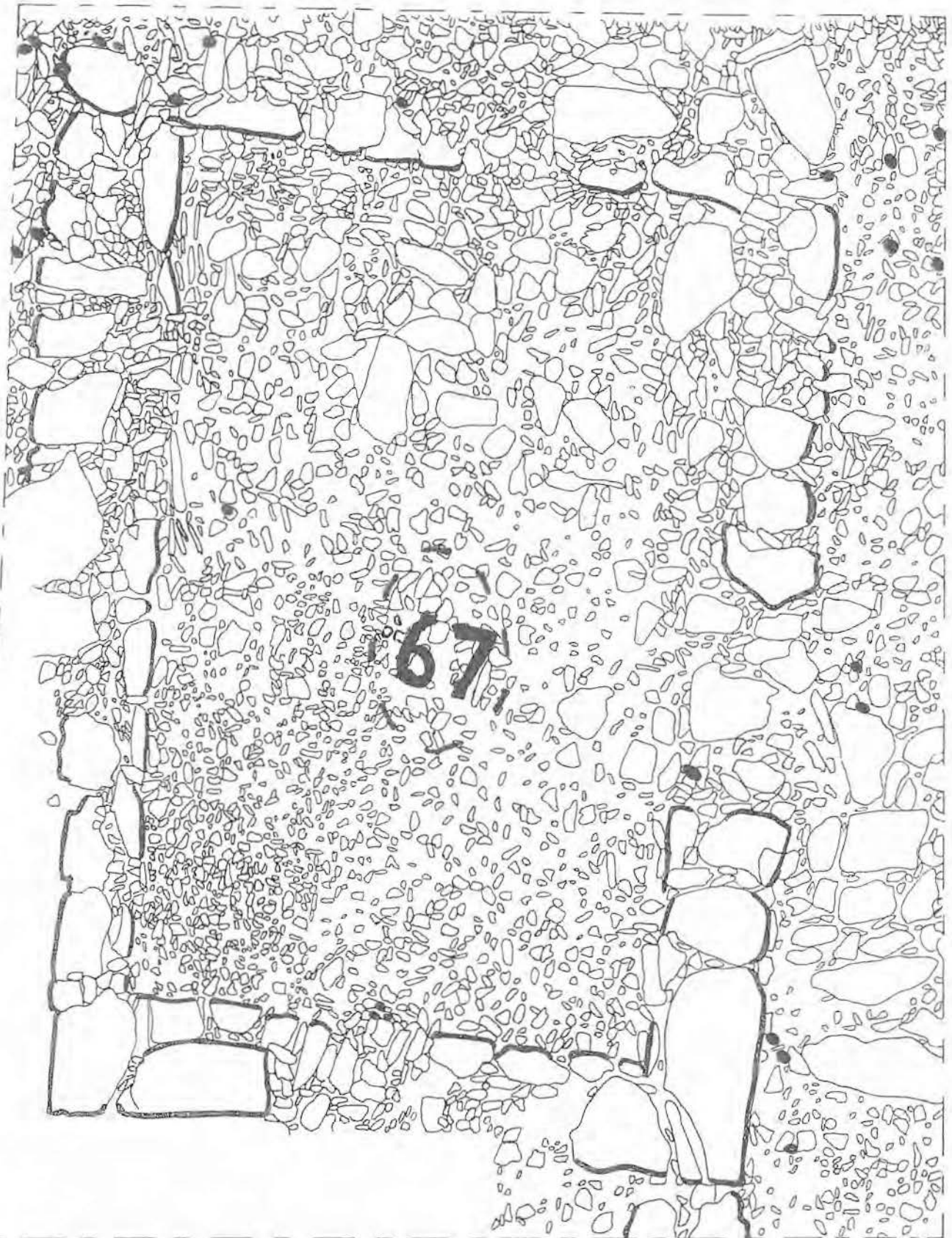
W99.00.05.01 was a curved thickish shard of pale green glass.

W99.03.08.01a was a thin curved shard of greeny-blue glass

W99.03.08.01b was a very thin slightly curved shard of very light blue-green glass.

W99.04.09.02 was a thin flat shard of very pale green glass.

W99.04.02.02 and W99.05.13.07 were both thin shards of pale greenish-blue glass and both had slight ridges of varying thickness making them translucent.



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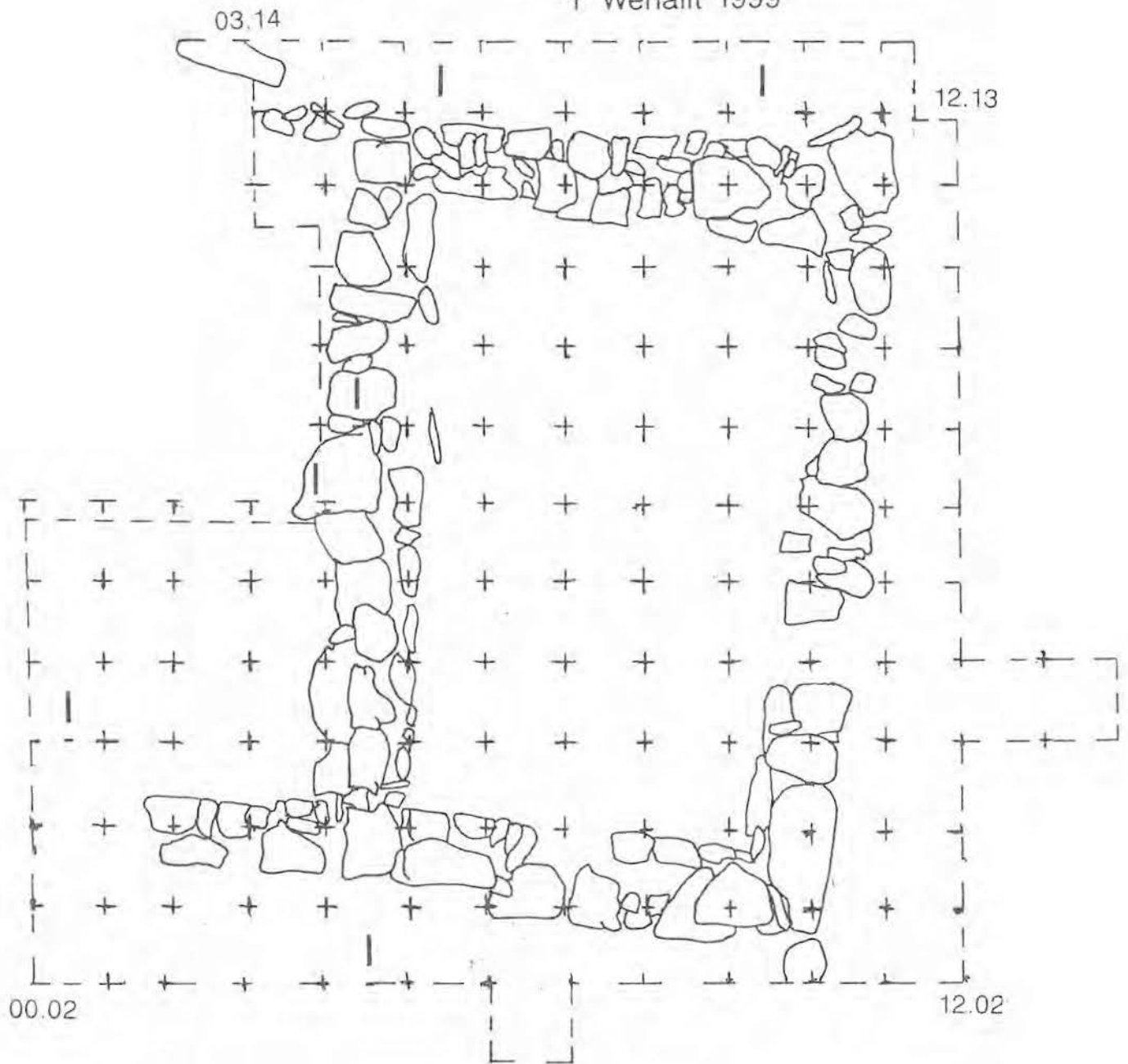
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Distribution of Glass Finds
Season One - 1998

Y Wenallt
NGR SH649 528



Fig.12a



Distribution of glass finds

Fig. 12b

6.6. METAL

During Season One 1998 144 corroded metal finds were found scattered across the whole site. Their distribution is shown in Figure 13a. Many of the finds in Season One 1998 were associated finds of thin straight wire and corroded knobs similar to wire fencing and barbed wire. These were particularly concentrated in around the central fire found just beneath the turf where 70 pieces of metal were recovered in close association with a considerable amount of charcoal and fused glass.

Many of the remaining metal finds from Season One, 1998, appeared to be corroded nails and were scattered across the site. Particular finds are recorded below:

W98.c113 could be a blade of a knife or implement.

W98.c107 is a metal ring of approx. 0.02m diameter and may have been a washer.

W98.b26 comprises of two large corroded nails each around 0.15m in length.

W98.a4 is a similar nail bent at a right angle 0.06m from the nail head.

W98.b45 is a curved thicker piece of metal approx. 0.11m in length which may have been a handle of a bucket or part of a door handle.

W98.c106a, W98.b114a and W98.b114b are corroded sheets 0.16.5m by 0.10m, 0.11m by 0.09m and 0.06 by 0.04m respectively. They were found within the tumble of the north wall near the mortar bomb tail fin. It is not known whether they were part of it or were part of a door or piece of equipment.

During Season Two 1999 40 corroded metal finds were found scattered widely across the site. Their distribution is shown in Figure 13b. The vast majority were small corroded lumps many of which may have been nails. Five of these pieces of metal were from the annexe, five were from north of the north wall, eleven were found outside and to the east of the building, and sixteen were found within the building.

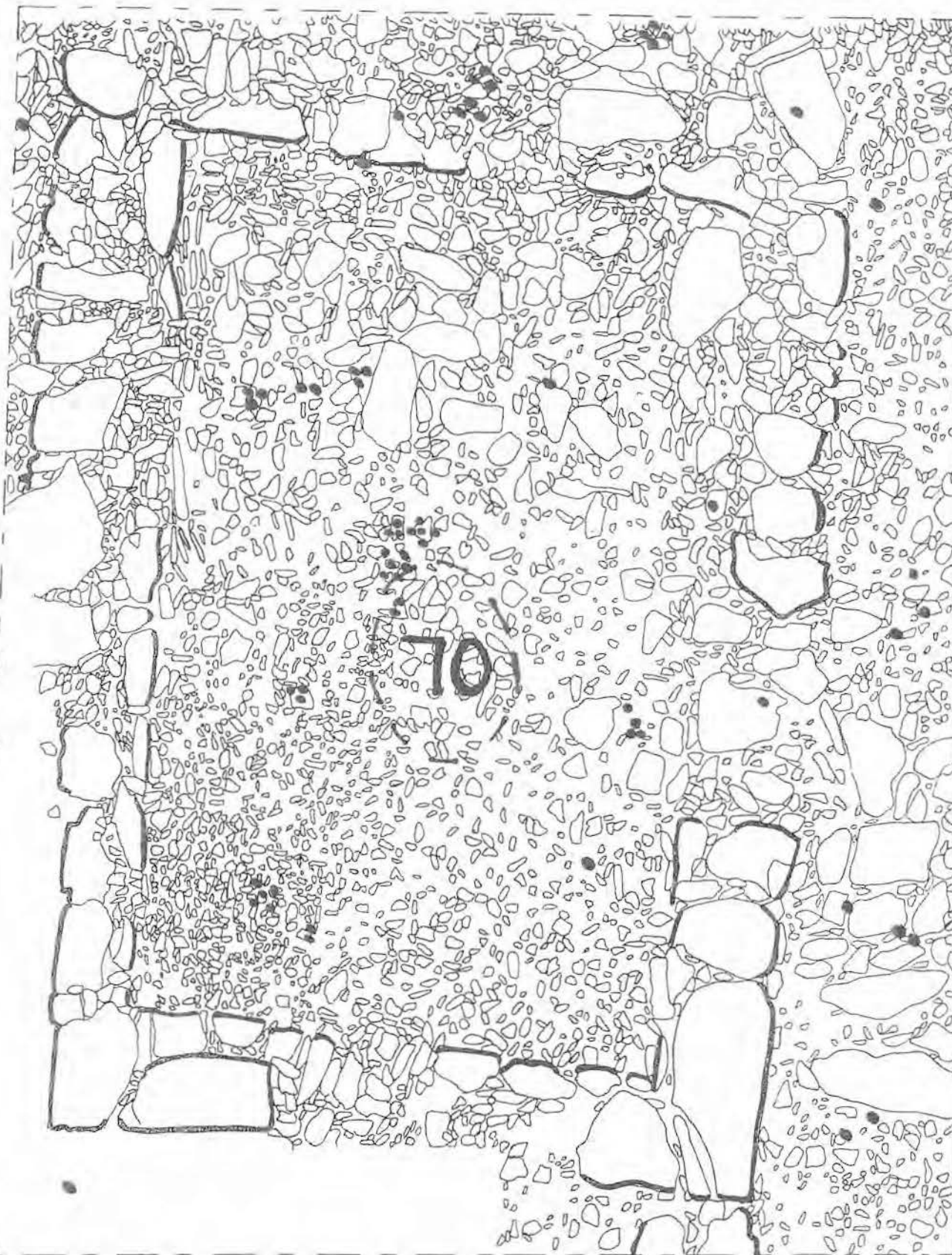
W99.06.08.04, W99.08.08.02, W99.11.07.03 and W99.11.11.01 were four such lumps which were found fused to small slate / stone fragments.

The other metal finds were as follows :-

W99.06.01.2 was a small hollow square of rounded metal, 0.03.5m by 0.03m, which may have been a buckle.

W99.03.12 was a heavy triangular block of metal measuring 0.09m by 0.09m by 0.06m and 0.02m thick. The sides were straight and the whole piece now appears concave but this may be the result of weathering and corrosion. It was found in the north west extension north of the north wall. It does not appear to be a broken tip of a larger implement and may be the base of a flat or box iron, although irons usually have convex sides.

W99.04.09.01 is a thin rectangular bronze strip 0.04.2m long by 0.02m wide. A semi circular hole in the centre of one end may be part of an original feature or may be accidental. The piece may be part of a strap, horse harness or farm equipment. It was found immediately to the exterior of the west wall at the edge of the excavation area.



0 3

metres

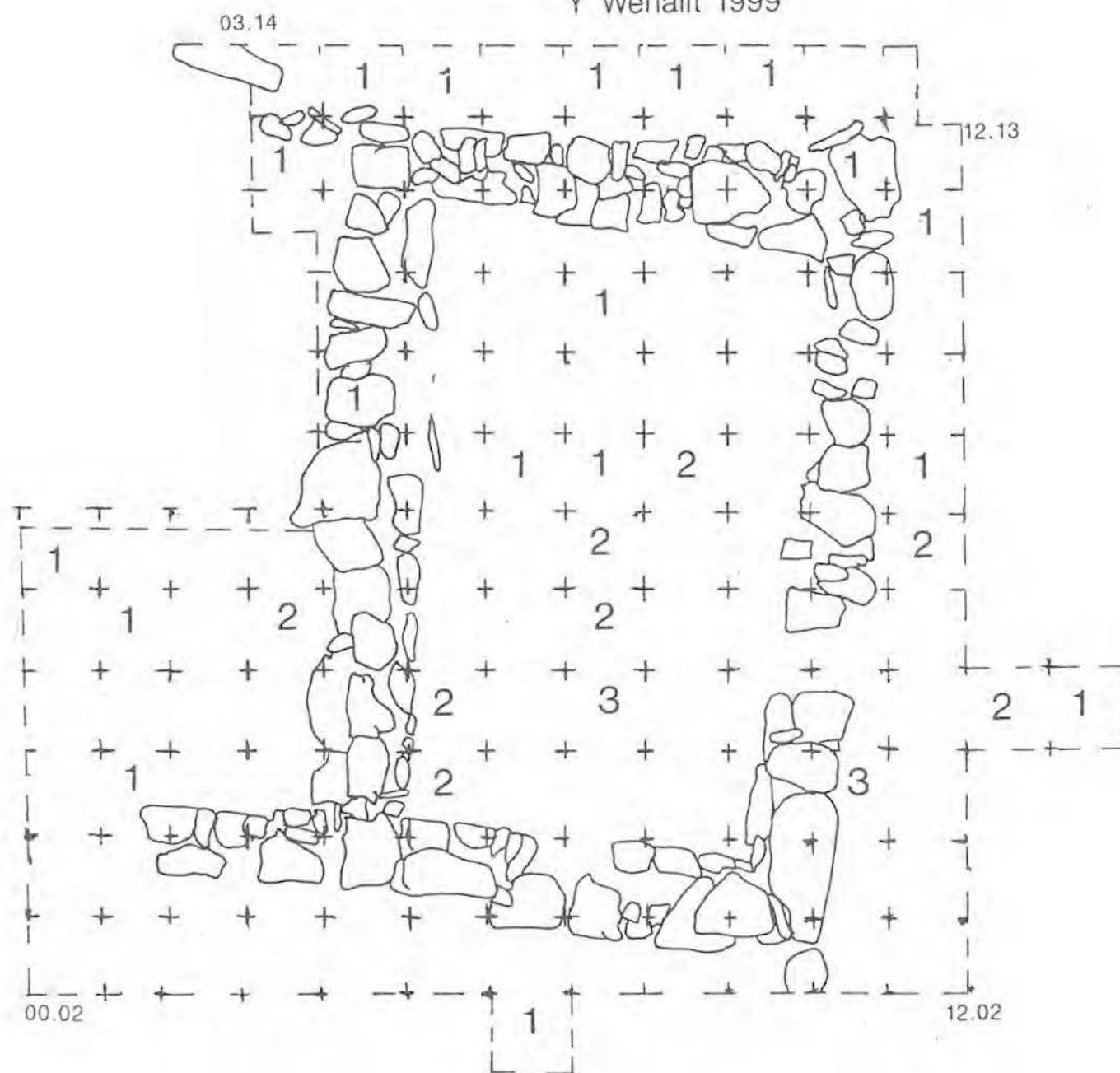
Distribution of Metal Finds
excluding 20th century finds
Season One - 1998

Y Wenallt
NGR SH649 528



Fig.13a

Y Wenallt 1999



Distribution of Metal Finds

Wenallt 1999

Fig. 13b.

6.7. BONE

During Season One six larger pieces of bone and a number of very small bone fragments were found. Their distribution is shown in Fig 14a. The larger pieces of bone have provisionally been identified as follows:

W98.b55, two incomplete sheep molars recovered from just inside the south wall of the building;

W98.b44, one half of the very dark stained lower jaw of a young sheep recovered from the southern part of the building;

W98.b82 may be a part of an incisor tooth or possibly a sheep small longbone and was found in the northern part of the building;

W98.d4, a molar tooth fragment probably from a cow was found at the lowest level excavated in Season One near the inside face of the northern wall.

W98.a12. There was also a larger more recent less stained part of an animal metatarsus or metacarpus, probably sheep, recovered from the spoil heap and possibly dropped there by an animal soon after the start of the excavation.

During Season Two (1999) parts of four teeth and five small fragments of bone were found. W99.00.07.05 and W99.05.04.01 are molar teeth from a cow or horse; W99.03.07.10 & W99.07.04.02. are unidentifiable tooth fragments;

Two of the teeth fragments were found within the building and two in the west annexe. Three of the small fragments of bone were found east of the east wall, two north of the north wall and one within the west annexe. The distribution of these finds is shown in Fig 14b.

Overall, six of the teeth and the half jaw were found within the building, two teeth and one bone fragment in the west annexe and the remaining small bone fragments were widely distributed. The cow / horse teeth were found at deeper earlier levels in the building and annexe and this may suggest a variation in use in the two phases of the building. Mr T W Jones, Veterinary Surgeon, Chwillog, kindly commented upon the bone finds.

6.8. CHARCOAL.

A considerable amount of widely scattered charcoal was found within and to the north of the building. 101 pieces were recovered in Season One, 1998 and charcoal was recovered from 10 of the metre grids in Season Two, 1999. They were frequently associated with slate fragments and were found in both periods of use, but particularly the earlier period. In Season One the major concentration was around the late central fire immediately beneath the turf. In Season Two the majority of the charcoal was north of the north wall. None of the charcoal has been used for dating purposes.

The distribution of charcoal is shown in Figs 15a & 15b.



0 3

metres

Distribution of Bone Finds

Season One - 1998

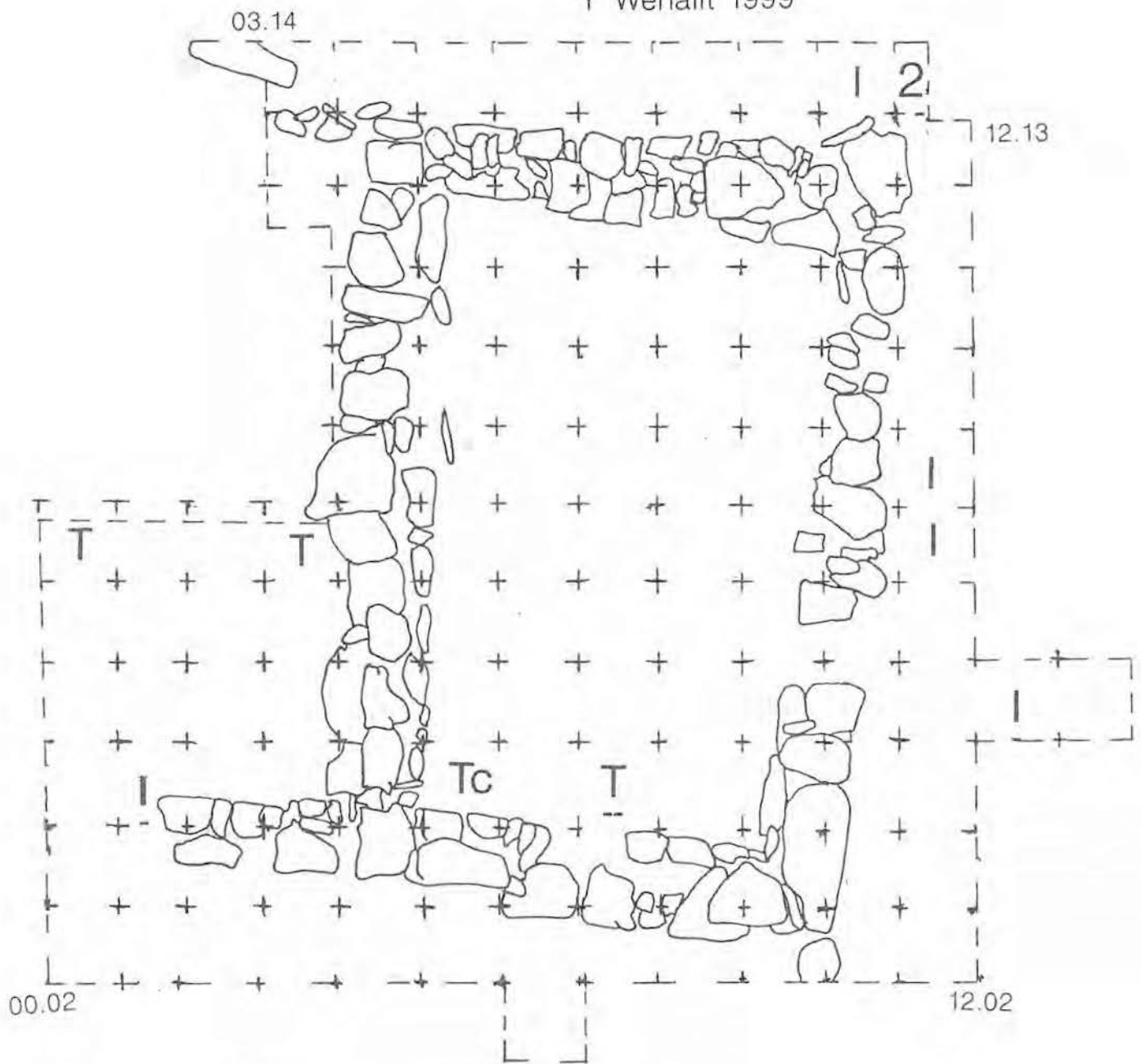
T sheep tooth TC cow/horse tooth

Y Wenallt

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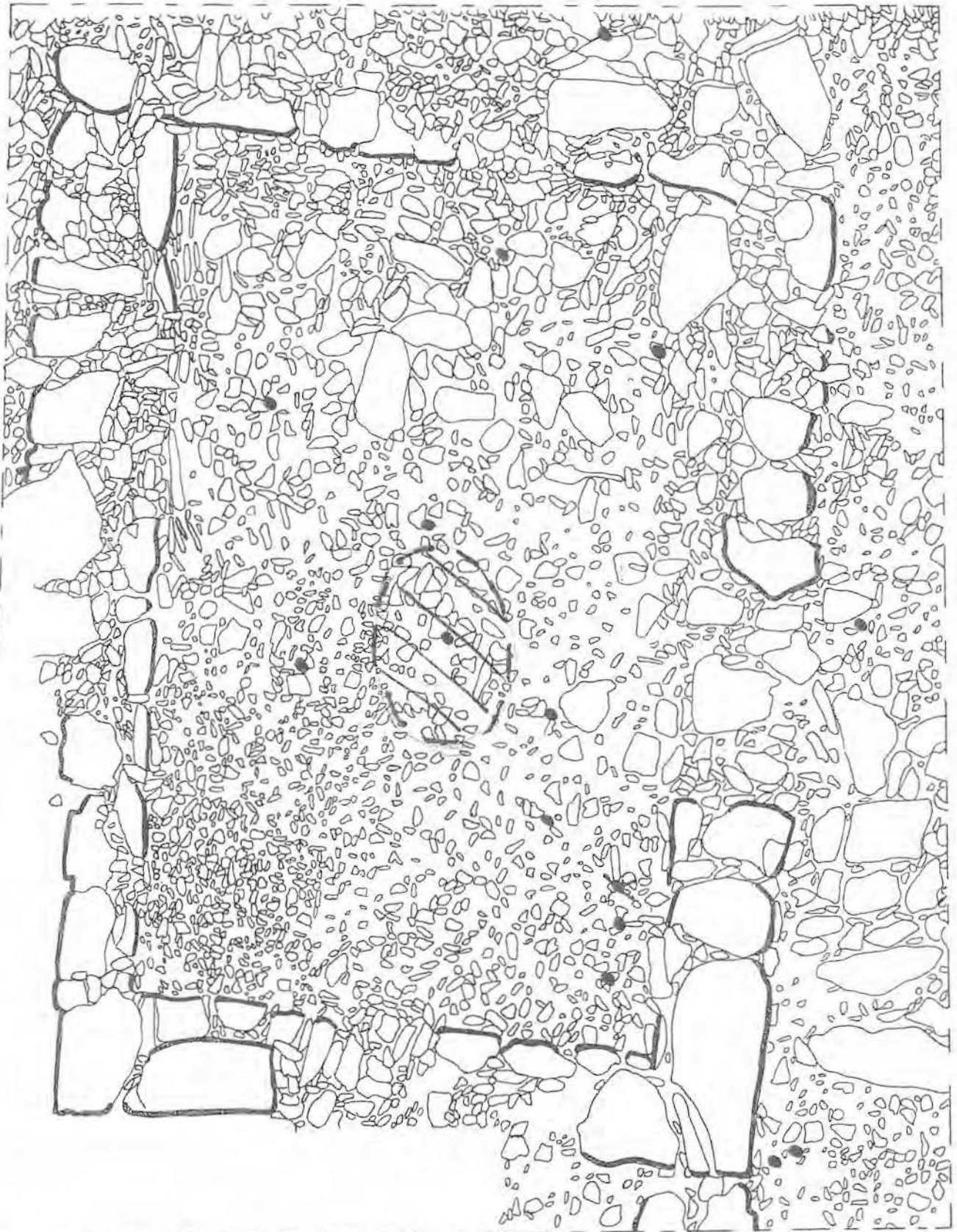


Fig. 14a



Distribution of bone finds
 Tc = Tooth - cow/horse T = Tooth - sheep

Fig. 14b

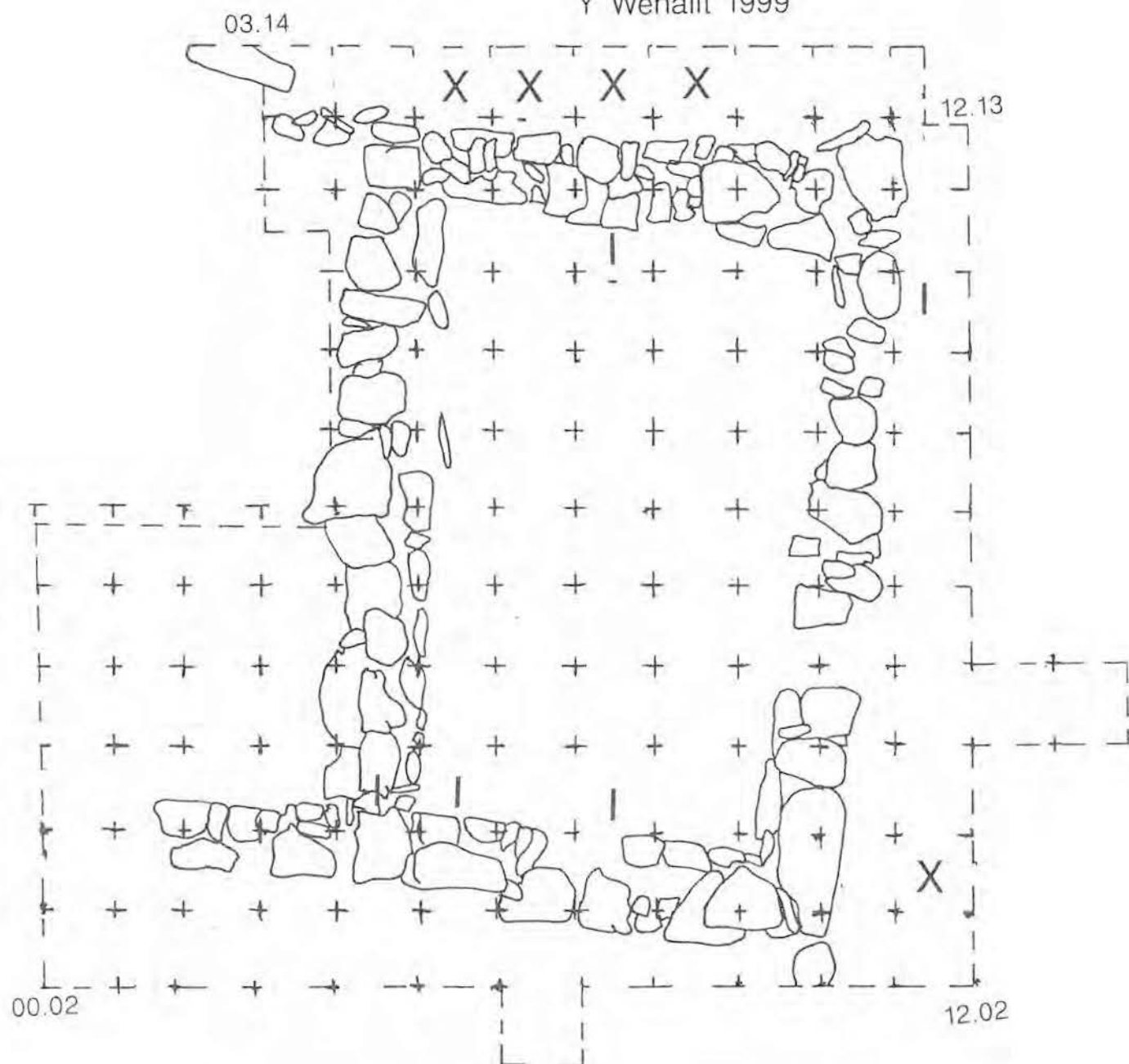


0 3
metres

Distribution of Charcoal Finds
Season One - 1998

Y Wenallt
NGR SH649 528

Fig. 15a



Distribution of charcoal finds

1 = 1 piece X = several pieces

Fig. 15b



0 3

metres

Distribution of 20th Century Finds: Season 1

Wenallt 1998

B	Bricks	P	Plastic	W	Wire
C	Charcoal	F	Fin of mortar bomb	R	Rope
G	Glass (51)	X	Bullets	o	Metal foil
S	Stoneware bottle (64 pieces)				

Fig.16.

6.9. MISCELLANEOUS : 20th century finds from Season One (1998) :

The remains of one or several fires in the centre of the interior immediately beneath the turf contained the 64 pieces of half of a shattered beige and tan stoneware bottle, a considerable amount of fused clear glass, charcoal and wire. 58 pieces of the stoneware container were reconstructed and indicated that it was 5.5 inch diameter and 7.5 inch high. The wire may have been from barbed wire fencing on old fence posts which may have been burned. Several substantial stones had been placed around the fire at a suitable distance to have been used as seats.

Several crumbling bricks were found between the fire and the massive displaced boulder. Perhaps they had been part of the camp fire. They were made of a very coarse reddish or yellowish gravelly sand.

Three .303 machine gun bullets (W98.a6, W98.b62 & W98.b63 [unused]) and an 0.08.5m part of a 10 inch tail fin from a mortar bomb (W98.b117) were recovered from the site. Some metal sheeting was found near the tail fin in the centre of the slumped north wall. The valley was used as an army practice area during the Second World War from 1941 – 1945.

There were also indications of agricultural use. Two lumps of lime were found. The farmer suggested that they had been brought by cart from Porthmadog to lime the fields. A 12 bore shotgun cartridge suggested fox hunting. Much of the metal found looked like the remains of pig wire fencing and barbed wire and a disused length of fencing posts with wire attached may well have been used in a camp or agricultural bonfire.

Three 0.009.5m long white plastic containers, two white plastic caps and three spiked blue bases plus cylindrical filling material and wadding for large fireworks or flares were found in the north east uphill portion of the site. During and since the 1960s groups came from the nearby campsite during "raves" to the area under excavation to celebrate and let off fireworks. These must be the remains of these events.

A 0.23m long hooked metal tent peg (W98.bb83) was found; a piece of a looped guy rope (W98.b34) was also found. Scouts camped nearby until the 1980s.

Crushed drink cans and metal pull rings, parts of polythene and plastic bags, sweet and biscuit tinfoil and papers recorded even more recent casual activity on the site.

The distribution of these finds is shown on Fig 16a.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Structure F appears to have been an agricultural building – a stable, byre or barn – belonging to the Y Wenallt mansion with its complex of buildings. Dating evidence from the clay pipe bowl found in the walling in the south west corner of the building suggests a mid 17th century date for Period One. The mid to late 17th century date of the two clay pipe bowls found in the west annexe suggests that this area was also being utilised in that period. The artefacts found in the Period One floor suggest that it was in use around the mid 17th century. It seems possible that a fire caused the roof to collapse. In Period Two the floor was raised about 0.60m, a new and possibly wider entrance was made in the east wall and a second slate roof was erected. As the whole Y Wenallt complex appears to have been inhabited until the mid 1800s it seems unlikely that the building excavated would have remained a ruin for long. It would have been required to again perform its probably agricultural role in the life of those at Y Wenallt.

It is not possible to determine whether the building excavated was continuously used after the mansion itself was abandoned following a rockfall around 1800 up until the abandonment of the whole site in the 1840s, followed by its short re-use around 1861.

Had it ever been adapted as a cottage inhabited after 1800, it is likely that a fireplace would have been required. However, the massive robbing of the south wall, particularly along its central portion, means that it is possible that there was once a fireplace and chimney there.

The demolition of the whole site in the 1860s removed much of the structural evidence. The steepness of the hillside has resulted in the likelihood of material from the mansion and other buildings higher up the slope being thrown or moving downhill in the soil onto Structure F. However, the large number of finds has confirmed the high status nature of the site as a whole in the 16/17th century and also the use of lower status goods in the early nineteenth century. Future excavation on the site of the mansion itself may clarify the situation further.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

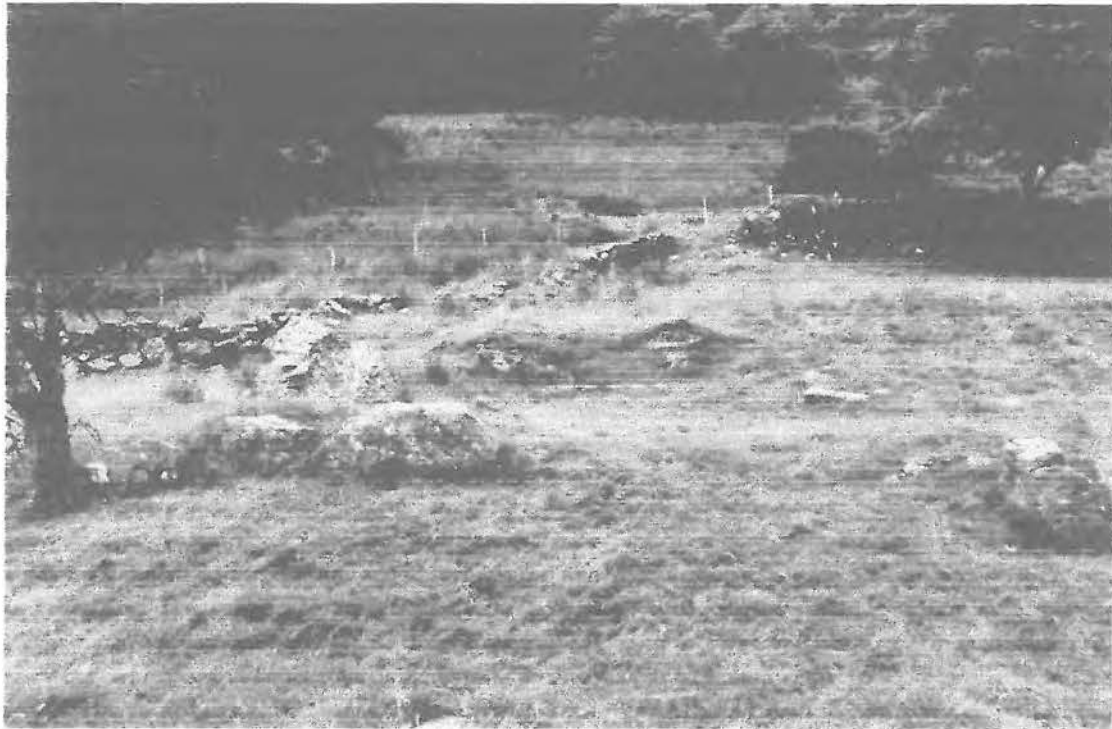
Sincere thanks are given to the following:

1. The landowner, Mr W. O. Williams, Hafod Rhisgl farm, for permission to excavate, for his practical assistance and great interest in the work.
2. The Excavation team. This research project could not have been undertaken without the hard work of the volunteer workforce. Most members regularly travelled considerable distances to take part. The size of the excavation team fluctuated between one and ten, was dependant on goodwill and therefore work was not undertaken in very bad weather. Some worked each day, others once a week or when available. Almost all had retired from paid employment. The site supervisor was Margaret Griffith who currently retains the finds and archival material from the site.
Main 1998 team: Steve Adams, John Burman, Jean Fulkes, Joan Hughes, John Pilling, Avis Reynolds & Terry Williams.
Main 1999 team: John Burman, Jean Fulkes, Joan Hughes, Alan Jones, Renig Jones, John Pilling & Avis Reynolds.
3. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, for advice, loan of equipment and practical help.
4. The various specialists who studied the finds, and who are listed above.
5. Dr C. S. Briggs & Mr Terry Williams for their advice in the preparation of the report.

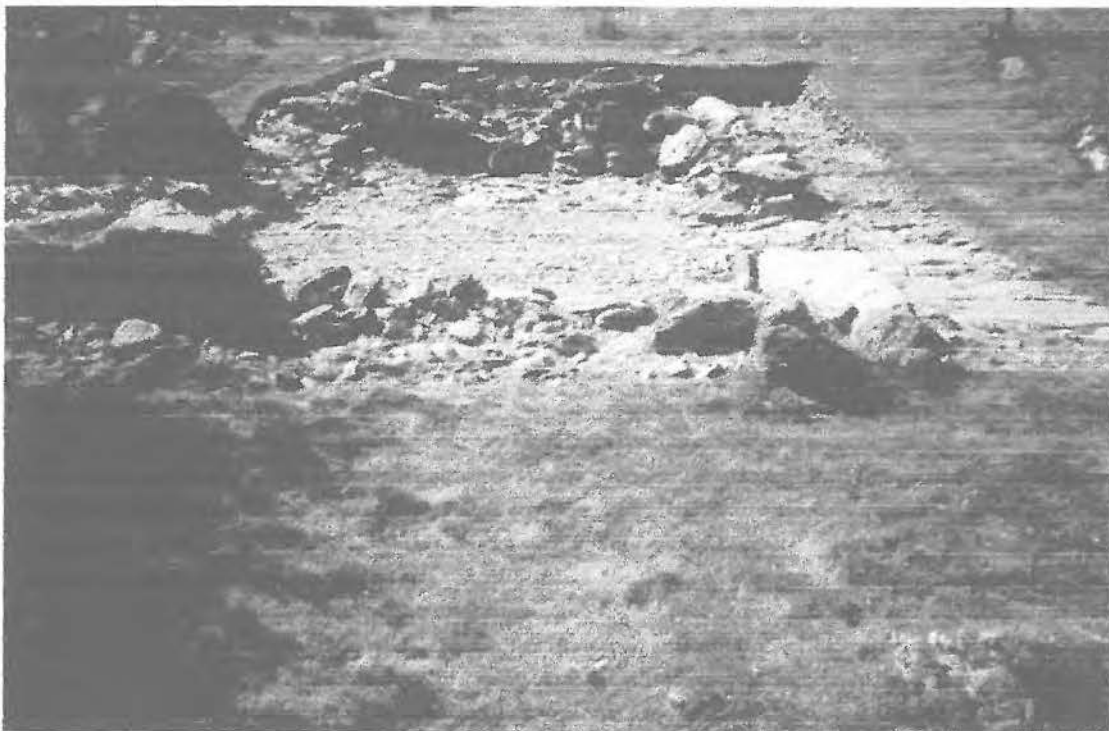
Margaret Griffith
Nant Gwynant.

31 October 2000

30 Nov.



Site from South before excavation -1998



Site from South at end of Season 1-1998



Site from South at end of Season 2 -1999



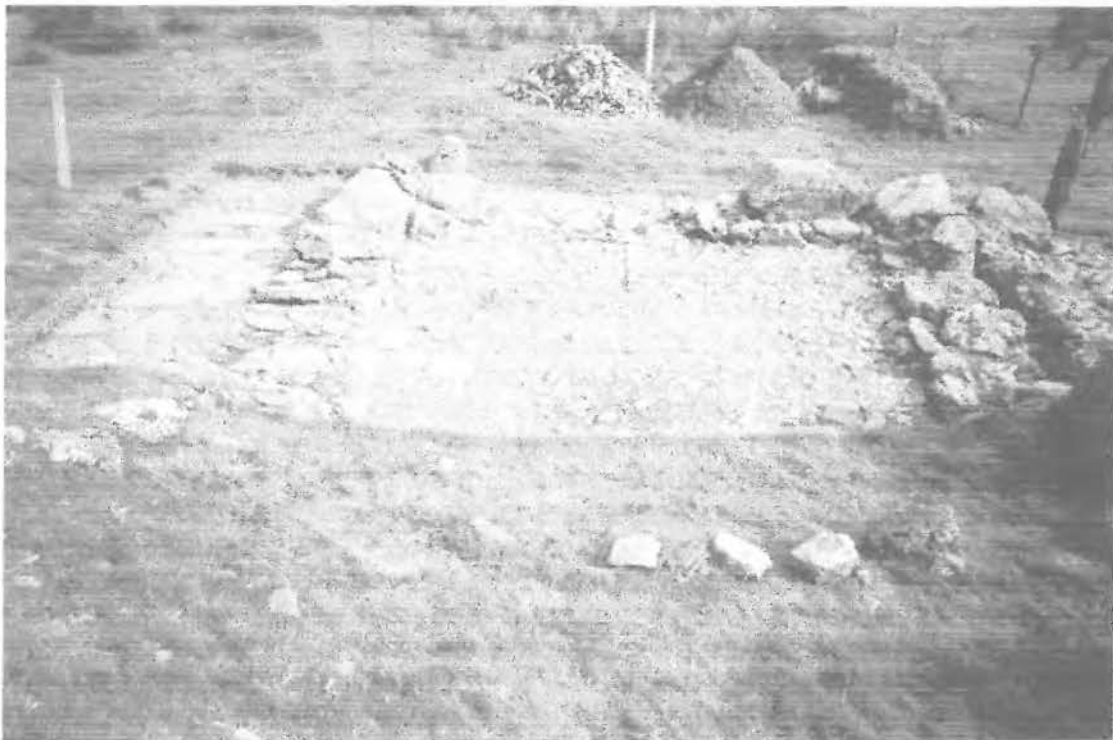
Annexe from West after Season 1 - 1998



Annexe from West after Season 2 - 1999



Site from North before excavation - 1998



Site from North after Season 1 -1998



Site from North early Season 2 -1999



Site from North after Season 2 -1999