

~~Event PRN 44954~~

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An Archaeological Report on
Saint Gwyddelan's Well.
Dolwyddelan.

Event PRN: 44954.



By
A.M. & W.T. Jones.
2015.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

The well is situated on ground sloping steeply to the south at the back of the Elens Castle Hotel, Dolwyddelan. (PRN 634 Grid Ref: SH 73675252). The well - reputed to have healing properties - is dedicated to the Celtic Saint Gwyddelan after whom, most probably, the village itself is named. As far back as the second half of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, comments had been made about the ramshackle state of the well.

The project we took on was to rectify record and interpret the site.

2. SUMMARY.

The well had been neglected for many years, and the roots of a large Ash tree were damaging the structure. Prior to the felling of the tree a preliminary archaeological survey was done. The removal of the tree was executed from the top downwards.

This report gives an account of the archaeology that took place with detailed drawings and photographs.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I would like to thank Adam and Helen Hardy the proprietors of the Elens Castle Hotel, on whose land the well is situated, for allowing us access, and also allowing us a safe place to keep our tools. My sincere thanks also to the volunteers who worked hard in all weather without them the job would not have been completed. Lord Dafydd Elis -Thomas, The president of the Dolwyddelan Historical Society; Snowdonia National Park; Heritage Lottery Fund; Menter Siabod - especially Bob Valentine who dealt with the financial side of the project. Alpha Tree Service of Dolwyddelan for felling and clearing away the large Ash tree, in a safe and responsible manner. Garry Edwards, Dolwyddelan; Eurwyn Roberts, Pencafnau, Dolwyddelan for the work he did on restoring and consolidating parts of the stonework. Ned Scharer for his advice on the use of lime mortar. Carwyn Price for the fencing and gates; Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Beuno Road, Bangor; Frances Richardson, Hafod y Gwynt, Nant Gwynant; Falcon D. Hildred, No 1 Hafod Ryffydd, Blaenau Ffestiniog; The Rev: Gerwyn Roberts, Llanrwst; The Rev: Eirlys Gruffydd and the late Ken Lloyd Gruffydd, Mold; Dr Ian Brooks of eas, Ltd, Blaenau Ffestiniog; Dafydd Jones, Brynofferen, Blaenau Ffestiniog; Gwyn Roberts, Amnen, Dolwyddelan; Robin Gwyndaf, Cardiff, President of the *Cymdeithas Ffynhonnau Cymru*; Cymdeithas Hanes Dolwyddelan Historical Society; Mel Thomas, 2 Hafod Ryffudd, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

The team of volunteers were.

Bill Jones.	Site supervisor	223hrs
Mary Jones	Site recorder	202hrs
John Jones.		119hrs
Buddug Pauline.		109hrs
Merl Field		96hrs
Avis Reynolds		87hrs
Rhys Mwyn		27hrs
Ann Morgan		20hrs
Helen Noble		12hrs
Catrin Roberts		12hrs
Robin Cox		8hrs
John Pilling		8hrs
Iona Price		6hrs
John Dean		6hrs
Ann Arkel		6hrs

Total man/hrs = **941hrs** at £6.50 per hr = **£6116.50**

Grants.

Heritage Lottery Fund of £4,500.00, and £999.00 from the Snowdonia National Park, Elens Castle Hotel £270.00.

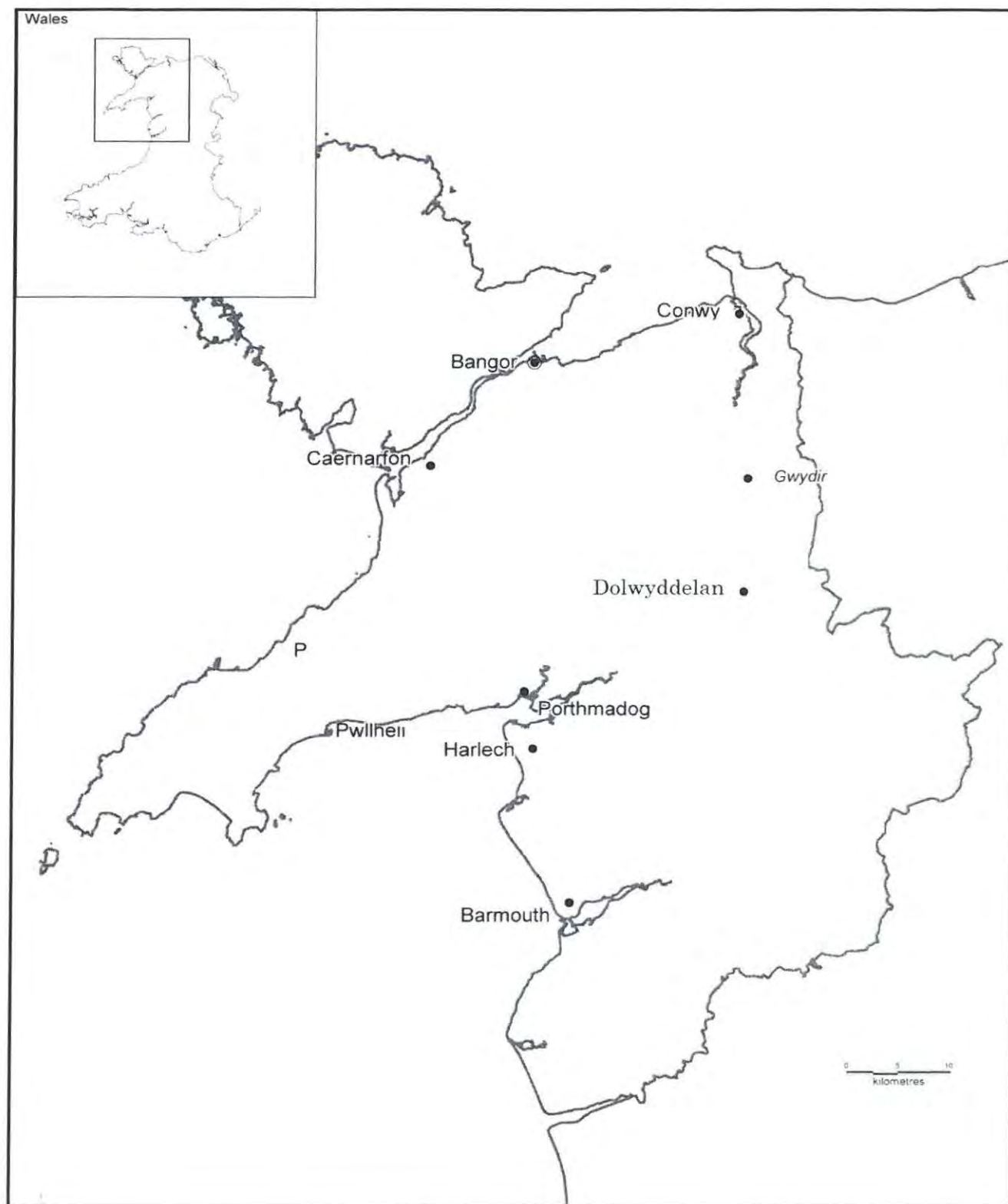
This money went towards

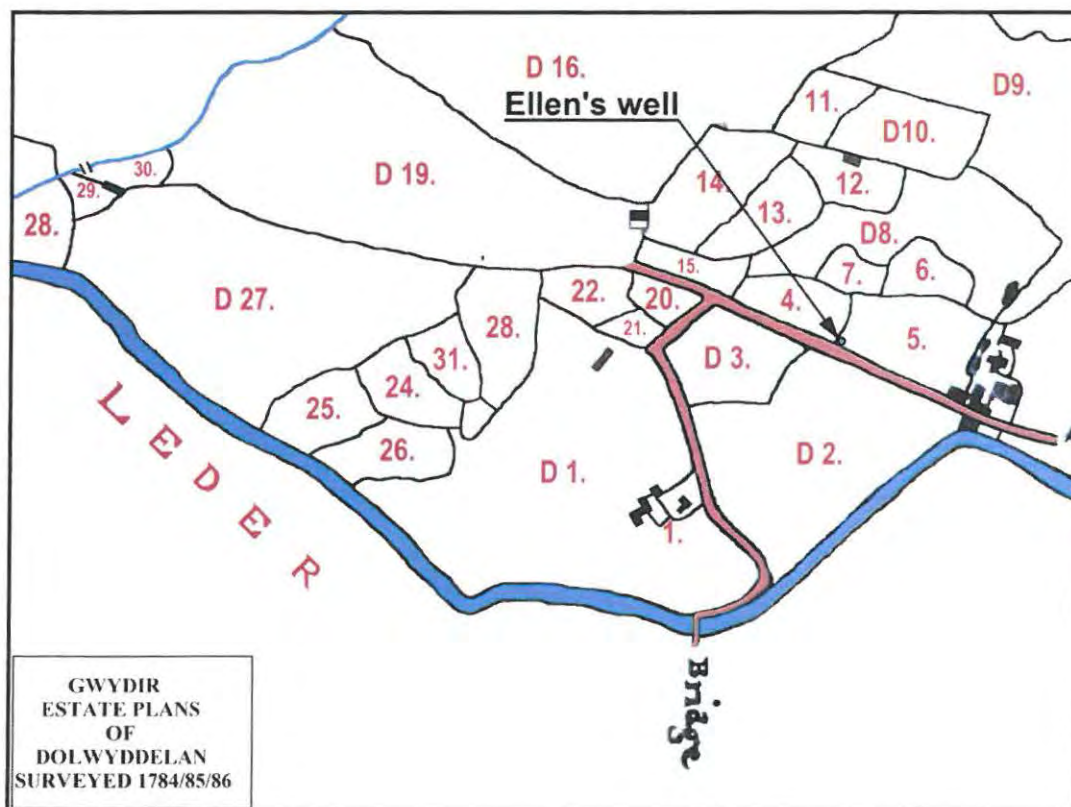
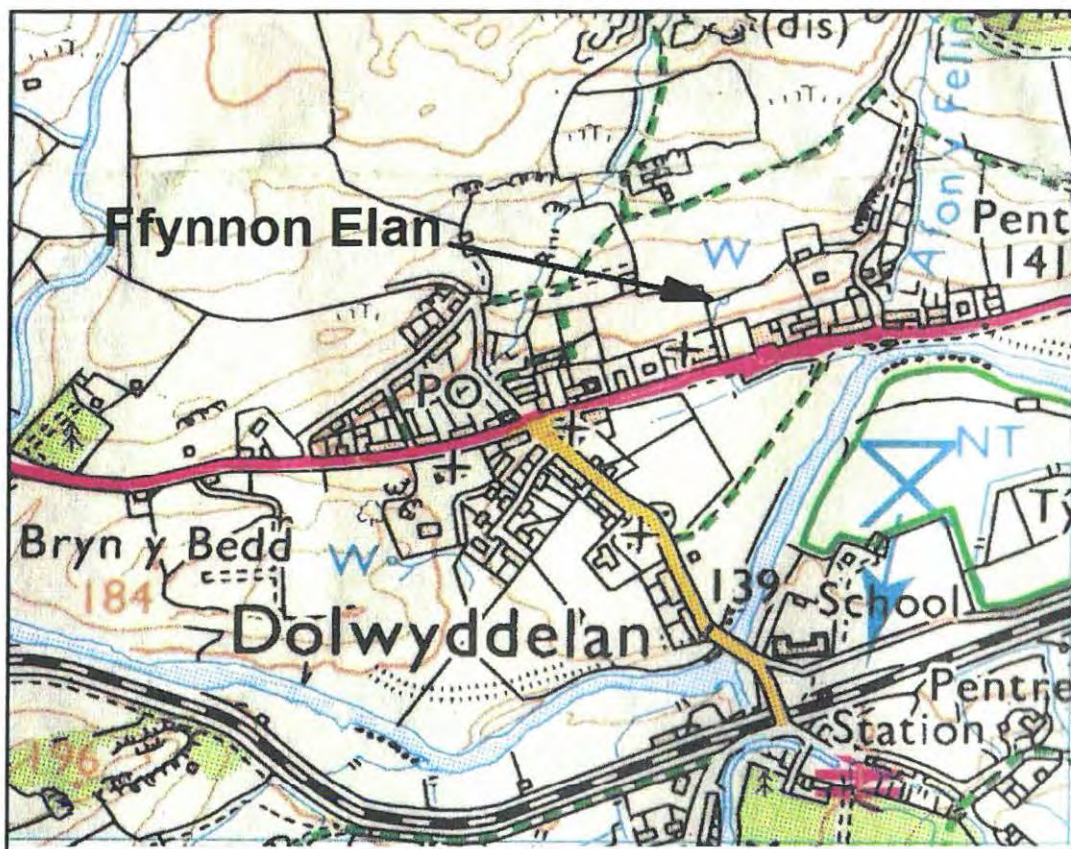
- The felling of the Ash tree.
- Fencing and gates.
- Cutting the undergrowth.
- Consolidating the well.
- Art work.
- Two interpretation panels.

Funding = £5,769.00
Voluntary work = £6,116.50

Total cost of the project = £11,885.50

4. LOCATION MAPS





Note. The 18th century Dolwyddelan road went in front of the well.

5. LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

- Fig 1 Ffynnon Elan looking north.
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- Fig 35 Rev; Eirlys Gruffydd unveiling the interpretation panel.
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 Fig 42 Lead and pewter artefact.
 Fig 43 Ink bottle.
 Fig 44 Midlands purple ware pottery.

6. SURVEY

The well is known as;

Ffynnon Gwyddelan Sant
 Ffynnon Sant Gwyddelan.
 Ffynnon Gwyddelan.
 Ffynnon Gwythelan.
 Ffynnon Elan.
 Ffynnon Elen.
 Elen's Well.

CYMRU

Yn Hanesyddol, Parthedegol a Bywgraphyddol.

Dan olygiad y Parch Owen Jones.

Cyflyfr 11. (1875)

Tud 445

Yr oedd hen ffynon enwog yn y plwyf hwn gynt, a elwid gan rai, "Ffynon Elen;" ond, gan eraill, gyda mwy o briodoldeb yn ol ei barn ni, "Ffynon Gwyddelan". Y mae i'w chanfod eto, ond mewn cyflwr tra adfeiliedig, yn ochor "Gelli y Pentref," fel y gelwir, ar y naill dy i'r felin. Yr oedd ei muriau yn mesur deuddeg troedfedd, wrth naw troedfedd o led; a rhodfa, tua haner llath o led, o fewn y mur allanol, gyda glan y dwfr.

Y mae tarddiad y dwr yn mhen uchaf y ffynon, o godiad y tir, ac y mae gofer (Streamlet, ffrwd) yn ei chwr isaf, i ollwng y dwfr i redeg yn llwyr, nes ei holl waghau; a hpan y byddai angen am ei gwasanaeth, yr oedd yn rhaid cau y gofer, i groni y dwfr. Dywedir ei bod wedi bod mewn bri a chlod mawr, yn yr amser gynt, am ei cyfrifid yn dra rhinweddol i gryfhau plant gweiniaid, ac adferu nerth i aelodau rhai wedi diffrwytho. Y mae amryw yn fyw eto sydd yn cofio dwyn rhai iddi i'w trochi, ac a gadarnhant wirionedd y traddodiad uchod, am ansawdd rhinweddol y ffynon hon. Pa fodd bynag, y mae wedi ei gollwng i gyflwr afler a thra esgeulusedig er's llawer o flynyddoedd bellach, ac ni bydd ddim i nodi y fan lle yr oedd yn fuan, oni adgyweirir hi gyda brys.

English translation.

There was a famous old well in this parish in the past, named "Ffynnon Elen;" by some but by others with more propriety it was named "Ffynnon Gwyddelan" It is to be found in a ruinous state by the side of "Gelli y Pentref" as it was called, near the mill. The walls measured twelve feet by nine feet wide and the walkway about half a yard wide inside the outer wall by the water's edge. The source of the water is at the top edge of the well, from a raised ground level, with a streamlet (gofer) at the lower end to drain the water away completely and, when needed, the drain would be closed to fill the well up.

It was said to have been in vogue and of great distinction in former times, and was reputed highly virtuous to strengthen weak children and barren women.

Many alive today remember bathing people in the well, and confirm the truth of the above tradition of this well for the virtuous quality. But it has fallen into a state of neglect for many years now and there shall be nothing to mark the spot unless it is urgently repaired.

Gweithiau Gethin by O.Gethin Jones, 1884.

Page 300

Dyma ni yn awr ar ben Bryn y Fynaches. Craig gron, neu fryncyn ydyw ar dir Ty'n y bryn, (Ty'n y bryn Fynaches, y gelwid ef gynt.) Y mae traddodiad fod Elen wedi myn'd i'w ben i edrych ansawdd yr ardal, ac wedi ei mawr foddhau gan yr olygfa, dywedai:—"Nis gwn am ddim all anfarwoli fy enw, os na wna y rhandir dlos hon; am hyny gadawer fy enw arni, sef Dolyddelen." Ac wrth groesi'r afon mynai yfed o honi, a'i harweinydd a ddywedai fod yno ffynnon ragorol gerllaw, a hithau aeth yno ac a yfodd o honi, ac a gostrelodd ryw gymaint o'i dwfr, ac aeth ag ef i wlad Canaan, ac a'i tywalltodd ar y Bedd Sanctaidd. A dywedir i Elen dd'od a darn o'r Groes fendigedig gyda hi adref ar y pryd. A'r ffynnon a alwyd "Ffynnon Elen" hyd heddyw. Bu hon mewn bri mawr am ganrifoedd wedi hyny, oherwydd ei rhinwedd i iachau amryw anhwylderau, a disychedu y teithwyr a elai heibio. Byddai mwg gwyn yn codi o'r ffynnon hon ar rew; ond nid yw ei gofer yn agos gymaint yn awr, ag ydoedd bedwar ugain neu gan' mlynedd yn ol. Clywais un hen wr o'r enw William Griffith Morris yn dyweyd iddo gael gwellhad hollol oddiwrth beswch a byddardod drwy yfed dwfr y ffynnon hon. Pan oedd yn lled ieuanc aeth at y Dr. Roberts o Oakland, am feddyginiaeth, yr hwn a forchymynodd iddo dd'od a dwfr amryw ffynnonau iddo ef i'w pwyso, yntau a gymerth ddwfr ffynnon Ty'n y bryn, a ffynnon Elen, a dwfr ffynnon yr Offeiriad, a phwyswyd hwy gan y Doctor, a chafwyd dwfr ffynnon Elen yn drymach na'r lleill, a dywedodd—"Dos adref Will ac yfychwart o hwn bob dydd, sef peint y boreu a pheint yr hwyr, a cherddu gymaint ag a eelli ar ol gwneyd, fel ag i'w gynhesu. Ac felly meddyginiaethwyd y peswch a'r byddardod. Gresyn na adgyweirid y muriau ag cylchyna, a beth wyddis, pe dadansoddid ei dwfr gan fferylllydd medrus, nad yw ei rhinwedd fel ffynnonau Trefriw neu Landrindod.

English translation.

Here we are now on Bryn y Fynaches, (*Hill of the nun*), a round knoll, or hillock on the land of Ty'n y Bryn, (Ty'n y Bryn Fynaches as it used to be called). Tradition has it that Elen climbed the hill to inspect the nature of the land and, after being well pleased with what she saw, said: - "I know of nothing that can immortalise my name, than this piece of land, therefore I leave my name on it - Dolyddelen. Then when crossing the river she demanded to drink from it, but was instructed by her advisor that there was an excellent well nearby. And after she went there and drank from it, she bottled some of the water and took it to Cannan, and poured it on the holy grave. And it is said that Elen brought a piece of the Blessed Cross home with her at that time. And the well is still called Ffynnon Elen to this day. The well was held in high esteem for centuries after, because of her properties to cure many sicknesses and quench the thirst of the traveller. White vapour used to rise from the well when there was a frost; but the overflow is not nearly as much now, as it was eighty to a hundred years ago. I have heard about an old man named William Griffith Morris, saying that he was completely cured of a cough and deafness simply by drinking the water. When he was a fairly young lad he went to see Dr Roberts of Oakland for treatment, who commanded him to collect samples from many wells for him to weigh, he took water from Ffynnon Ty'n y Bryn, Ffynnon Elen and Ffynnon yr Offeiriad, and when they were weighed by the doctor the result was that Ffynnon Elen was the heaviest, he then said-"Go home Will, and drink a quart of this every day, a pint in the morning and a pint in the evening, then walk as much as you can to warm it up. And that's how the cough and the deafness were cured. It is a shame that the walls surrounding the well cannot be repaired, for who knows, if the water was analysed by a chemist, it may be found as virtuous as the Trefriw and the Llandrindod wells.

***Dolwyddelan a'i chymeriadau hynod.* E.C.Roberts, 1924 Page 27.**

Ffynnon Elen.

Rhwng Gwesty Elen a chapel Moriah erys gweddillion Ffynnon Elen. Adroddir chwedlau lawer am rinwedd iachusol ei dyfroedd, a churchid ati fel at aml i ffynnon arall dan obaith ymwared a llesgedd a chlefyd.

Between Elen's Castle and Moriah church lie the remains of Elen's well. Many tales of the healing virtues of her waters and, like other wells, many would come with the hope of getting rid of a weakness or disease.

The Holy Wells of Wales.

By Francis Jones, First published 1954

Page 149

FF. ELAN. Near Gelli'r Pentref, Dolwyddelan: also called Ff. Gwythelan – M Fardd, 168. it is about a quarter mile from the church, and was once covered by a building 9 feet 6 inches by 8 feet, with a seat around the walls: the water has tonic qualities and is said to steam slightly in frosty weather – OCS, 134 plan: (*The old churches of Snowdonia.* H.H.Hughes & H.L.North. Bangor. 1924.) OCA, 138-9: (*The Old Churches of Arlechwedd.* H.L.North. Bangor. 1906.) Y Brython, Jan., 1861: O. Gethin Jones, *History of Dolwyddelan, Penmachno and Ysbytty Ivan.*

Fenton (TW, 189) states that "near Dolwyddelan Castle there was 'Ffynnon Elen' where Roman legionaries used to dine" Its waters were considered good, especially for weakly children and paralysed limbs - LBS, iii, 218. (*Lives of the British Saints.* S. Baring Gould & J. Fisher. 4 vols. London. 1913.

Ffynhonnau Gymru,

Eirlys a Ken Lloyd Gruffydd. Cyfrol 2, Caernarfon, Dinbych, Y Fflint a Môn.

First published 1999.

Tud: 28-29.

Ffynnon Elan (Ffynnon Gwyddelan), Dolwyddelan

Mae'r ffynnon hon ar lethr y tu ôl i westy Castell Elan ar ochr chwith y ffordd fawr wrth fynd i gyfeiriad Betws-y-coed. Mae'n hen ffynnon gyda thraddodiad fod milwyr Rhufeinig wedi bod yn ei defnyddio. Roedd anwedd yn codi o'r dŵr mewn tywydd oer a chredid ei fod yn arbennig



**Ffynnon Elan
Dolwyddelan.**

o dda at wella parlys ac i gynorthwyo plant gwanllyd i gryfhau. Roedd y dŵr yn llifo iddi o'r llethr uwchben ac yn goferu i lawr i gyfeiriad y pentref. Tybiai Myrddin Fardd fod math o argae ar draws y ffynnon ac y gellid symud darn ohono er mwyn ei gwagio a'i glanhau. Mae'r dŵr yn dal i lifo.

Aeth y ddau ohonom i ymweld â'r ffynnon yn haf 1987 a gweld ei bod yn prysur ddadfeilio. Roedd yn mesur naw troedfedd a hanner wrth wyth troedfedd. Nodwyd fod y tir yn llithro i mewn iddi a nifer o goed yn tyfu o'i chwmpas a'u gwreiddiau yn achosi tirlithriadau. Cofiodd un wraig y bûm yn siarad â hi fod perthynas iddi, oedd mewn gwth o oedran, wedi mynnu cael dŵr o Ffynnon Elan i'w yfed pan oedd mewn gwendid mawr, ac iddi dystio ei bod wedi cryfhau ar ôl hynny. Gresyn na fyddai modd adfer y ffynnon.

English Translation

This well is on the slope behind Elen's Castle Hotel, on the left hand side of the road leading to Bettws y Coed. It is an old well with a tradition that it was used by Roman soldiers. Vapour used to rise from the water in frosty weather.

Myrddin Fardd thought that there was a dam across the entrance, which a part could be removed to empty and clean the well. The water is still flowing.

The two of us went to visit the well in the summer of 1987 and found it busily deteriorating. A note was made that the ground was falling down around the well; this was caused by the many trees that had grown around the place. One lady we talked to remembered one of her aged relatives, when in dire weakness, drank from the well and was revitalised. Pity it could not be restored.

Llen Gwerin Sir Gaernarfon gan John Jones (Myrddin Fardd) 1908, t168

Ffynnon Gwythelan.

I. FFYNNON GWYTHELAN.

Y mae effeithiau tra channoladwy yn cael eu priodoli i "Ffynnon Elen," neu yn hytrach "Ffynnon Gwythelan," yr hon sy gerllaw Gelli y Pentref, yn mhlwyf Dolyddelen. Pan ydoedd yn ei bri, ymddengys oddiwrth yr olion sydd yn aros o'i muriau, y perthynai iddi fath o argae tuag at ollwng yr holl ddwfr o honi, er mwyn ei glanhau, pan na fyddai galwad am ei gwasanneth at iachâu amryw anhwylderau, megis cryfhau plant gweinid, adferu seolodau diffrwyth, &c.

English translation.

The effects, while praiseworthy are attributed to *Ffynnon Elen*, or rather *Ffynnon Gwythelan*, which is near Gelli y Pentref in the parish of Dolyddelen.

When in its heyday, it appears from the traces that remain of the walls, evidence of a dam with an outlet, to drain and cleanse it, when a call for her services to various healing disorders, such as strengthening weak children, restore barren members etc.

The Old Churches of Snowdonia by Harold Hughes and Herbert L. North.

First edition, 1924 Page 134- 135

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Ffynnon Elen

It was probably a bell of this type, made of brass or copper sheet metal and dipped into or covered with molten metal, that Gildas gave to S. David in the sixth century, and which he in turn gave up to S. Illtyd.

By the British Church it would have been esteemed a venerable relic.

About a quarter of a mile from the church, on the road to Bettws y Coed, there is a path going up between the former Elen's Castle Hotel and the adjoining chapel, which leads direct to

Ffynnon Elen

The well is about 50 yds. from the road, and was originally covered with a little building measuring 9 ft. 6 in. by 8 ft. internally, and had a seat or causeway—it is difficult to say which—running round, which is 14 in. wide. If the former, the well itself must have been very small, and this was probably the case, for, unlike those we have seen, this well appears to have been only a drinking-well. We have shown a conjectural small well on the plan. The water is said to have had tonic qualities, and to have steamed slightly in frosty weather.

From Dolwyddelan a mountain road leads round the foot of Moel Siabod to Capel Curig. At about a mile and a half on our way we come to a mountain brook, which is crossed by stepping-stones, known as *Sarn yr Oŷleiriad*, and just



Ffynnon Elen.

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Capel Curig a'i fam Julitta

below this a later stone-slab bridge, *Pont Sarn yr Oŷleiriad*. A few yards further on we reach a well, known as *Ffynnon Oŷleiriad*, the Priest's Well. It is formed of rough stones, shaped like an oblong box with half the lid on, and measures 24 in. by 15 in. and 12 in. deep.

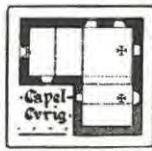
There seems no reason to suppose that this is a Sacred Well, but simply one used by the priest going from Dolwyddelan to Capel Curig.

Continuing our beautiful upland walk we come by Pont Gyfyng, the Narrow Bridge, to

Capel Curig a'i fam Julitta

the chapel of Curig and his mother Juliet. The original dedication would have been to Curig Lwyd; at a later date he was displaced by Cyriacus and his mother Julitta, as in other Welsh churches. On account of this confusion, Curig's Festival has been transferred to 16th June.

Curig the Blessed was known as Bishop of Llanbadarn, and his 'cambutta' or upper part of the pastoral staff is described by Giraldus as being 'covered on all sides with gold and silver, and resembling the form of a Cross.' It was



Black: original portion. Watched: After the century addition.

the narrow descent into the Vale of the Lleder, must be the Sarn Elen, as there was no room for it to take another course ; and there can be no doubt but that the ancient pitching exists in several places, as the cast stones are bedded so deep that they cannot be supposed to be of a later date.

The Castle before Meredydd ap Evan became possessed of it was inhabited by a noted outlaw, Howel ap Evan ap Rees Gethin, which Rees Gethin lived at a place called Hendre Rhys Gethin, near the spot where the Rev^d. Mr. Pryce lives, not far from Pont y Pair. Antiquaries are not decided as to the etymology of Dolwyddelan. One will have it to be from the Saint Gwyddelan, to whom the Church is said to be dedicated, though the name of such a Saint is not found amongst our copious Catalogue of Saints. Others will make it out to be the Wood (Gwydd) of Elen. But such is the veneration that this Lady, supposed to be the wife of the Emperor Maximus, has obtained in Wales, that every great and good work is attributed to her, and at such different periods, that she must, to have accomplished them all, have lived for 3 centuries. There is every reason to suppose that the Romans, after travelling from Tommen y Mur, the station doubtedly of Mons Eryri, over such difficult and mountainous roads, on sinking into this rich little sheltered Vale, would have wished for repose ; and therefore it is likely they had here a station or some resting place. Why may not the name, then, be Gwaith y lleng, the Work of the Legion ? All publick works being accomplished by the legionary soldiers ; and to confirm this they shew you to this day Ffynnon Elen, that is, their Spring, by which, the tradition says, they used to dine. Probably the spring that served the station.

Turn down the Vale of Lleder to get into the Vale of Conway. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this sequestered spot, bounded on both sides by very picturesque mountains, in some places broken and bare, in others charmingly clothed with wood, whilst the River preserves a most charming character through its whole course. Pass an old house called Bryn y Voel, where it is said, when Penanmaen was vacated, some of the Gwydir family lived. They say Coats of Arms still exist in the house. Leave a curious Alpine Bridge to the right over a part of the River which forms a pretty cataract. From hence the Vale, instead of widening as is usual near its termination, contracts, and is more woody, before it is lost in the Conway. The Lleder has a bridge over it which leads to Penmachno. A new bridge a few hundred yards below the Junction of the Lleder with the Conway ; and over the

Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments (1956), Caernarvonshire 1, p84.

Wells (246) Ffynnon Elen. A small rectangular basin now dry, 9 ft. by 7 ft., with walls of earth-mortared rubble, on ground sloping steeply to the S. The S. wall is 1 ft. 6 ins. thick and 1 ft. high; the remaining walls are revetments only, that on the N. reaching a height of 4 ft.; water emerging outside the S. wall is now collected in a drinking trough. The name has also been applied to a natural spring about 100 yards to the N. W.

Condition: ruined and overgrown.

SH 73675252

29 viii 50

23 S.E.

DOLWYDDELAN.

EI HYNAPIAETHAU, EI HYNODION, A'I HANES.
(Parhad o Tu Dalen 8.)

Y mae amryw o hen furddynod yma ac uew mewn manau anghysbell oddi wrth y tai presennol; megys Llwyn Grauenig, a'r gweddillion a ganfyddir yn rhesydd Coetmor; yn dangos fod rhyw adeiladau wedi bod i ryw ddiben mewn amseroedd boreuol; ond, os taffwn olwg yn ol ar hanesion y plwyf, y mae yn amhosibl eu bod yn ddim angen, na math o ystablau i noddi yr anifeiliaid y nos ac i'w porthi y gauaf, yn amser Hywel Coetmor a Meredydd ab Ifan. Yr oedd y fath nifer o geffylau ag oedd ym meddiant Hywel a'i wyr, yn gofyn llawer o noddseydd heb law ag oedd yn agos i'r Castell. Ac mewn amser pryd nad oedd nemawr o drefn i gadw, nac i drosglwyddo, porthiant i le mor fynyddig; yr oedd yn rhesymol eu bod yn gwneyd defnydd o'r ychydig fanau rhywiog a gant, i ollwng yr anifeiliaid y dydd i bori: ac er mwyn bod yn gyfleus, yr oeddynt yn adeiladu bythynod ac hofelydd i'w cadw yn ddiddos y nos; ac nid oes un rheswm arall yn ymddangos yn gyson dros ddyben yr adeiladau hyn. Hefyd, yr un peth a ellir ddywedyd dros hanfodiad hen ffyrdd y canfyddir eu hollion yn traws groesi y plwyf. Nid yw y chwedlau a adroddir, gan hen wrachod, mai ffyrdd wedi eu gwneuthur i'r dyben i Elen Lueddog deithio o Gastell Harlech i Gastell Conwy oeddynt, ddim ond ymfyrwydd, a mwy na hyny, sef yr hyn nas dichon iddo fod, yn gymmaint nad oedd sylfaen yr un o'r cestyll hyn wedi cael eu gosod i lawr lawer o oesoedd ar ol Elen. Hefyd, mewn perthynas fod cerbydau wedi bod yn myned a dyfod ar hyd-ddi, ymddengys hyny yn beth amhosibl, yn gymmaint ac nad oeddynt yn arferedig yn y deyrnas hon hyd yr unfed ganrif ar bumtheg.

Y mae olion ffordd yn dyfod o gyfeiriad Capel Curig, heibio Bryn Gefeiliau, gan unioni tuag at Gwm Au-maen, ac i fyny llechwedd y Cwm i gyfeiriad y Bala. Y mae rhai yn

dywedyd mai olion ffordd Rufeinaidd ydychydig. Ond y mae hyny hefyd yn amheus genyf fi, gan nad yw yn meddu hanfodion ffordd Rufeinaidd, sef gwely sych caregog heb bridd a phalmant gwenithfaen cryf yn uchaf. Y mae rhai manau o honi hi heb ei phalmantu mewn lle gwastad a sych, ac mewn lleoedd corsiog, nid yw ond wedi ei phalmantu yn unig gyda cheryg lled deneuon ar eu gorweddadiad. Wrth edrych yn ddiduedd ol a blaen, y mae yn ymddangos yn fwy tebyg fod y ffordd hon, yng nghyd ag ereill, wedi eu gwneuthur gan y milwyr yn amser Hywel Coetmor yn benaf, ac yn amser Meredydd yn ddiweddarach; er cyfleusdra i'r meirchflwyr allu myned a dyfod yn llu rheolaidd, at alwad y rhyfeloedd disymmwth a gymmerent le yn yr amseroedd hyn. Ond oedd gan gymmaint o filwyr ag oedd gyda Hywel ddigon o amser a gallu i gyflawnu unrhyw amcan a gynnygiant arno; a diau genyf fi fod yn rhaid iddynt wneyd ffyrdd, yn rhan arbenig o'u gwaith, cyn gallu gweithredu yn effeithiol.

Yr oedd hen ffynnon enwog yn y plwyf hwn, a elwid gan rai "Ffynnon Elen," a chan ereill "Ffynnon Gwyddelan." Y mae i'w chanfod eto, ond ei bod yn adfeiliedig, yn ochr "Gelli y Pentref," fel ei gelwir, ar y naill du i'r felin. Yr oedd ei muriau yn mesur deuddeg troedfedd o hyd, wrth naw troedfedd o led; a rhodfa tua hanner llath o led o fewn y mur allanol, gyda glan y dwfr. Y mae tarddiad y dwfr yng nghwr uchaf y ffynnon, o godiad y tir; ac y mae gofer yn ei chwyr isaf i ollwng y dwfr i redeg yn llwyr nes ei hollol waghau: pan byddai angen am ei gwasanaeth, yr oedd yn rhaid rhoddi ystopell yn yr agored i groni y dwfr. Dywedir ei bod wedi bod mewn bri a chlod mawr yn yr hen amser; y rhinwedd a briodolir iddi yn benaf ydoedd cryfhau plant gweinïad, ac adferyd nerth i aelodau rhai wedi diffwytho. Y mae amryw yn fyw yn bresennol sy'n cofio dwyn rhai iddi i'w trochi, ac a gadarnhant y dystiolaeth uchod. Pa un a oes rhyw rai

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yn faw
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yn erby
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friw; ac
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y plwyf,
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ffydd Jo.

wedd gwirioneddol yn y dwfr ai peidio nid oes neb yn gallu dywedyd yn awr: byddai'n fuddiol edrych i mewn i hyny. Pa fodd bynnag, gollyngir hi i gyflwr asfer a dirmygedig iawn yn bresennol; a bydd yn fuan heb ddim i'w dangos ei hun oni adgyweirir hi gyda brys.

Mewn perthynas i ffordd y plwyf. Fel y rhan fwyaf o blwyf mynyddig ereill, nid oedd yn yr hen amser ddim ond rhyw lwybrau geirwon i'r cefylau, a chludid bob peth yn bynnau ar eu cefnau. Yr oedd diffygion celfyddyd yn fawr y pryd hyny, fel yr oedd yn anafateisiol iawn gwneyd ffordd na lwybrau da, megys y gellir yn awr; canfyddir hyn yn amlwg oddi wrth yr hanesyn canlynol, yr hwn sydd yn sic o fod yn wirionedd:—Rhyw bryd, tua chan mlynedd yn ol, yr oedd gwr o'r enw Gruffydd Jones, o Glyn Lledr, taid i Thomas a Gruffydd Jones, sydd yn y Glyn yn bresennol, wedi myned i Loegr ar neges; a digwyddodd iddo weled dynion yn saethu ceryg gyda phylor, yr hyn beth a'i synodd yn fawr dros ben; a'r peth cyntaf a wnaeth bron wedi dychwelyd adref, oedd myned i efail y gof i wneyd arfau cyffelyb i'r rhai a welsai yn Lloegr. Yn yr amser hwnw yr oedd y llwybr i fyned i'r plwyf hwn yn myned heibio Tan Altroch i fyny at y Pant; ac yr oedd maen mawr ar ochr y llwybr, ychydig is law i'r Pant, yn gwasgu yn drwm yn erbyn craig gyferbyniol iddo, nes y byddai yr anifeiliaid pyniedig yn methu yn lan ac ymwithio rhyngddynt. Ac yn y maen hwnw y gwnaeth Gruffydd Jones y twll ebill cyntaf erioed yn y plwyf: pa fodd bynnag, llwyddodd yn ei amcan, a drylliodd y maen yn chwilfriw; ac y mae talpiau o'r maen yno i'w gwled hyd heddyw. Wedi i'r weithred hon gymmeryd lle, aeth son mawr am y tro trwy y plwyf, a chyrchai pawb i'r fan a'r lle i weled y fath orchestwaith. Yr oedd maen mawr arall ar y ffordd o dan y Bwlch Cymid yn peri blinder mawr, cyffelyb i'r maen oedd is law y Pant; a thaer ddymunwyd ar Gruffydd Jones ddyfod i dori hwnw drachefn;

ac efe a ufuddhaodd, ac a aeth, pryd yr oedd lluaws mawr o bobl wedi ymgasglu yng nghyd i weled y weithred. Llwyddwyd i hollti y maen hwnw fel y llall; ac y mae un hanner o'r maen i'w weled eto yn gorwedd yn y clawdd, ar fin y ffordd sydd o dan y Bwlch Dolwyddelan; a gellir canfod ol y twll ebill yn y maen yn amlwg yn bresennol. Oddi wrth yr haesyn hwn yr ydys yn gwled, pa mor anhawdd ydoedd i'r hen bobl gyflawnu, yr hyn a ystyrir yn clwredu o beth erbyn ein dyddiau ni.

Yn fuan ar ol yr amgylchiad uchod, sef o ddeutu 70 o flynyddoedd yn ol, dechreuwyd cloddio am lechau mewn lle a elwir yn bresennol yn "Chwarel Ddu," ger llaw y Castell, a gwnaethpwyd ymdrechadau i wella y ffordd er mwyn y gwaith hwnw. Dywedir ddarfed i un Iohn Williams, masnachydd yn y plwyf, wario llawer er ei gwella. Yn ddiweddar, pa fodd bynnag, y mae gwelliant mawr wedi cymmeryd lle yn y plwyf, yn gymmaint a bod ffordd wedi cael ei gwneyd trwy y plwyf i Chwarel Ffestiniog; yr hon sydd yn uno yr ardaloedd hyn fel un, ac yn peri fod gwedd newydd yn cymmeryd lle ar yr hen fro fynyddig hon yn gyflym iawn. Yn awr gellir canfod pob math o gerbydau yn gyru trwedd ar eu tro, ac y mae tramwy nid bychan trwy y plwyf, rhwng ardaloedd Ffestiniog a Llanrwst. Mae yn ddiau fod y cyfnewidiadau hyn yn gyfryw ag a fuasai yn anhygoel iawn gan rai o henafiaid y plwyf i dybied am dano, chwaithach ei weled a'u llygaid. Heb law yr hen chwarel a nodwyd, y mae yn y plwyf amryw o dyllau wedi eu cloddio i chwilio am lechau. Ac y mae un yn cael ei gweithio yn bresennol, a golwg lled obeithiol arni, sef Chwarel y Bwlch. Y mae yn ymddangos fod ceryg da iawn yn ei gwaelod, ac os dyfnheir hi yn briodol, gellir dysgwyl iddi droi allan er lles mawr i'r plwyf yn y dyfodol. Pwy a wyr nad oes llawer o gyfoeth yng nghrombil lle mor fynyddig? Ac y daw amser pan egyr dorau Rhagluniaeth, i'w gyflwyno i wasanaeth dyn; ac y

English translation.

Y Brython

There was a famous old well in the parish named by some as *Ffynnon Elen*, and by others *Ffynnon Gwyddelan*. It can be found again in a dilapidated state by *Gelli y Pentref* by the side of the mill. The walls measured 12 feet by 9 feet, with a walkway about 1½ foot wide inside the outer wall, by the water's edge. The source of the water is at the back of the well, to the north. There is an overflow at the bottom of the south wall to drain the well. When the well was needed a stopper was inserted into the overflow. The virtue attributed to the well was to strengthen weak children, and restoring strength to disabled limbs. There are many alive today who remember taking people here to bathe, and the evidence above confirms this fact. Whether there is some merit in the actual water or not, no one can say now, it would be beneficial to look into this. However it has succumbed to a very shabby state of neglect at present, and soon there will be nothing left to see, unless it is repaired urgently.

7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT.

Preliminary archaeology had to be undertaken prior to the large Ash tree being felled in order to minimise the damage to the well. (**Fig 9**).

The tree was cut in a specific way, i.e. from the top downwards and removed from the site. (**Fig 10 & 11**). The undergrowth had to be cut back to expose the well. A Tirfor hand winch had to be hired to remove the large tree roots that were also damaging the well. (**Fig 12 & 13**). A dilapidated fence had to be removed and taken away, and a new one erected with a new gate to replace an old stile. (**Fig 34**).

The pathway between Ellen's Castle Hotel and the Methodist Chapel also had to be cleared. This enabled us to start on the excavation of the site. (**Fig 6 & 7**).

There were three trenches excavated, trench one and two was to excavate an anomaly to the south-east of the well. Trench three was to the east side of the well, where another anomaly was found.

Trench one and two. (**Fig 16**).

These were excavated and were found to be the old road that went passed the well in an east-west direction. It was about two meters wide with a ditch on the topside, which had a metal water pipe in it. Some tobacco clay pipes and coal were found in these trenches.

Trench three.

This was found to be a footpath that led to the direction of Singrug and the barracks. In this trench the oldest pottery found was dated as seventeenth century (**Fig 44**), also a lead musket shot (**Fig 41**), which had been fired.

A catalogue has been compiled with all the pottery found.

Excavation work was done on, and in, the well. A small niche was found in the north wall, where offerings would have been deposited (**Fig 14**). The well used to be drained for maintenance by the *gofer*, an outflow culvert which had completely collapsed, so a new drainage pipe had to be installed. (**Fig 25**).

All the new construction has been marked with drill holes to distinguish between the old and the new build (**Fig 28**). When the well was drained coins and white stones were found at the bottom. There was a slate slab trough (**Fig 27**) which was used as a sediment trap by the Elens Castle Hotel for supplying water for their fish pond. The trough was sawn by means of a Hunters saw which was based at the nearby Tynybryn Slate Quarry.

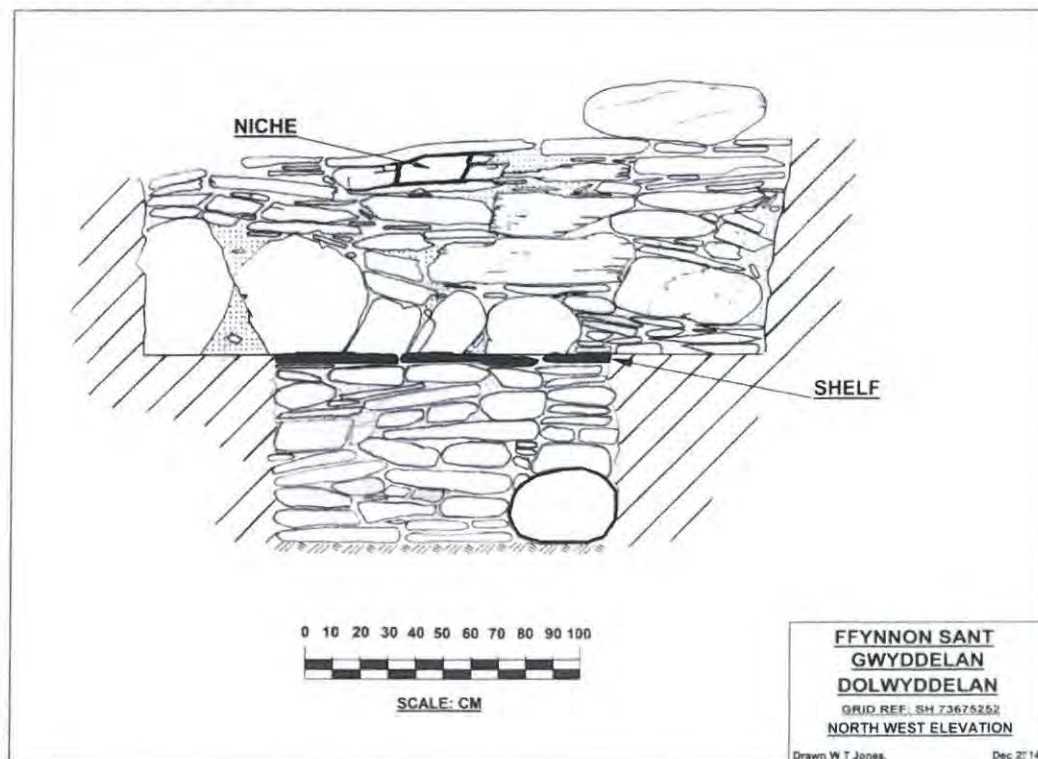
A pathway was constructed up to the well, which crossed the outlet stream by means of a new culvert (**Fig 17**). The whole area around the well was landscaped and the wild flowers replanted (**Fig 19**).

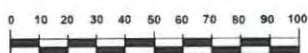
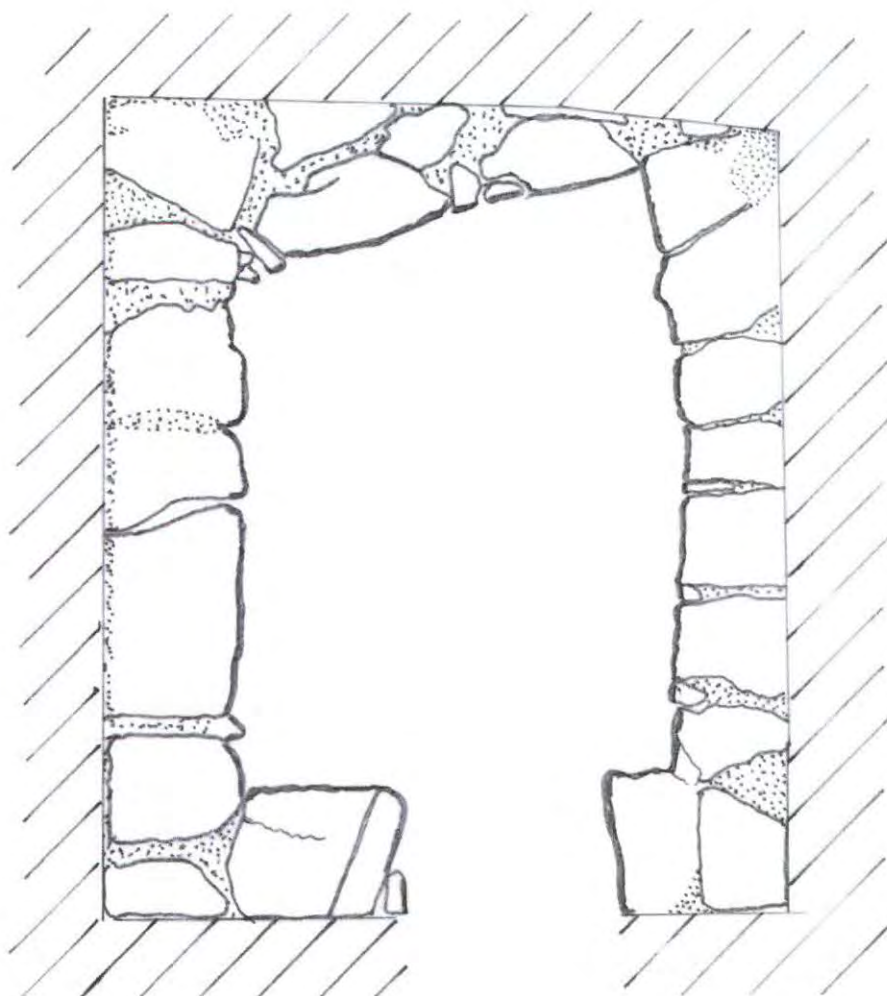
Two interpretation panels were designed and manufactured, (**Fig 32**), one erected in the Ellen's Castle car park and the other erected on site. The art work was done by the well known artist Falcon D, Hildred (**Fig 36**). An open day was held on the 22nd of May 2015. The unveiling was done by Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas and the Rev; Eirlys Gruffydd (**Fig 29 & 35**). The well was blessed by The Rev ; Gerwyn Roberts the minister for Capel Moriah, Dolwyddelan (**Fig 30**).

8. CONCLUSION.

When excavating below the well a road was unearthed. This road is shown on the 1784 Gwydir Estate map. It was the main road from Betws y Coed to the village, prior to the new one built at the beginning of the nineteenth century. No pottery was found earlier than the seventeenth century; these were slipware, mottled ware and midlands purple ware. Oral history says that Roman coins were found at this location, but their whereabouts remain unknown. On the back revetment wall a small niche for offerings was found. What was left of the masonry strongly suggests it had a surrounding wall. But no evidence was found to confirm that the well was covered with a roofed building, as some reports indicate, although there was one moss slate found during excavations. But one slate does not a roof make.

9. DRAWINGS.





SCALE: CM

**FFYNNON SANT
GWYDDELAN
DOLWYDDELAN**

GRID REF: SH 73675252

PLAN

Drawn W.T. Jones.

April 2015.



Fig 1.



Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.



Fig 6.



Fig 7.



Fig 8.



Fig 9.



Fig 10.



Fig 11.



Fig 12.



Fig 13.



Fig 14.



Fig 15.



Fig 16.



Fig 17.



Fig 18.



Fig 19.



Fig 20.



Fig 21.



Fig 22.



Fig 23.



Fig 24.



Fig 25.



Fig 26.



Fig 27.



Fig 28.



Fig 29.



Fig 30.



Fig 31.



Fig 32.



Fig 33.



Fig 34.



Fig 35.



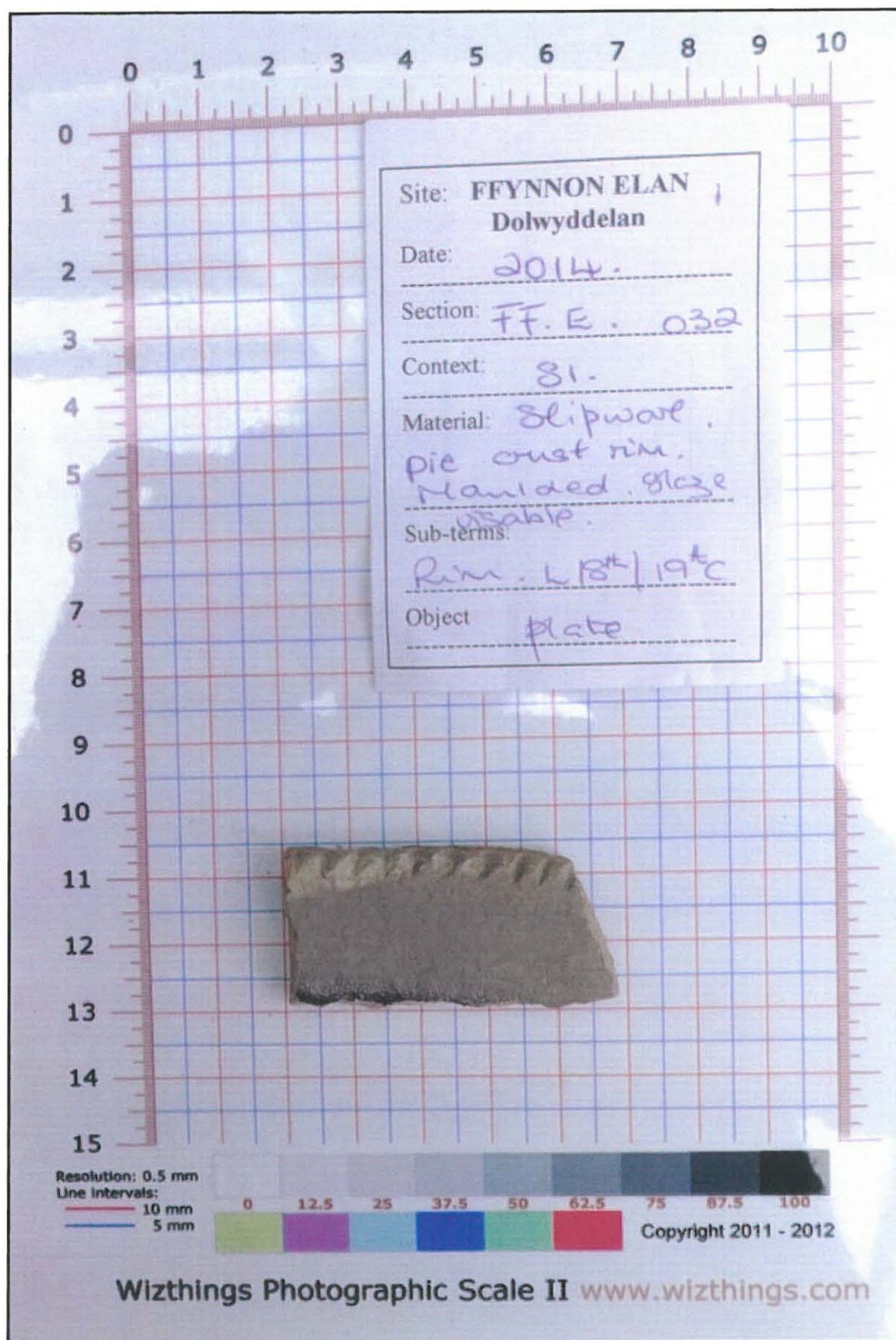


Fig 38.

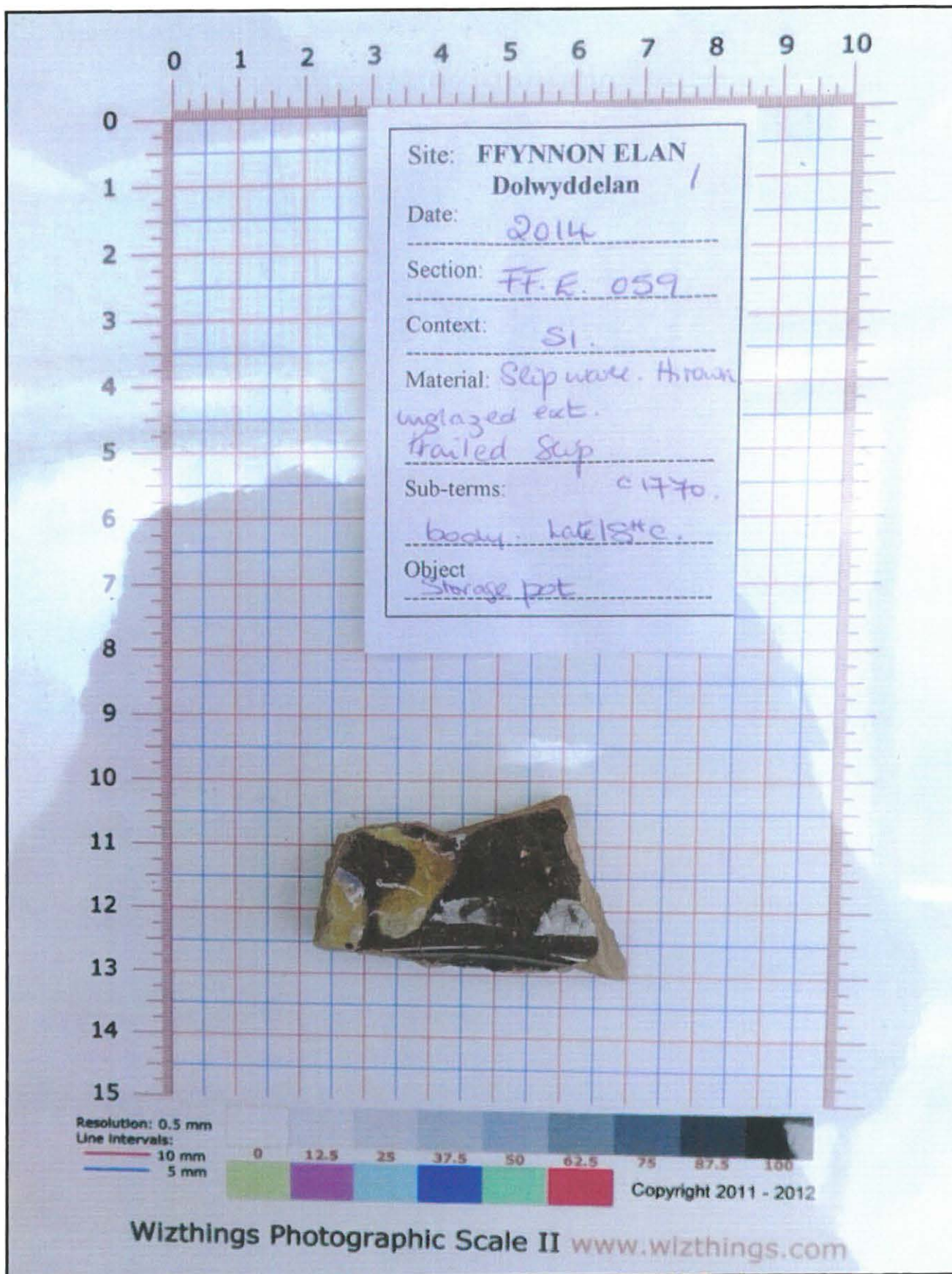


Fig 39.

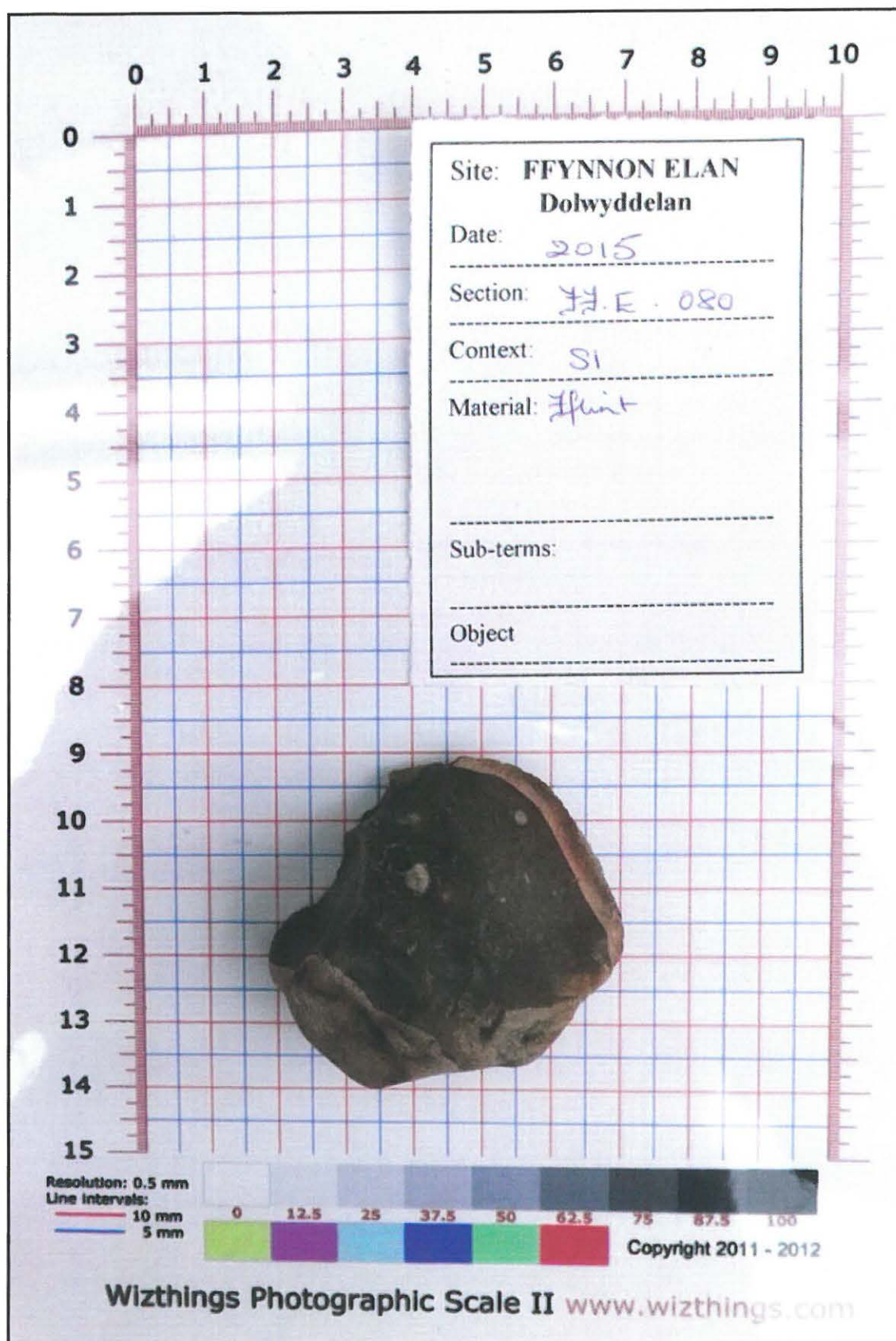


Fig 40.

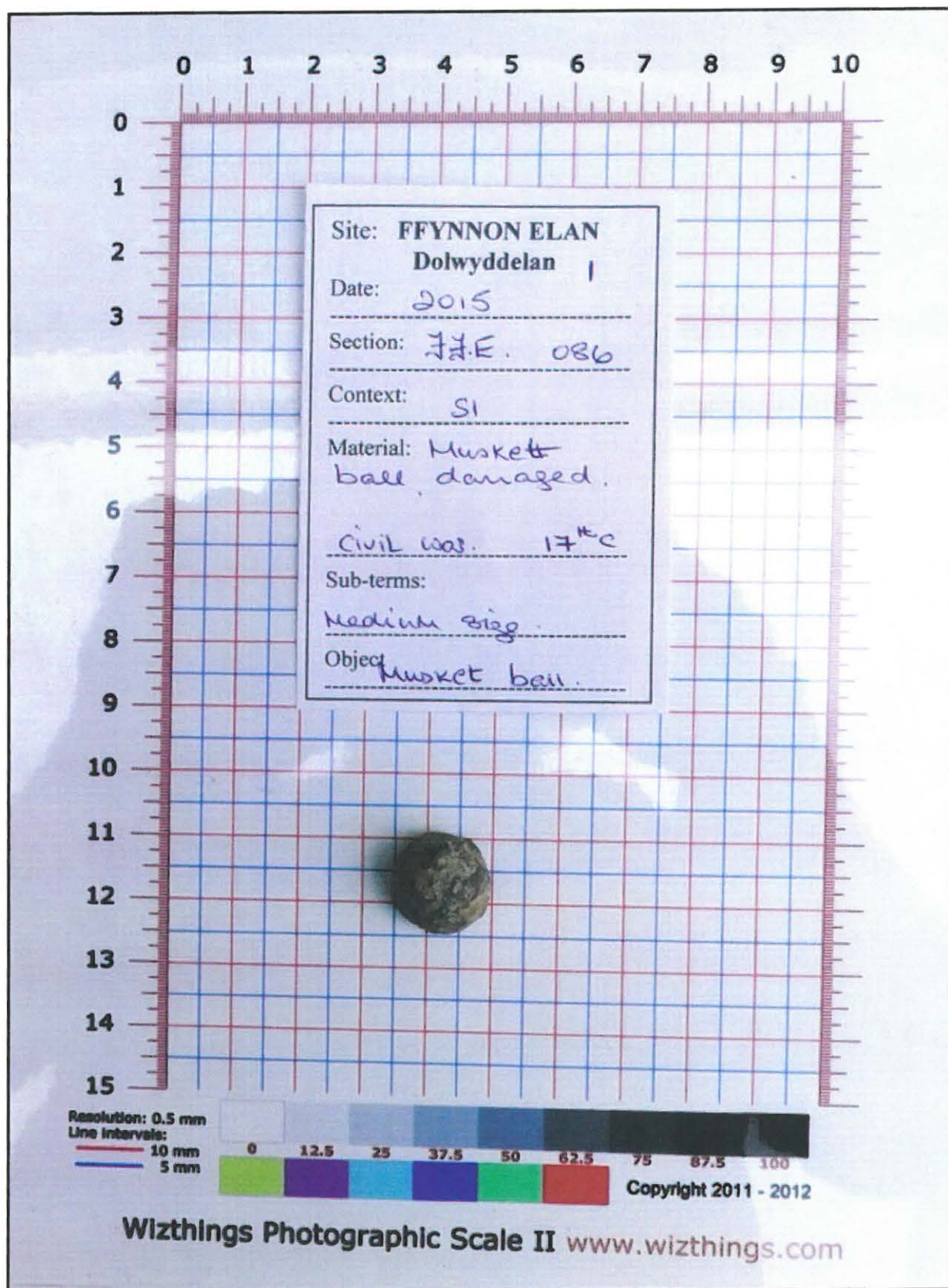


Fig 41.

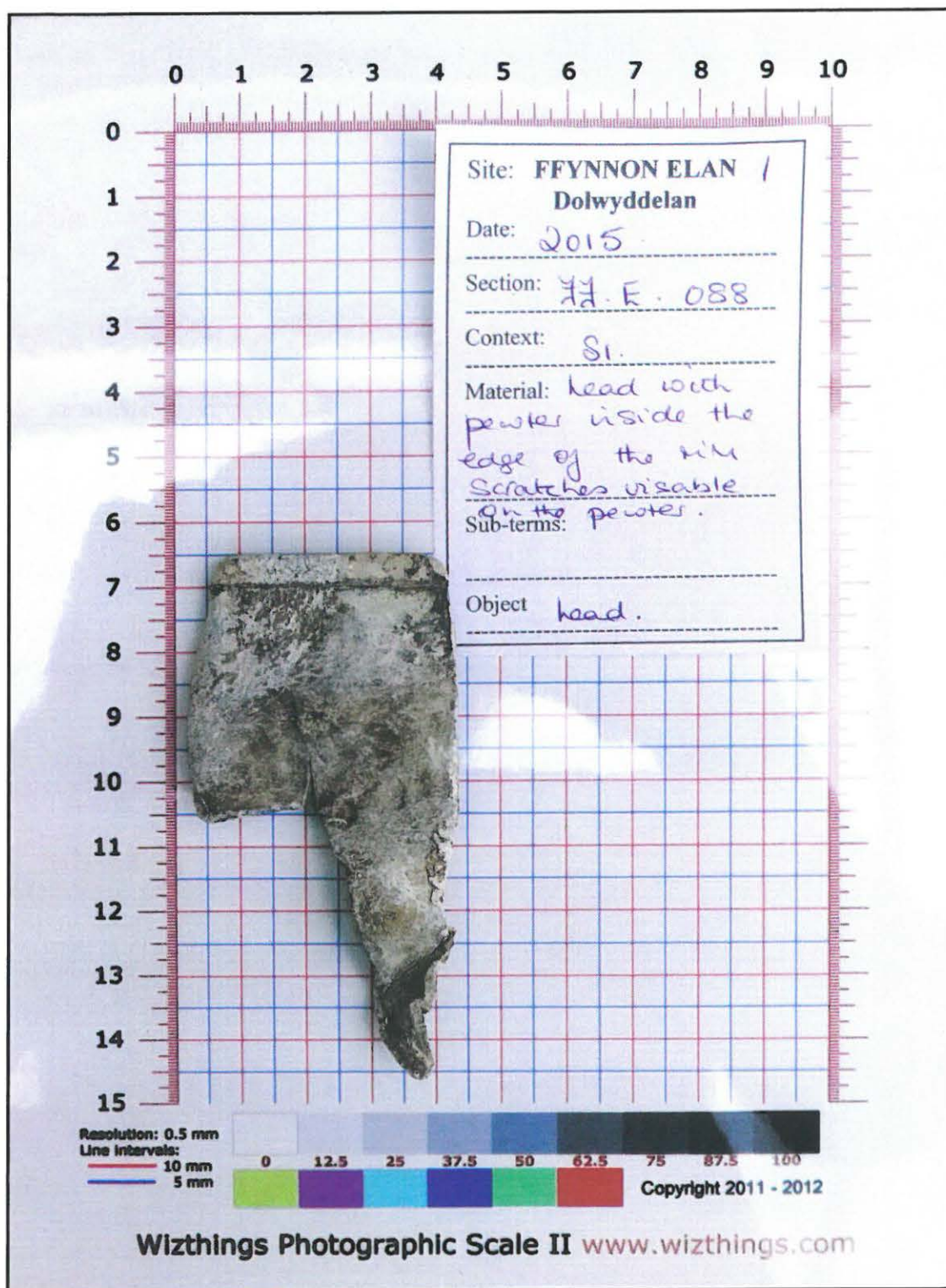


Fig 42.

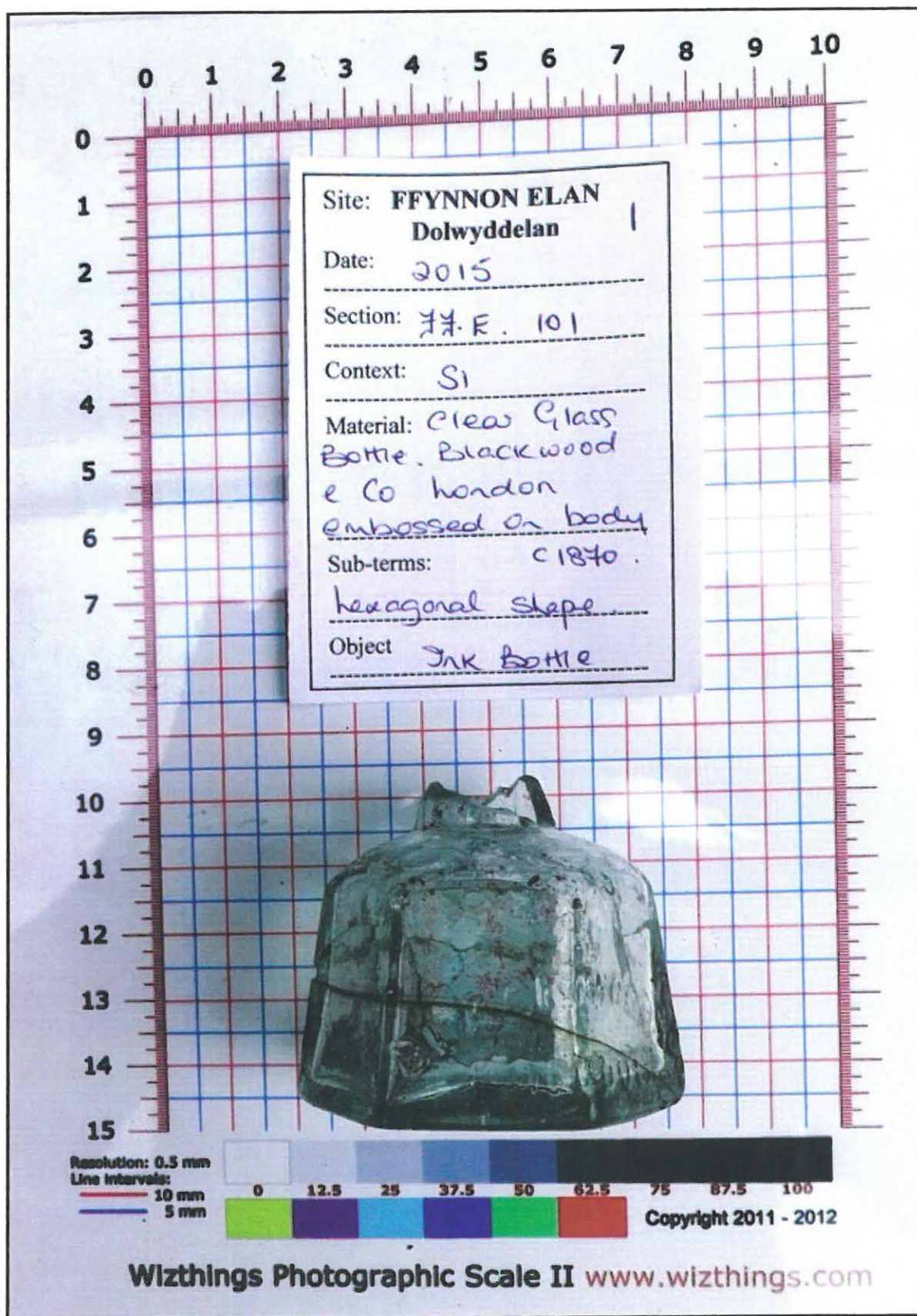


Fig 43.

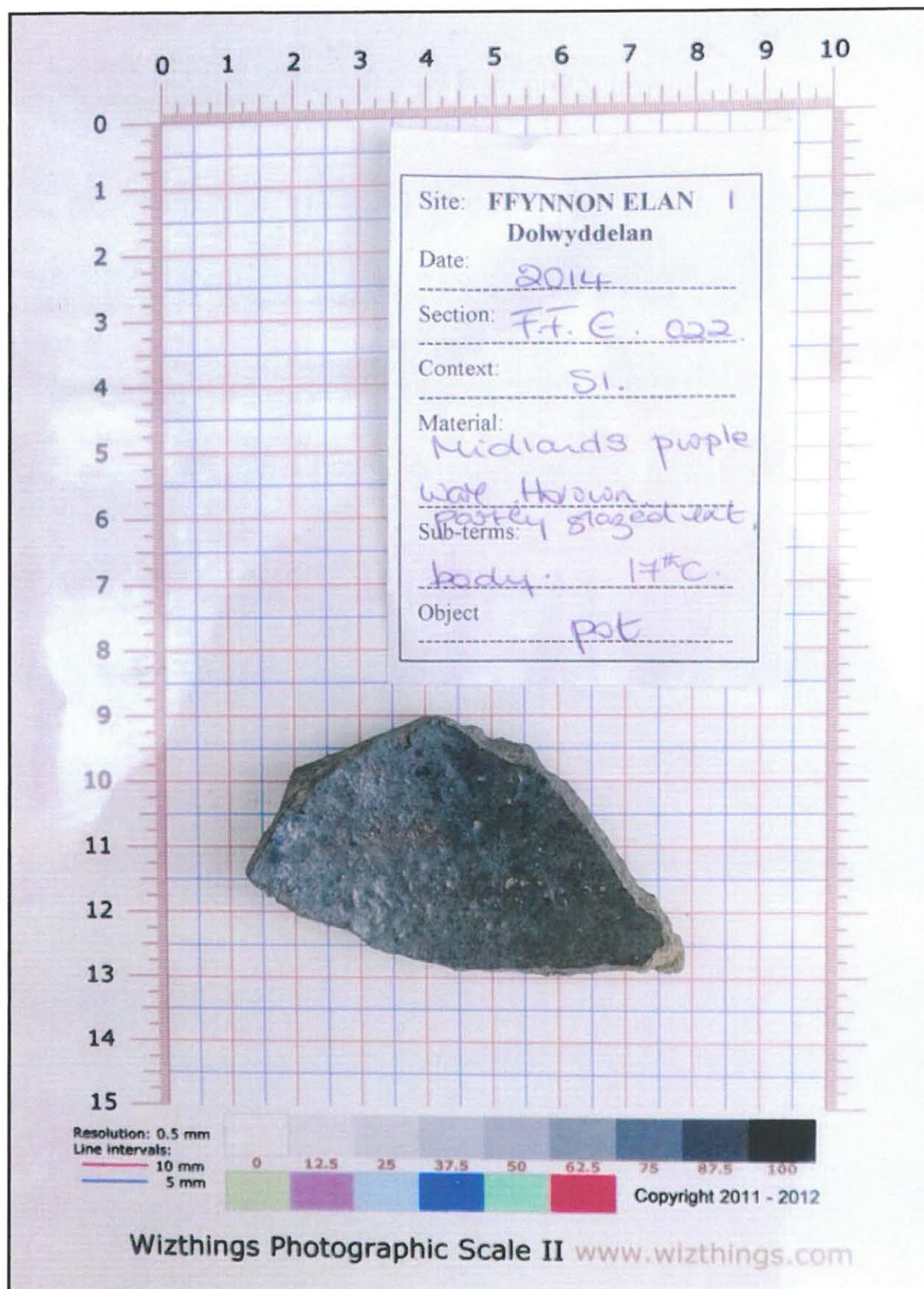


Fig 44.

Bibilography

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