



# FACTsheet 26

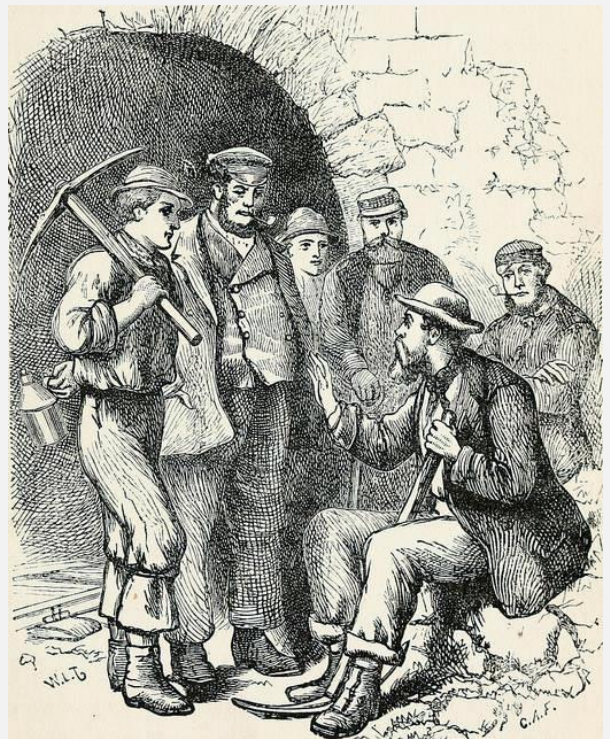
## Entrepreneurial 'spirit'

Labourers and skilled 'navvies' were employed in the laying of tracks, the digging of cuttings and the construction of embankments, tunnels, viaducts and bridges. As you can imagine, this was physically demanding work and after a hard day the workers were very thirsty....for a beer!

Unfortunately for the men, the seaside towns that we know today were in the early stages of development and there was an absence of inns and taverns along the coastal route.

The two inns in Penmaenan at that time - 'The Goat' and 'The Jolly Herring' - and one in the hamlet of Capelulo called Y Bedol ('The Horseshoe'), may have been too small to accommodate all the workers, or perhaps the beer was a bit expensive if they wanted a lot of it to quench their thirst!

There were also relatively strict licencing laws in place, and the Beerhouse Act of 1830 required rate-payers who wanted to brew or sell beer to pay a licence fee of two guineas (42 shillings).



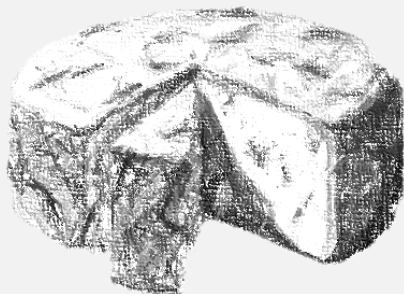
# Entrepreneurial 'spirit'

But there was a loophole in the Act, and as you'd expect, someone found it!

That someone came up with the simple licence-evading idea of 'cake taverns' or 'tafarnau cacen'. In these establishments you bought a piece of cake and received a free jar of ale!

There were at least two such 'confectionary shops' in Dwygyfylchi at the time of the construction of the railway. One was a wooden hut which stood somewhere near the present Ffordd Darbshire, above the deep railway cutting in Penmaenan (it is recorded that the hundreds of navvies working here were 'frequently engaged in free fights and wrestling bouts during their dinner hour').

The other cake tavern was housed in a cottage at the junction of Treforris lane and the Old Conwy Road, next to the cottage where the Dwygyfylchi National School was founded!



When the railway was completed through the parish, the men moved on to the next stage and the taverns probably followed them. They left no record of their ownership, their operation, the quality of the ale, or the cake!

Who did the brewing or the baking? Perhaps it was done on site, but it's also possible that people in the community were involved. Brewing weak or 'small' beer was practiced in many rural households and women were often judged by their skills as brewers of beer as well as bakers. There would have been many home brewers who would have been willing to supply the taverns for much-needed extra income.