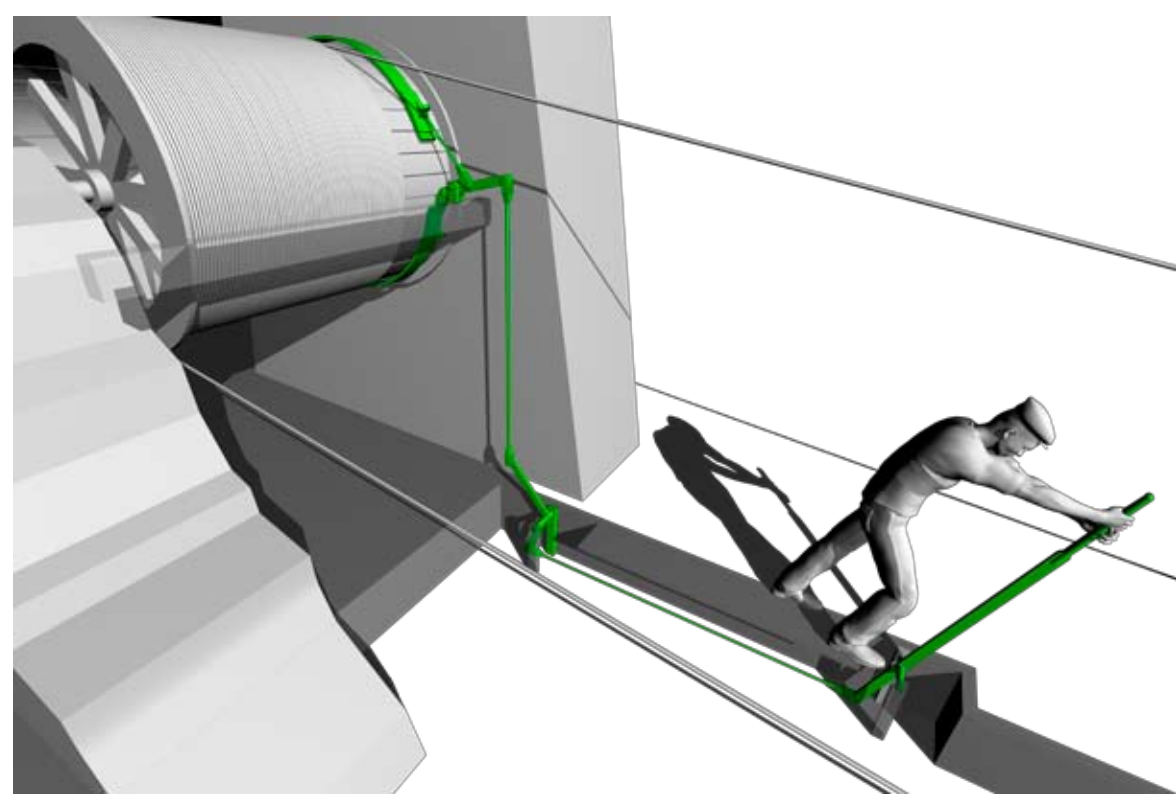


THE ENGLISH BRAKE DRUM HOUSE

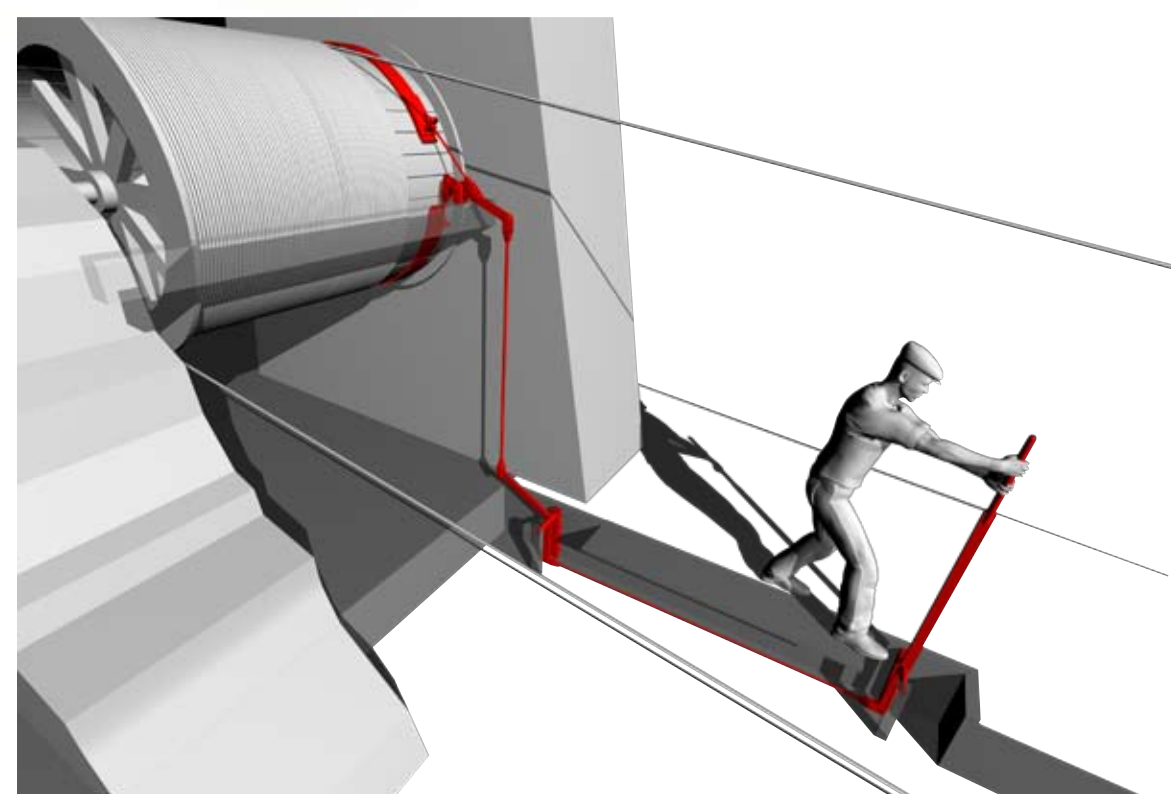
The **BRAKEMAN** – often a boy – controlled the descent of limestone filled trucks.

The downward pull of the heavy stone-filled truck, connected by a cable wound around the brake drum to an empty truck lower down, was enough to pull the 'empties' back up the hill for refilling. Two parallel sets of tramway track were needed to keep the trucks apart and to run evenly.

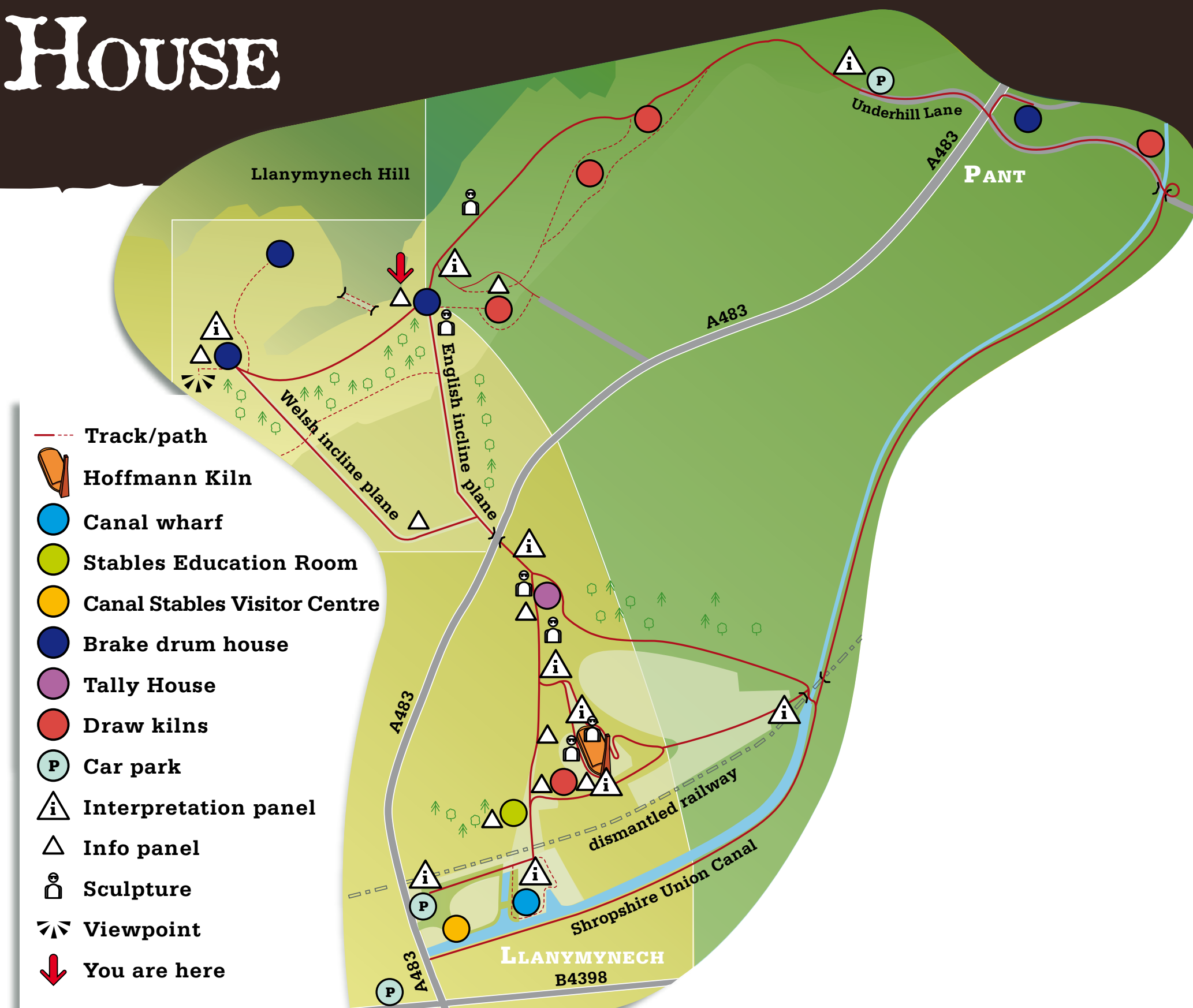
The partially covered gully – leading from the brake drum house to where the brakeman stood – contained a system of rods and pivots that tightened or released the brake mechanism around the drum.



Brake off – trucks free to move



Brake on – slow down and stop



Frayed cables or human error could result in trucks coming loose. Many inclines featured safety 'check' points halfway down on each side by which runaway trucks could be directed into a bed of soft earth. But the brakeman needed to be alert enough to throw the switch in time to avoid a disastrous pile-up at the bottom.

The drum and brake mechanism that you see here is a replica based on remains found nearby. Some of these items are featured in the sculpture by the canal side entrance to the Heritage Area in Llanymynech.