

# food and diets

Prison food was very drab and monotonous. Prisoners lived on a diet of oatmeal gruel, bread and potatoes.

## INGREDIENTS OF GRUEL AND SCOUCE.

NOTE.- The Gruel, when made in quantities exceeding 50 pints, to contain 1½ oz. of Oatmeal per pint; and 2 oz. per pint when made in less quantities. The Scouce to be made of Beef, cut in small pieces, and Potatoes, - the proportions of 9 lbs. weight of Beef to 90 lbs. weight of Potatoes.

*(Ruthin County Gaol Dietaries, circa 1850.)*

Meat was scarce and different categories of prisoner were "prescribed" different "rates of diet". Prisoners confined for long periods were given more food than those with shorter sentences as a better fed prisoner was less likely to be ill. Sick prisoners were both costly and unproductive. Male and female prisoners sentenced by a court to solitary confinement received "the ordinary diet of their class".

*(Denbighshire Quarter Sessions Record, 1851.)*

## RUTHIN COUNTY GAOL.

### DIETARIES.

The following are the prescribed rates of DIET:—

#### Class 1.

Prisoners confined for any term not exceeding seven days.

	MALES.	FEMALES.
BREAKFAST, .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel.
DINNER, .....	1lb. of Bread .....	1lb. of Bread.
SUPPER, .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel.

#### Class 2.

Prisoners for any term not exceeding a month.

	MALES.	FEMALES.
BREAKFAST, .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel.
DINNER, .....	1lb. of Bread, 1lb. of Potatoes .....	1lb. of Bread, 1lb. of Potatoes.
SUPPER, .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel.

#### Class 3.

Prisoners exceeding a month.

	MALES.	FEMALES.
BREAKFAST, .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel .....	1 pint of Oatmeal Gruel.
DINNER, .....	1½lb. of Bread, 1lb. of Potatoes .....	1lb. of Bread, 1lb. of Potatoes.
SUPPER, .....	Same as Breakfast .....	Same as Breakfast.

Male and Female Prisoners of this Class to have 1½lb. of Scouce on every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, instead of Potatoes.

#### Class 4.

Prisoners sentenced by the Court to solitary confinement.

MALES.	FEMALES.
The ordinary diet of their class.	The ordinary diet of their class.

#### Class 5.

Destitute Debtors.

MALES.	FEMALES.
The same as Class 3.	The same as Class 3.

#### Class 6.

Prisoners under punishment for prison offences, for terms not exceeding three days,—1lb. of Bread per diem.

Prisoners in close confinement for prison offences under the provisions of the 42nd section of the Gaol Act.

	MALES.	FEMALES.
BREAKFAST, .....	1 pint of Gruel .....	1 pint of Gruel.
DINNER, .....	1lb. of Bread .....	12 oz. of Bread.
SUPPER, .....	1 pint of Gruel .....	1 pint of Gruel.

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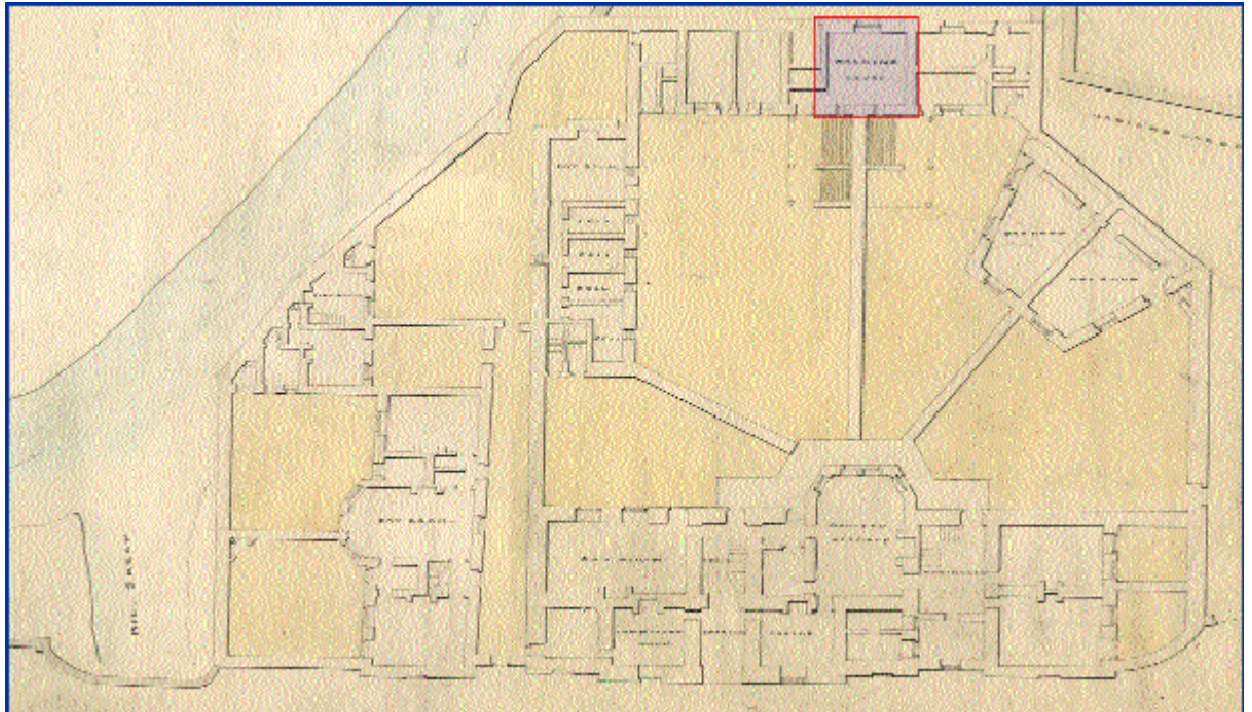
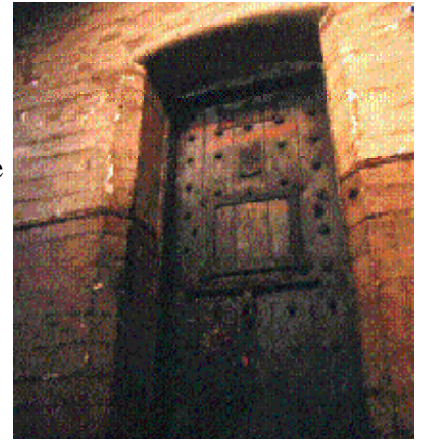
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# kitchen and store

"At the east of the chapel is a stone stair. Going down this the Prison-Store is found below in front, while at the back a passage leads to the Bakehouse and Kitchen... a neat place. There are three boilers with built in furnaces, a range with high pressure boiler behind for hot water, a new fire-clay sink, hot water tank, and cement floor."

*(Ruthin Prison Inspection Report, published 1906.)*

The prison-kitchen has had many different uses. Described on the 1831 plan of the gaol as the "Machine House" it probably contained a mechanism coupled to the treadmill used to raise water to a tank at the top of the building, as at other prisons.



*Gaol plan dated 1831 showing the "Machine House" (Denbighshire Record Office).*