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Walker, Martyn

Book Launch: The Development of the Mechanics' Institute in Britain and Beyond

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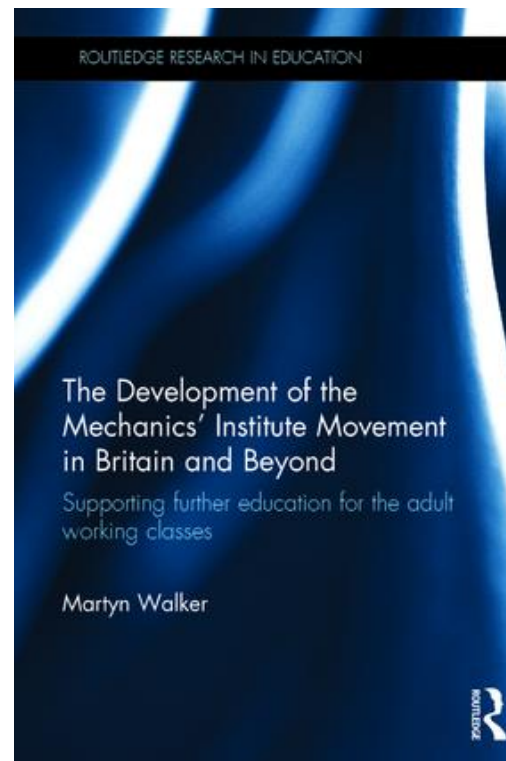
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# Book Launch

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# Book chapters

- Introduction
- Brief History of the Mechanics' Institute Movement
- Scientific Education up to 1850
- Scientific and technical education up to 1900
- Social class membership
- Female membership
- From rented to civic pride
- MI libraries and Public Libraries
- Three clusters
- Overseas
- MI Legacy

Canada

Australia

New Zealand

America

- Birkbeck was the central figure in the drama and Americans, who always felt comfortable in the assurances of old-world precedent, Glasgow, and London, were the proofs they urged in support of their own ambitions. They might just reasonably have looked for examples amongst themselves. The mechanics' institute began simultaneously in Britain and the United States. The London Society and the Franklin Institute were established practically at the same time (Sinclair 1974, p.7)
- Josiah Holbrook was the Birkbeck of America (Bode 1958)

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# American MI and Lyceums

Franklin, Philadelphia,  
New York, Boston,  
New Harmony, Indiana  
Chicago,  
Washington,  
Bigelow,  
Ohio,  
Mercantile Library Associations  
..... San Francisco Mechanics' Institute (Goldsmith, 1955).

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# San Francisco Mechanics' Institute

- Started in rented property 1855,
- 1857 Mechanics' and Manufacturers Fair,
- End of the Civil War, technical subjects offered in support of industrial growth and the Gold Rush,
- Foundation of the University of California.

# San Francisco Mechanics' Institute

- At the time of the San Francisco earthquake the Institute had 200,000 books,
- The building was destroyed with all its books and archives, including British patent reports going back to James 1, as well as technical and scientific papers and works of art.
- At the time of the fire, the librarian was already contacting book dealers and libraries in the eastern states by telegram asking if it was possible to send books, especially on architecture and engineering, for restocking in what was a temporary building established some five months after the earthquake....the rest is

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# Summary



# International Conference of Independent Libraries & Mechanics' Institutes San Francisco : November 2016

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'Reinvention – Thriving in the 21st Century'

'No more admirable building could be provided for such a purpose':  
A study of several mechanics' institutes and how they have been  
adapted for twenty-first century Britain

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The University of Huddersfield  
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What happened to mechanics' institutes in Britain following the introduction of state post-school education?

This paper is divided into three parts:

1. Mechanics institutes and education,
2. Mechanics' institutes and the library movement,
3. Mechanics' institutes and the community.

# Distribution of MI in 1850



# Mechanics institutes and education

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# Yorkshire: Bradford MI

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# Bradford

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## Mechanics' Institute and Technical School



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# Saltaire Model Village near Bradford

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The buildings at Saltaire, including the Mechanics Institute (now the Victoria Hall) were built in a neo-classical style very typical of the period.



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# Saltaire

The School, which faces the Mechanics Institute is also neo-Classical in style with its Ionic columns.





# Keighley, near Bradford: First owned MI

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# Keighley MI and Carnegie Library

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# Keighley: MI fire

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# Keighley: Former FE College

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# North Wales: Llanrwst MI

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# Salford, Peel Building

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# Salford: Peel building, museum and art gallery & 1960s Salford University building

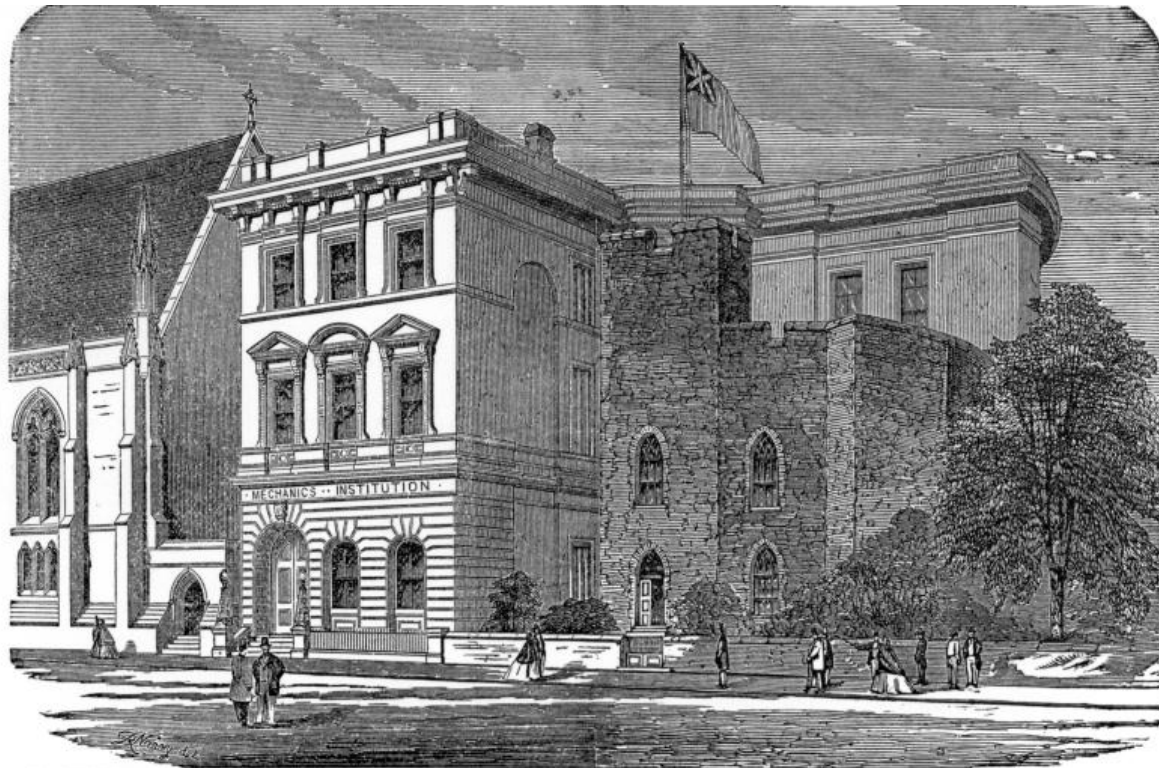
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# Newcastle-Upon-Tyne MI

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MR. THOMAS OLIVER, ARCHITECT.

**MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.**

A. CARSE, SEC.

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# Newcastle North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers

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# Main hall with stain-glass window

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# Entrance from the main hall

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# Main library and archives

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# Mechanics' institutes and the library movement

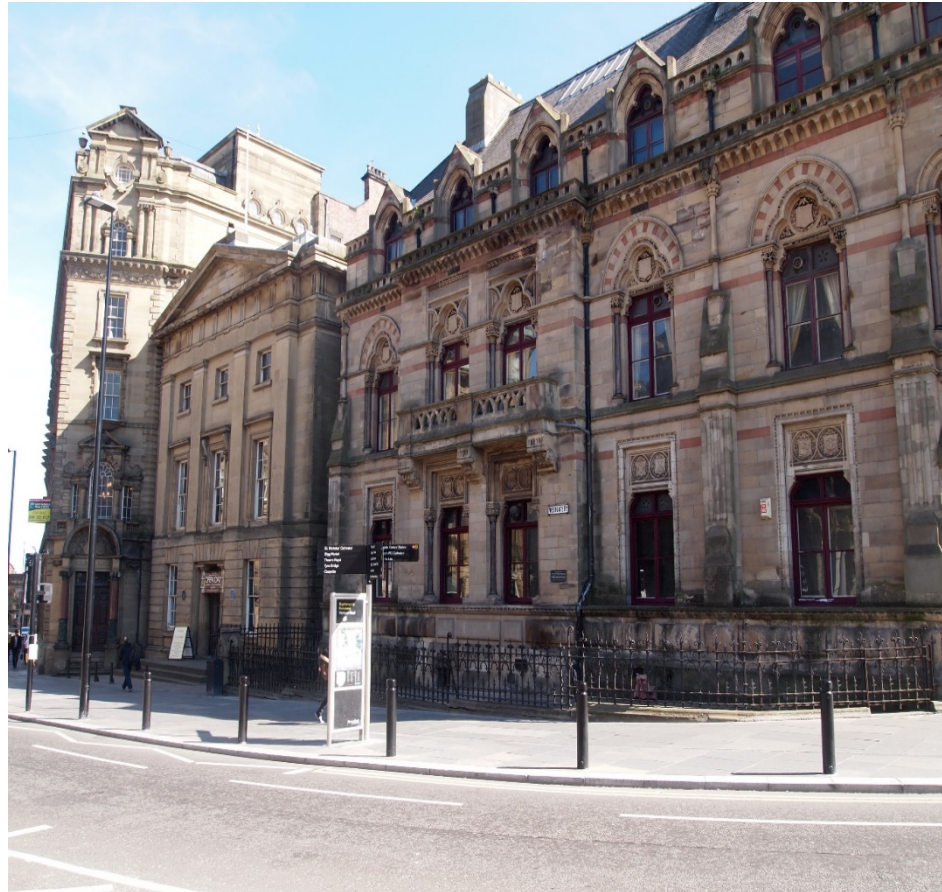
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# Newcastle Literary & Philosophical Society

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# Interior

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# Lancashire Accrington MI and Carnegie Library

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# Skipton MI and Carnegie Library

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# Salford Working Class Movement Library

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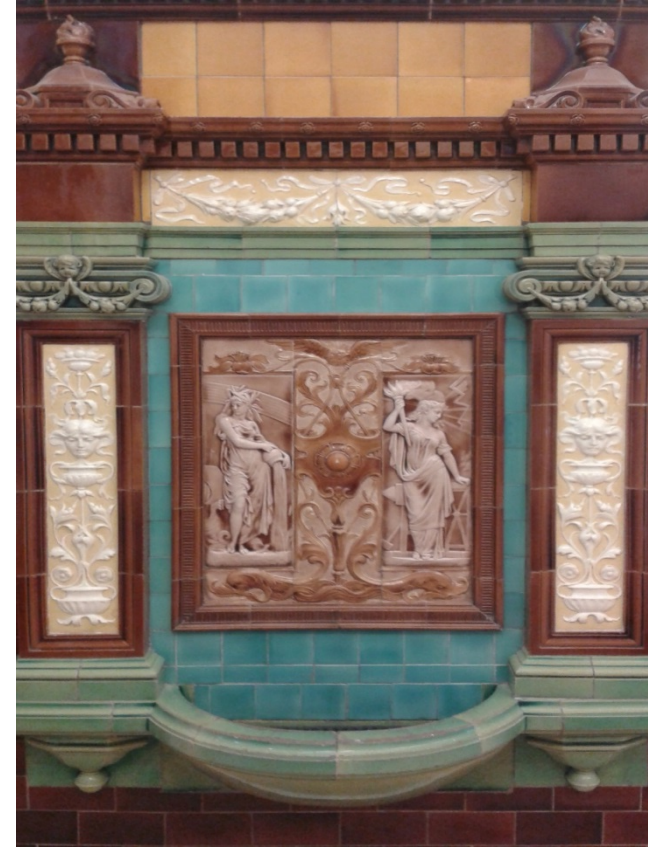


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# Cardiff Technical Institute and Library

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# The new Cardiff library

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# Coniston: Lake District

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# Mechanics' institutes and the community

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# Derbyshire: Whaley Bridge and Eyam

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# Kirkby Malzeard: Yorkshire

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# Wark: Northumberland

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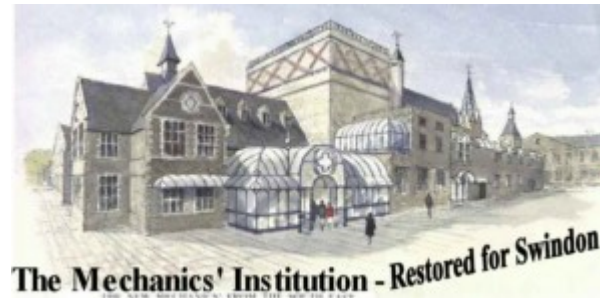
# Nottinghamshire: Eastwood

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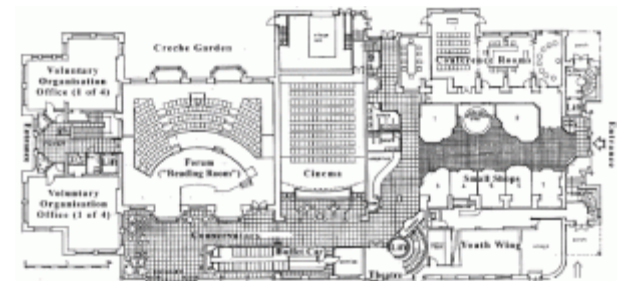


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# However.....



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# Heptonstall MI, Lancashire

- And finally.... Heptonstall MI Now semidetached house on the market in January 2016 for £340,000 (\$413,474!)



# Conclusions

- Mechanics' institutes and education
- Mechanics' institutes and libraries
- Mechanics' institutes and the community
- The future.....conferences such as these, papers and publications to highlight the importance
- Realistically, however, at this point in time there is a high percentage that some will disappear from the British landscape.....



