



Mechanics Institute



The Mechanic's Institute was formed in Neath in 1843 by William Jevons, a local industrialist who owned the Cwmgwarch Ironworks. The purpose of the institute was to provide working men with education in elementary and technical subjects. On his first residence in Neath Wallace began teaching astronomy, geology and geography until the work had dried up and he left for a teaching position in Leicester until his return in 1845. Encouraged by William Jevons, Wallace continued to give talks and lectures to the men of the institute until he left Neath in 1848.

Due to its popularity the original institute housed in a small school room was now too small and a new building was necessary. Wallace was asked to design a new building and his plans were accepted. The building was soon completed at a cost of £550 and opened on Church Place in 1847. The building is now owned by Neath –Port Talbot CBC and is home to the Neath Antiquarian Society and the West Glamorgan Archive Service.



Image courtesy of the Natural History Museum

