

*‘Placing Knowledge Within Reach of Lurgan’s Weavers’:*

*Reform, Education, and the Mechanics’ Institutes*



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In 1859, the Lurgan Mechanics' Institute was formally inaugurated, 'in the presence of one of the largest and most fashionable assemblages that has been witness in that town for a long time past'.<sup>1</sup> The townsmen and women were very proud of the building. According to newspapers throughout the North, the Institute was a

handsome structure, situated at the corner of High Street and Union Street, opposite to the demesne of Lord Lurgan. It belongs, properly speaking, to no one distinct style of architecture, but approaches more nearly to the Romanesque than any other. Due regard has been had by the architect to the purpose for which the building is intended, and in the exterior, ornamentation has been sparingly employed, but the general appearance is light and attractive, and the pleasing effect is much increased by a beautiful and lofty clock-tower.<sup>2</sup>

The Lurgan Mechanics' Institute reflected local interests. It originally contained a museum showing off the 'wondrous industrial productions of the Lurgan looms'.<sup>3</sup> In its early years, it was a strong educational focus. 47 per cent of people in Ireland were illiterate, a fact that was rapidly changing as people sought education. The Library, which had been formed by purchasing the entire library of the Lurgan Literary Society, contained around 1,200 books when it first opened,<sup>4</sup> tripling its holdings within forty years.<sup>5</sup> The second floor of the building was dedicated to schoolrooms, one for boys and another for girls, as well as offering a night school for 'working adults' which provided instruction in writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, mensuration, and geometry.<sup>6</sup>

What motivated people to form a Mechanics' Institution in Lurgan in the late 1850s? In a moment, I will place its establishment in the context of a much wider – global – movement of mechanics institutes. But it is helpful to first listen to what people *at the time* said. The foundational story of the Mechanics' Institute in Lurgan (as told during the inaugural address formally opening the Institute) was that it was conceived of by William Watson, born in Lurgan and a successful linen merchant in New York. He returned from America with a fortune and, in the words of Lord Lurgan (the sportsman and Presbyterian Charles Brownlow, Second Baron Lurgan), who was chairing the inaugural event, Watson's

his keen eye, prompted by the feelings of a kind heart, at once led him to perceive that there was still much to be done for the amelioration both in mind and body of those hardworking men – the weavers. He felt that those industrious mechanics,

by whose skill and industry he had attained his present honourable and affluent position, was not advanced – [indeed, they were] scarcely holding their own in this age of progress.<sup>7</sup>

By charging only two shillings per quarter, it was hoped that the Institute's classes would 'place knowledge within the reach of all who are really anxious to acquire it'.<sup>8</sup>

These sentiments were echoed during the inaugural address, given by 77-year-old Francis Blackburne, Lord Justice of Appeal in Chancery in Ireland, and as passionate a supporter of the Church of Ireland as he was an enemy of Daniel O'Connell. Blackburne believed that the Lurgan Mechanics' Institute was

the means of advancement and permanent improvement in matters that must, more or less, affect the welfare and happiness of all that will place themselves within the sphere of its beneficial influence.<sup>9</sup>

He believed that the Institute would 'increase the comforts and improve the condition of those who take advantage of them', including (most importantly) having a 'beneficial influence on the moral habits and conduct' of the working people of Lurgan.<sup>10</sup>

Both Lord Lurgan and Francis Blackburne acknowledged that physician and philanthropist George Birkbeck and legal giant Lord Brougham were the original founders of the mechanics' movement worldwide. The movement in Lurgan, as elsewhere, was animated by similar things: the dramatic demand for education, a belief in the importance of 'useful knowledge', and a conviction that education would not only enhance people's *intellectual* qualities but their moral and spiritual behaviours as well.

The first half of the nineteenth century was a time of intense political and economic reform. Civil society itself was undergoing revolutionary change. Industrialization was transforming relationships between the different classes. Even the most conservative employer was beginning to recognise the need for more literate and educated workers if their businesses were to flourish. This was especially the case in industrial centres such as Lurgan where the economy was dependent on the skills of its workers. Economic competition, especially from continental Europe, was a concern. Governments were tackling elementary education (especially after the Education Act of

1870); providing compulsory education and progressively raising the age at which children were required to attend school. The instruction given in mechanics' institutes were believed to be a useful supplement.

The 'father' of the movement was George Birkbeck. Although classes for the education of working people had been founded sporadically since the eighteenth century, the *systematic* establishment of mechanics institutes is often credited to Birkbeck. In 1799, he had been invited to teach 'natural philosophy and chemistry' at the Andersonian Institution, which had been founded three years earlier under the will of John Anderson, former Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. Needing a particular machine for his classes, Birkbeck had visited a mechanical workshop and was struck, first, by the workmen's ignorance of basic engineering facts and, second, by their hunger for knowledge. He promptly opened his classes to mechanics, offering classes on Saturday evenings. Birkbeck's aim was to ensure that a workingman would 'cease to be a mere machine, toiling on from day to day' but would 'understand the laws on which his operations were based' and therefore 'perfect himself in his calling'.<sup>11</sup> Demand was high; by the fourth class, there were 500 men in attendance.

George Birkbeck left Glasgow for London in 1804, where he set up a fashionable medical practice, in addition to working as a physician to the General Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor in Aldersgate Street, which provided home-visiting and outpatient treatment for paupers and working-class men and women in that area of London. He threw his energies into a wide variety of social causes, including support for the Reform Act of 1832, which transformed the electoral system, and the fight to repeal the duty on paper and the tax on newspapers, which was severely limiting the ability of people to contribute to political debate and disseminate knowledge. In 1823, when patent agent Joseph Clinton Robertson and economist Thomas Hodgskin (both of the *Mechanics' Magazine*), along with the 'radical tailor' Francis Place, put out a call for the establishment of a London Mechanics' Institution, George Birkbeck was considered the ideal President. It was the start of what would become an international movement. By the middle of the nineteenth century, when Lord Lurgan and Blackburne were giving their inaugural orations to the members of the Lurgan Mechanics' Institution, there were an estimated 610 mechanics institutes in England, 55 in Scotland, 25 in Ireland, and 12 in Wales.<sup>12</sup> Institutes were also flourishing in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere.

If George Birkbeck was the founder, Henry Brougham was the movement's philosopher. Brougham was a lawyer by profession, but he came to public notice because of his role as chief adviser to Queen Caroline, the estranged wife of King George IV. By the 1830s, Brougham was Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, where he was an active supporter of the 1832 Reform Act and, as an active abolitionist, the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act. In 1826, he founded the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Crucially, however, his book on education was a popular success. Entitled *Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People. Addressed to the Working Classes and their Employers* (1825), it became the "Bible" for the mechanics' institutes everywhere. In its first year alone, *Practical Observations* went through nineteen editions.<sup>13</sup> According to one admirer, not since 'the Scriptures were first printed and circulated in the common tongue' had there been such an important text.<sup>14</sup> In *Practical Observations*, Brougham contended that only 'tyrants' and other 'bad rulers' should be terrified by 'the progress of knowledge among the mass of mankind'.<sup>15</sup> He maintained that 'the time is past and gone when bigots could persuade mankind that the lights of philosophy' were 'dangerous to religion'. He argued that the 'peace of the country, and the stability of the government, could not be more effectually secured than by the universal diffusion' of knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

These sentiments were echoed by commentators of the Mechanics' Institutes in Ireland. In the words of *The Ulster Magazine* in 1861, the mechanics' institutes aimed to 'illuminate the understandings and reform the habits of the masses of mankind', creating 'useful citizens'.<sup>17</sup> The author rejected the idea that 'men who are engaged with engrossing occupations, toiling at their daily task, and often for their daily bread' were uninterested and incapable of 'discovery'.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, he insisted, they were keen and capable: the 'honest rewards of patient industry, and the heaven-descended flame of genius, are confined to no order of our fellow-beings'.<sup>19</sup> Increased democratization also demanded it. As *The Ulster Magazine* put it, 'the masses' were increasingly influencing government, meaning that it was in

the interest of all classes to assist in diffusing the seeds of knowledge and enlightenment.... The greatness of this country has its foundation on a volcano; and if an eruption should arise owing to any revulsion of our social system in these days of impending commotion and disturbance[,] the calamity would be all the more mitigated in proportion as the people should be found tractable and intelligent, and the commonwealth perhaps also preserved from dissolution.<sup>20</sup>

In other words, he believed that mechanics' institutes would 'cause our men to become better husbands, better parents, better brothers, better members of society, and more useful citizens'.<sup>21</sup>

Men who joined the mechanics institutes

understand that they require more than 'the bread that becometh stale', and more than the meat that perisheth. The mind needs the food that nourisheth as much as the body refreshing support'.<sup>22</sup>

These were idealistic expectations. And not shared by all. Mechanics' institutes worldwide, including in Ireland, faced exceptionally high levels of hostility at the time. Opponents had six major concerns. The first was that there was working men (and women) were simply incapable of learning. In the early 1860s, an anonymous author in *The Ulster Magazine* admitted that

when a young man is tired after a hard day's work, it is by no means pleasant to set out after tea to come to some Mechanics' Institute or Athenaeum, and sit shivering for an hour or two in a barely-furnished room, while a third-rate teacher tries to unravel the intricacies of English grammar; or, harder still to impart some little knowledge of Latin or mathematics to his inquiring class.<sup>23</sup>

Second, there were anxieties about whether *women* should be part of the movement. In Lurgan, Emily Anne Browne, daughter of John Browne, the Third Baron Kilmaine, (along with 31<sup>24</sup> other 'ladies') organized a bazaar, which raised a large sum of money to establish the Lurgan Mechanics' Institute. As her husband, Charles Brownlow (Lord Lurgan) announced during his inaugural address, 'the ladies proved themselves most efficient salesmen (laughter and applause)'.<sup>25</sup>

But the involvement of 'ordinary' women in Lurgan, and elsewhere, was highly contentious. Few people disputed that education in *domesticity* could be useful. For example, the Mechanics Institute in Lurgan introduced cookery classes, distinguishing between ones offered to the 'artisan class' and those for the 'high class'. In 1879, readers of the *Lurgan Times* were told that the 'matrons and maidens of Lurgan are no less alive to a sense of their own interests' than women elsewhere. It was 'generally admitted that a little education in domestic cookery was much required'.<sup>26</sup> By charging only one-and-sixpence, it was hoped that the instruction would be 'within the reach of the humblest members of society'.<sup>27</sup>

But what about educating women *in other topics*? There were mixed views. On the one hand, would the presence of women in the institutes lead to immortality, as un-chaperoned women mingled with men in the same halls? Would the 'scientific' quality of the lectures be diluted, since it was feared that women might demand more leisure-orientated classes such as art and music? On the other hand, would educating working women enhance their employment opportunities (for example, as teachers of art and music)? Would it promote more fulfilling and equitable relationships? As early as 1826, prominent Owenite William Thompson pleaded with the mechanics' institutes to

Let your libraries, your models, and your lectures... be equally open to both sexes. Equal justice demands it.... Long have the rich excluded the poorer classes from knowledge; will the poor classes now exercise the same odious power to gratify the same anti-social propensity – the love of domination over the physically weaker half of their race?<sup>28</sup>

It was a point echoed by radical politician Rowland Detrosier in 1831. Detrosier had founded the New Mechanics' Institution in Manchester, a break-away from the Manchester Mechanics' Institution, and he believed that the education of women had to be central to working-class emancipation. He argued that it was necessary to 'raise the females of the working classes from the state of degradation' in order to make them 'rational companions of men'. By providing working-class women with education, their menfolk would be encouraged to turn away from 'immorality and crime'.<sup>29</sup> Educated woman would raise rational children; their domestic labour would benefit families, communities, and the entire nation.<sup>30</sup>

Third, might educating working *men* also be detrimental to good morals? John Dunlop, a Scottish Justice of the Peace maintained that a 'literary and scientific education' would not 'generate that change of heart required in Scripture', nor would it 'advance morality to a sublime and scriptural pitch'.<sup>31</sup> He was especially worried about how education could be 'beneficial to morality' for female members.<sup>32</sup> Scottish essayist and episcopalian priest Archibald Alison expressed similar sentiments in more vivid terms. He argued that educating working men would give them 'the means of the gratification of the animal or the sensual propensity'.<sup>33</sup> He also advocated for censorship in the books made available to working people. He contended that education that was 'unaccompanied... by any adequate restriction upon the books [workers] read or any adequate religious instruction' was a 'very great cause of the depravity of the times'.<sup>34</sup> Alison agreed with

philosopher Francis Bacon that 'knowledge or education is power' but it could be the power to do mischief as well as good.<sup>35</sup>

Similar concerns were expressed about Irish mechanics' institutes. Was the Lurgan Mechanics Institute 'respectable'? There were complaints about the 'improper' and 'filthy' language heard in the amusement room of the Institute, with one commentators begging the Committee to make a distinction between 'liberty and license' and calling for 'good breeding' and 'gentlemanly demeanour'.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, in the early 1860s, an anonymous author in *The Ulster Magazine* snarked that a little knowledge was a dangerous thing. He claimed that, at the meetings,

There is often a great deal of talking, for talking's sake, controversy in which neither side is much interested, being merely got up to pass the time. And the bad jokes, and bad grammar which prevail, are sometimes truly terrible. It is almost needless to say that such meetings seldom or never entice young men from scenes of dissipation.<sup>37</sup>

He did think there were ways to remedy these problems – including asking the members to pay the lecturers since 'a strict collection of fees, no matter how small, will do more than anything else perhaps to give the members a proper interest in their studies' (as well as improving the quality of the teachers), making members sit examinations, and handing out prizes and medals, but warned that few young men would be able to 'imitate the heroes of Mr. Smiler's book', by which he meant Smile's *Self-Help*.<sup>38</sup>

The fourth concern expressed by opponents of the mechanics' institutes is that they were a threat to religion. Churchmen and their supporters feared that any education that was primarily 'scientific and philosophical' rather than 'moral and religious' was risky.<sup>39</sup> As conservative, Anglican Biblical scholar Edward William Grinfield warned, 'it would be far better that the common people of this country should remain totally illiterate, than they should thus be furnished with *tools* by which they would inevitably work out their own and the public ruin.'<sup>40</sup> Grinfield wanted to know *who* was going to be responsible for choosing what books working men would be reading in mechanics' institutes. He believed that it was 'desirable that the choice of such books should be left to those whose superior knowledge may enable them to direct the reading of others'.<sup>41</sup> It was 'folly' to educate people beyond what they needed to know, especially when such



knowledge would not make a working man 'more happy in that station to which Providence had called him'.<sup>42</sup>

Theological concerns were augmented by more practical ones. The fifth and sixth anxieties related to the establishment of mechanics' institutes is that they would ferment social and political disorder. Some commentators alleged that there was a link between education and crime. A 'comparatively better education was co-existent with a greater amount of crime', claimed John Dunlop speaking before the 1834 Select Committee on Drunkenness. If evidence was needed, he urged the commissioners to look at France.<sup>43</sup>

The possibility that educated working people would incite social disruption, however, paled alongside the threat of political chaos. Of all the arguments against mechanics' institutes, this was the most vocal. For Moses Angel, who was active in the Jews' Free School, the mechanics' institutes were an improvement on 'the tavern, the billiard-room, the cheap theatre, and the casino' because they at least *attempted* to encourage 'the cultivation of the mind'. However, they also risked turning 'half-educated men into ill-formed politicians (and therefore, generally revolutionists, or at least democrats)'.<sup>44</sup> For Angel, democracy was as dangerous to social stability as all-out revolution. One critic even contended that educating working men was as perilous as educating animals. 'Suppose', this anonymous author in *Edinburgh Review* wrote in 1826, that 'some friend to humanity were to attempt to improve the condition of *the beasts* of the field; – to teach the horse his power, and the cow her value'. Wouldn't that make the animal less 'tractable and useful' and not 'so profuse of her treasures' (that is, milk) 'to a helpless child?'<sup>45</sup> Once again, 'useful knowledge' was equated with knowledge that maintained the status quo rather than questioned it. It was linked to anxieties about weakening deference of the 'lower orders' towards their 'superiors'. In the words of an author writing in 1825 in the *St. James's Chronicle*, 'every step which they take in setting up the labourers as a separate and independent class' was a step towards destruction: 'A scheme more completely adapted for the destruction of this empire could not have been invented by the author of evil [that is, the devil] itself.'

This barrage of hostility towards mechanics' institutes and other educational organisations catering to working people failed to dent the momentum of reform. After all, the institutes were part of a much larger movement within politics at the time. It is important to reiterate a point I made at the start: mechanics' institutes were very much *local* initiatives. Indeed, it may be problematic to write as though the rapid spread of mechanics' institutes throughout the world

were part of a *movement*. It was more *ad hoc* than the term ‘movement’ implies. Mechanics’ institutes were established by local communities; they served local interests.

The institutes in Australia and Ireland can be taken as examples. Colonists to Australia quickly adapted what they knew about mechanics’ institutes in Britain and Ireland to the Australian context. Australian institutes were often based in under-developed, rural areas, such as Van Diemen’s Land (the first mechanics’ institute in Australia). These institutes were much more than simply educational establishments. Their buildings served as libraries, reading rooms, meeting spaces, galleries, and theatres, as well as venues for sports, fairs, weddings, baptisms, and funerals.

These broad functions were also true of Ireland, including the one in Lurgan. Like in Australia, Irish institutes were often located in provincial, agricultural towns. Many Irish institutes were inspired by temperance politics.<sup>46</sup> In Lurgan, the Institute offered lectures on the linen trade of Ulster (1860), differences between the Poor Law in England and Ireland (1862),<sup>47</sup> English versus American birds (1865),<sup>48</sup> heraldry, bee-keeping, temperance and numerous discussions about matters of science. This included a lecture by R. H. Procter on the ‘Birth and Death of Worlds’, of which it was said that ‘Mr Procter’s poetic description of the sun would almost have satisfied a Fire-Worshipper. While his practical observations upon the Spectroscope marked very decisively the progress of modern discovery and speculation’.<sup>49</sup> The Institute hosted evening ‘do’s for local people. In the 1860s, the lecture room of the Lurgan Mechanics’ Institute was opened every Thursday for business men to meet ‘for the purpose of holding intercourse on mercantile matters, writing lets, etc, etc for which latter stationary will be provided’.<sup>50</sup> Auctions were held in the Institute, selling homes and businesses. It hosted meetings of numerous clubs: cricket club, gymnastics, golf, boat, rowing, athletics club, and the rifle association. It gave out medals for elocution. It was the location for the Lurgan auxiliary of the Ulster Society for Promoting the Education of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind.

The Lurgan Institute was also a major centre for entertainment. Although it wasn’t licensed until 1969 (probably due to temperance politics), throughout its history billiards was routinely mentioned.<sup>51</sup> The mechanics institute in Lurgan put on musical concerts, consisting (in the words of one 1853 report) of ‘solos, sings, and glees’, all ‘performed in a credible manner’.<sup>52</sup> There were numerous theatrical events, such as a ‘magic and slight [sic] of hand tricks’ show<sup>53</sup> and (more problematic to our ears today) an entertainment put on by ‘Christy’s Minstrels’ (a ‘black-face’ troupe) including ‘Original Illustrations of Negro Life and Character’.<sup>54</sup>

As with many of the mechanics' institutes in the UK and Ireland, there was a Penny Savings Bank on the Lurgan premises, accommodated inside the building rent-free.<sup>55</sup> Such banks were crucial. In the words of Blackburne during his inaugural address for the Lurgan Mechanics Institute, savings banks were an 'invaluable boon to the vast multitudes who are paid for their labour either by wages or small salaries' because they gave working men 'a safe investment for any money they can put by, and a moderate rate of interest upon it'. It was a *moral* enterprise: specifically, encouraging 'abstinence from intoxication'. Blackburne asked his listeners to

picture to yourselves the condition of a family where this laudable economy and providence are practiced, and contrast it with what you[,] unhappily, too often see – the fatal waste of the fruits of labour on intoxicating liquors, go to the ruin of body and soul, and the penury and wretchedness of those on whose comforts they should have been expended.

The local character of the mechanics Institutes inevitably stirred preexisting tensions. One of the most contentious aspects of the mechanics institutes was: who was to benefit? Some such as the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, were dominated by the workers themselves,<sup>56</sup> while others were under the leadership of paternalistic middle-class leaders. In the words of the 1859 Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes,

It is a prevalent opinion that Mechanics' Institutes are only so in name, their original purpose having been superseded by the rejection of them by the class for whom they were intended, and their adoption by the middle classes. But this is not true of the majority of those in Yorkshire, however it might apply elsewhere. Some of the most flourishing Institutes are composed almost wholly of the labouring class, and in most of them they form a considerable majority.<sup>57</sup>

In contrast, Mechanics' Institute in places like Bradford<sup>58</sup> and Lurgan were very much 'top-down'. This was to tear the movement apart.

Let me explain: amongst some commentators, the mechanics Institutes were a progressive force. The *Northern Whig* called the institutes a 'glorious work of national unity'.<sup>59</sup> And, indeed, the Institute in Lurgan claimed to have been established for 'the scientific, literary, and social

improvement of the operative classes of Lurgan and its neighbourhood, *without distinction of creed or party*'.<sup>60</sup>

It was not to be. There were two, highly inter-related issues that caused tempers to flare: religion and class. Accusations of sectarianism were prominent. In 1879, the Lurgan Mechanics' Institute had insisted that it was the 'only place in Lurgan in which all classes of the community could meet on a common platform and on a purely non-sectarian basis'.<sup>61</sup>

But it was patently not the case. The Institute in Lurgan might have *claimed* to be non-sectarian, but there was a strong anti-Catholic bias. The Institute hosted the British and Irish Baptist Home Mission, the conservative County Armagh Constitutional Association, and the wives of the Masons met in the Lurgan Mechanics' Institute to plan fund-raising bazaars.<sup>62</sup> It was the location for political campaign meetings for Irish Conservatives such as Maxwell C. Close and St. John Thomas Blacker.<sup>63</sup> We also know that prayer meetings were held inside the Institute because, in 1881, a 'lad' called James Dongan ('and others') disturbed a prayer meeting, organised by 'ladies'.<sup>64</sup> The only exception I found to this conservative, elite bias was a couple of meetings of Lord Lurgan's tenants who met at the Institute to talk about how to respond to the estate's refusal to lower the rents.<sup>65</sup>

Some commentators (including the Institute's chairman) even suggested that the non-sectarian nature of Lurgan's Institute was a partial reason why it faltered while other places flourished.<sup>66</sup> Lurgan's citizens preferred keeping company with their fellow-believers, such as those in the rival Shankill Buildings and the Holy Family Reading Rooms.<sup>67</sup> As a member of that latter institution claimed, they were not fuelled by 'a spirit of hostility or rivalry towards the Mechanics' Institute'. Rather,

It was felt by all that there were numbers of young men of our town, who could not be induced to join the [Mechanics'] Institute, and for whose spare time no provision of a Literary and innocent Recreative character was made. The many temptations to such young men to spend their leisure hours in the (perhaps, to them) agreeable society to be found in places where there was every danger of their being led to excessive indulgence in strong drink and its accompaniments, need not here be enlarged upon.... The opening of the Shankill Buildings Temperance Refreshment Rooms (so much needed) at the commencement of the present year,

seemed a happy juncture for the carrying into effect of the ideas previously entertained regarding Reading and Recreation Rooms, good Wholesome refreshments, if desired, being thus obtainable at a moderate charge without the necessity of leaving the building.<sup>68</sup>

Class was the second, and related issue. Class tensions were not unique to Lurgan. Indeed, class was a tension in the mechanics' institutes *from the start*. As early as the first Mechanics Institute in London in 1823, there were heated debates about who should wield power. In an 1826 article entitled 'To the Members and Managers of the Mechanics' Institutions in Britain and Ireland', the anonymous author insisted that the 'operative classes... *for whose exclusive benefit all Mechanics' Institutions profess to be instituted*' (emphasis in the original) must retain control. The author admitted that

The employers of the operative classes, as well as others of the benevolent rich, have in many places come forward with their money, books, and instruments, to aid in the establishment of your institutions. Such is one of the best modes of promoting mutual kindness between the rich and the productive classes. But let not this class of person expect *power* in return for their gifts. By so doing they would have made sordid bargains instead of gifts, and would nullify all those claims to beneficence and sympathy, which would be otherwise their natural and sufficient reward.<sup>69</sup>

In Lurgan, class tensions reached crisis point in the early 1880s. Membership had been dropping and was at an all-time low of 125.<sup>70</sup> According to the *Lurgan Times* in 1881, this was causing financial distress. When members of the Institute failed support the plan to raise subscriptions to 10 shillings, which most of the Committee members believed would help solve the financial crisis<sup>71</sup> twelve members of the committee resigned, leaving only Lord Lurgan and two other committee members.<sup>72</sup>

The failure to raise the subscription fee drew attention to the fact that the class for whom the 'Mechanics Institute' had been created were absent from the Institute. As the *Lurgan Times* noted, it was a 'notorious and lamentable fact' that the 'laudable purpose' of working for the 'intellectual improvement of the people of Lurgan' had 'never been attained in any tangible degree'.<sup>73</sup> A member reminded the meeting that 'artisans did not attend' the Institute and 'never

did'.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, in 1881 that there were *no* artisan members. Raising the fee would have meant that 'artisans' would *never* become members. As 'A Member' complained,

The rich have numerous other resources whereby they can, if so disposed, cultivate their mental faculties: for though there may be no actual 'royal road' to learning, it is yet an undeniable fact that even the rugged pathway to the temple of Minerva may be considerably smoothened, if not shortened, by a liberal disbursement of the almighty dollar.<sup>75</sup>

The needs of working people, though, had been 'either thoughtlessly overlooked or wilfully ignored'. Instead, the people who might benefit from the Institute avoided it. In his words,

Even persons in no way afflicted either by hypersensitiveness or feminine diffidence, would experience an unwillingness to enter the Institute, under the battery of supercilious or aggressive glances with which his advent is now almost sure to be saluted, should he not happen to belong to the select companionship of 'mechanics' who have constituted the place as their lounging place.<sup>76</sup>

There were some defenders of the *status quo*. As one journalist explained,

People whose social position came within the term 'mechanic' felt that the place was, or ought to be, dedicated to their interests, and believed, either rightly or wrongly, that those interests were disregarded by their more affluent neighbours, whom they looked upon as having taken wrongful possession of the establishment from its earliest hour.<sup>77</sup>

Of course, he argued, this was a *false* belief. Although he admitted that the 'working classes' had 'some cause for jealousy', he contended that stating that they must also accept 'a great deal of the blame' since the rules allowed them to be represented in the management of the Institute but they had 'persistently kept aloof from it'.<sup>78</sup>

A new Committee was established, who set about a radical overhaul of the Institute. This included downgrading the centrality of the library (which 'ceased to exercise the slightest attraction to any reader' and was described as in a 'state of disorder').<sup>79</sup> The new committee believed the way

to attract mechanics and artisans was to provide more *entertainment*, by which they primarily meant bagatelle, billiards, chess, and draughts.<sup>80</sup> And, to do this, they needed a ‘good room’ as opposed to ‘the small ante-room’.<sup>81</sup> So, the Reading Room was converted into an ‘amusement room’<sup>82</sup> and funds were raised by putting on ‘elocutionary and musical entertainment’.<sup>83</sup> They also proposed opening a School of Design, which was considered to be very much in line with the original purpose of the Mechanics’ Institutes. As the *Lurgan Times* noted,

From the rudest implement of agriculture to the most improved machinery, everything is now produced on a scientific basis, and it is well known that the art of drawing is the great instrument by which the human brain is capable of carrying the most complicated ideas into practical issues. The development of the faculty of design has wielded a potent influence in working out the remarkable evolutions of the present century.<sup>84</sup>

This was especially true with the ‘staple industries of this neighbourhood’, such as the linen and cambric trades: after all, ‘the efforts of our damask designers, as much as the superior handcraft of our damask weavers, have contributed to produce a firm front against foreign competition, and carry off the highest awards from all the great international exhibitions of Europe and America’.<sup>85</sup>

The plans weren’t wholly successful. Similar concerns continued to be heard in the 1890s. For example, a person signing himself ‘A Worker’ complained that the Lurgan Mechanics’ Institute ‘has been monopolized by the class who require it least, and who have made it into a 5s club, without popular instincts of any kind’.<sup>86</sup> The author wanted to establish a Lurgan Free Library.

Less than a month later, a person signing himself ‘Forward’ (and it could have been the same man) set out a detailed plan, explicitly in opposition to the Lurgan Mechanics’ Institute, which it criticised for being run by and in the interests of ‘employers and the well-to-do... to the exclusion of the mechanics and artisans’. The author accused the managers of leaving much of the building ‘idle, except a part which is kown [sic] as the Freemasons’ department, and used as a lodge-room by that fraternity’.<sup>87</sup> The author suggested that the ‘Trustees of the Lurgan Mechanics’ Institute be ‘respectfully asked’ to donate the building entirely to the Free Library, insisting that this request would ‘only be asking that the property be converted to its original use’, which was to benefit mechanics and artisans.<sup>88</sup> If the Freemasons objected, they should simply be dismissed since ‘they have wealth enough’ to build a hall themselves.<sup>89</sup> As for the ‘employers and gentry who

now used the Institute', he asked them to 'manfully set about starting a club of their own' since the original Mechanics' Institute had been created for mechanics and artisan class, not their 'betters'.<sup>90</sup>

Only five days later, John C. O'Reilly responded to 'Forward'. He was keen on the idea of establishing a Free Library, on the grounds that it would 'very much assist in promoting the self-instruction and self-esteem of the working classes of the town and surrounding neighbourhood'. In addition, such a resource would 'tend in a marked manner to the more rapidly lessening of that chasm of political and religious discord which formerly worked such evil and kept divided the inhabitants of the town'.<sup>91</sup> But was 'Forward's' plan workable? O'Reilly had doubts:

Even if what 'Forward' proposes were carried out, what would you have? Jack and his master actually arriving together, going up the same stairs together, walking into the same door together, then each into their own reading room together – no! but each to their own separate and exclusive room – and, mark you, *on the same floor*. But, if all this *could* happen to successfully continue to exist – and that Lurgan has so changed that the wolf and the lamb could fondle each other – then there would exist no caste – no exclusive sets – no grades of society – why, even then, I dread the result, not for myself, nor for the people, but for the steps. They never could contain all the 'gazing gossippers' [sic] who on the nice summer evenings would be talking over the 'affairs of men (including their neighbours) and nations'. And at the same time watching 'everybody and his business'.

It was unworkable, in other words. The 'poor, honest, working son of toil in Lurgan' simply did not want to

mix with the 'upper (?) crust' on the stage of the Mechanics' Institute. His desire, as I take it, would simply be to go to his own library in a place where he would not be likely to come across those whose stations in Lurgan society is such that (in their own opinion) only!, has to give them the right to look down upon the working man as a 'pariah', and unworthy to be associated with.<sup>92</sup>

Obviously, the 'moneyed men' enjoying the benefits of a 'club' were not going to give up their privileges, which is why, from 1904, raising funds for a Free Library heated up. Andrew



Carnegie offered to provide the building, but the local community were supposed to provide the ‘equipment’, that is, the books.<sup>93</sup> The discussions returned to accusations that the Lurgan Mechanics’ Institute had deserted the workers. According to one unnamed person, he hoped that the new Free Library would not ‘drift away’ from working people as had happened with the Lurgan Mechanics Institute, ‘which none of them dare go into now’.<sup>94</sup> The *Lurgan Mail* simply repeated the old line previously recited by the *Lurgan Times* – that is, that although the working people of Lurgan felt that the ‘advantages of the Mechanics Institute’ had ‘been deliberately filched from them, and the offence is the more contemptible and blameworthy because those who now enjoy the advantages are of a class who should be able to pay for anything and everything they require in the way of newspapers and current literature or recreative enjoyment’, but working people had always been welcomed at the Institute and had never taken advantage of its facilities or opportunities to help manage it.<sup>95</sup> The Carnegie Library was established in 1910 and, in 1944, purchased the entire library of the Lurgan Mechanics Institute. Reflecting on that purchase, someone signing themselves ‘Pro Bobo Publico’ commented:

The power of the written word is uniformly known and respected. The Nazis since their rise to power have sought to destroy all the emancipating literature they could seize. The importance they attached to good books is revealed by their diabolical eagerness to destroy them.<sup>96</sup>

He continued, stating that this was why the ‘guardians of Lurgan’ purchased the Library of the Lurgan Mechanics’ Institute, so that ‘in time it [the Carnegie Library] shall become a seat of culture, wielding a beneficial influence on the community, for which high purpose libraries were first constituted’.<sup>97</sup>

In conclusion, in 1859, the Lurgan Mechanics’ Institute had been formally inaugurated ‘in the presence of one of the largest and most fashionable assemblages that has been witness in that town for a long time past’. But it struggled (like many other mechanics institutes) to adapt to changing educative provisions and social as well as political realities. The people for whom the Mechanics’ Institutes had been established were becoming less deferential. In Lurgan, as early as 1884, a lecturer who was (‘with tiresome prolixity’) arguing that ‘Art could not improve Nature’. Was interrupted by a member of the audience exclaiming, ‘How would you look without your wig?’.<sup>98</sup> State-run education, from 1870 but especially from the 1940s, took away one of their main rationales. In places like Lurgan, class and religious tensions had a deadening impact. In the words

of a writer in the *Lurgan Times* in 1884, the Irish had ‘more deeply rooted and intense caste instincts’ and a ‘magnetic repulsion between class and class’.<sup>99</sup> The fundamental purpose of the old Mechanics Institutes was in disarray: Were they vehicles for improving social morality or key to promoting an entrepreneurial ideal? Was the spread of the institutes due to enthusiasm by working people themselves to improve their position in life or was it more about ‘social control’ of the workers by their ‘betters’? Nevertheless, around a century after it had been formed, the Mechanics’ Institute in Lurgan found itself ‘the last of its kind in Northern Ireland’ since all the others had ‘faded out’.<sup>100</sup> It was a major achievement.

- <sup>1</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>2</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>4</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>5</sup> *Lurgan Times* (19 February 1902), 2.
- <sup>6</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>7</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3. William Watson and his brother Francis (who was a magistrate in Lurgan) both died in 1877 and a memorial clock was placed in the tower of the Parish Church: 'Proposed Watson Memorial in Lurgan', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 November 1877), 2.
- <sup>8</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>9</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>10</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>11</sup> John George Godard, *George Birkbeck. The Pioneer of Popular Education. A Memoir and a Review* (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1884), np.
- <sup>12</sup> James William Hudson, *The History of Adult Education, in Which it Comprised a Full and Complete History of the Mechanics' and Literary Institutions, Athenaeums, Philosophical, Mental and Christian Improvement Societies, Literary Unions, Schools of Design, Etc., of Great Britain, Ireland, America, Etc. Etc.* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1851), v.
- <sup>13</sup> These sale figures were according to 'A Reply to Mr Brougham's 'Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People, Addressed to the Working Classes and Their Employers'', *The Edinburgh Review*, 42.83 (1 April 1825), 212.
- <sup>14</sup> Review of Brougham's tract entitled "Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People; Addressed to the Working Classes and Their Employers' (London, 1825)', *The Edinburgh Review*, 41.82 (1 January 1825), 508.
- <sup>15</sup> Henry Brougham, *Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People. Addressed to the Working Classes and their Employers*, 1<sup>st</sup> pub 1825 (Manchester: E. J. Morten, 1971), 31.
- <sup>16</sup> Henry Brougham, *Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People. Addressed to the Working Classes and their Employers*, 1<sup>st</sup> pub 1825 (Manchester: E. J. Morten, 1971), 4.
- <sup>17</sup> G. Blackwood, 'Literary Clubs', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1861), 25.
- <sup>18</sup> G. Blackwood, 'Literary Clubs', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1861), 26.
- <sup>19</sup> G. Blackwood, 'Literary Clubs', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1861), 26.
- <sup>20</sup> G. Blackwood, 'Literary Clubs', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1861), 29.
- <sup>21</sup> G. Blackwood, 'Literary Clubs', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1861), 29.
- <sup>22</sup> G. Blackwood, 'Literary Clubs', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1861), 29.
- <sup>23</sup> 'R. G.', 'How to Help Self-Helpers', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1961), 585.
- <sup>24</sup> Another report says 14.
- <sup>25</sup> 'Inaugural Address by the Lord Justice of Appeal', *Belfast News-Letter* (3 March 1859), 3.
- <sup>26</sup> 'Cookery Classes in Lurgan', *Lurgan Times* (25 October 1879), 2 and 'Cookery Classes', *Lurgan Times* (18 October 1879), 2.
- <sup>27</sup> 'Cookery Classes in Lurgan', *Lurgan Times* (25 October 1879), 2.
- <sup>28</sup> William Thompson, 'To the Members and Managers of the Mechanics Institutions in Britain and Ireland', *The Co-Operative Magazine and Monthly Herald*, 1 (January-February 1826), 12.
- <sup>29</sup> Rowland Detrosier, quoted in 'London Mechanics' Institution', *The Examiner* (25 September 1831), 619.
- <sup>30</sup> 'London Mechanics' Institution', *The Examiner* (25 September 1831), 619.
- <sup>31</sup> Evidence from John Dunlop in the *Report from the Select Committee on Inquiry into Drunkenness, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix* (5 August 1834), 412.
- <sup>32</sup> Evidence by Rev. Dr. Nathan Marcus Adler, in *Education Commission. Answers to the Curriculum of Questions, 1860. Vol. V*, 19.
- <sup>33</sup> Archibald Alison, *First Report from the Select Committee on Combinations of Workmen; Together with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix*, 1838, 187.
- <sup>34</sup> Archibald Alison, *First Report from the Select Committee on Combinations of Workmen; Together with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix*, 1838, 187.
- <sup>35</sup> Archibald Alison, *First Report from the Select Committee on Combinations of Workmen; Together with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix*, 1838, 187.
- <sup>36</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (27 January 1883), 2. He was referring to a letter to the editor from 'Common Decency', 'Irregularities on the Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (27 January 1883), 3. There were also complaints about 'chattering' in the Reading Room: see 'An Old Member', 'Silence! Silence!!', *Lurgan Times* (11 March 1893), 3.
- <sup>37</sup> 'R. G.', 'How to Help Self-Helpers', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1961), 584.
- <sup>38</sup> 'R. G.', 'How to Help Self-Helpers', *The Ulster Magazine: And Monthly Review of Science and Literature*, 2 (1961), 585.
- <sup>39</sup> Edward William Grinfield, *A Reply to Mr. Brougham's 'Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People; Addressed to the Working Classes and Their Employers'* (London: C. & J. Rivinton, 1825), iv.

- <sup>40</sup> Edward William Grinfield, *A Reply to Mr. Brougham's 'Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People; Addressed to the Working Classes and Their Employers'* (London: C. & J. Rivinton, 1825), 10-11.
- <sup>41</sup> Edward William Grinfield, *A Reply to Mr. Brougham's 'Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People; Addressed to the Working Classes and Their Employers'* (London: C. & J. Rivinton, 1825), 17.
- <sup>42</sup> Edward William Grinfield, *A Reply to Mr. Brougham's 'Practical Observations Upon the Education of the People; Addressed to the Working Classes and Their Employers'* (London: C. & J. Rivinton, 1825), 25.
- <sup>43</sup> Evidence from John Dunlop in the *Report from the Select Committee on Inquiry into Drunkenness, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix* (5 August 1834), 412.
- <sup>44</sup> Evidence from Moses Angel of the Jews' Free School, in *Education Commission. Answers to the Curriculum of Questions, 1860. Vol. V*, 48.
- <sup>45</sup> 'The Consequences of a Scientific Education', *Edinburgh Review* (1 December 1826), 194.
- <sup>46</sup> 'The Consequences of a Scientific Education', *Edinburgh Review* (1 December 1826), 531.
- <sup>47</sup> *Protestant Watchman and Lurgan Gazette* (4 October 1862), 2.
- <sup>48</sup> *Protestant Watchman and Lurgan Gazette* (15 April 1865), 3.
- <sup>49</sup> 'An Interesting Lecture', *Portadown News*, 21 April 1883, 5.
- <sup>50</sup> *Protestant Watchman and Lurgan Gazette* (17 Sept 1864), 2.
- <sup>51</sup> 'Lurgan has Last of Mechanics Institutes', *Lurgan Mail* (27 November 1953), 6.
- <sup>52</sup> 'Brief Chronicle of the Last Month', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 8.184 (1 June 1858), 259. MUST GET: R. G. Moron, 'Mechanics Institutes and the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in Ireland', *Irish Booklore*, 2 (1972), 59-74 and K. B. Byrne, 'Mechanic Institutes in Ireland', *Proceedings of the Educational Studies Association Conference* (Dublin: 1979), 32-47.
- <sup>53</sup> *Protestant Watchman and Lurgan Gazette* (17 September 1864), 3.
- <sup>54</sup> 'Christy's Minstrels', *Protestant Watchman and Lurgan Gazette* (1 February 1868), 2.
- <sup>55</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (18 October 1879), 3.
- <sup>56</sup> Martyn Walker, 'Encouragement of Sound Education Amongst the Industrial Classes': Mechanics' Institutes and Working-Class Membership 11838-1881', *Educational Studies*, 39.2 (2013), 142-55.
- <sup>57</sup> *Annual Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes* (Leeds: Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, 1859), 2.
- <sup>58</sup> Gerry Wright, 'Discussions of the Characteristics of Mechanics' Institutes in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century: The Bradford Example', *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 33.1 (2001), 14.
- <sup>59</sup> *Northern Whig* (6 January 1825)
- <sup>60</sup> 'The New Building of the Lurgan Mechanics Institute', *Newry Telegraph* (15 December 1857), 2, emphasis added. Also see 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Dublin Evening Mail* (9 December 1953), 1.
- <sup>61</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (18 October 1879), 3.
- <sup>62</sup> 'Masonic Centenary Bazaar', *Lurgan Times* (12 March 1892), 3.
- <sup>63</sup> *Lurgan Times* (20 March 1880), 3.
- <sup>64</sup> It was a man who complained on behalf of the women – John G. Wake. 'The Salvation Army', *Lurgan Times* (5 March 1881), 3.
- <sup>65</sup> For example, see 'Lord Lurgan's Estates', *Lurgan Times* (29 January 1881), 2.
- <sup>66</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (12 November 1881), 3.
- <sup>67</sup> The Holy Family Reading Rooms opened in 1879.
- <sup>68</sup> 'Observer', 'To the Editor', *Lurgan Times* (14 June 1879), 3.
- <sup>69</sup> 'To the Members and Managers of the Mechanics' Institutions in Britain and Ireland', *The Co-Operative Magazine and Monthly Herald*, 1 (January 1826), 23-4.
- <sup>70</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (12 November 1881), 3.
- <sup>71</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (12 November 1881), 3. The proposal was to increase the subscription to 10 shillings for members living in the town (payable half-yearly) and the members could then recommend 'apprentices or artisans' employed by them for admittance at 1s3d per quarter. People not living in town were to pay 5 shillings. In 1902, the annual subscription was 5 shillings a year.
- <sup>72</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics Institute', *Lurgan Times* (10 December 1881), 3. Another report said that 14 committee members resigned. Also see 'Lurgan Mechanics Institute', *Lurgan Times* (10 December 1881), 3.
- <sup>73</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institute: A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (4 November 1882), 2.
- <sup>74</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (12 November 1881), 3.
- <sup>75</sup> 'A Member', 'A Needed Reform', *Lurgan Times* (13 December 1884), 3.
- <sup>76</sup> 'A Member', 'A Needed Reform', *Lurgan Times* (13 December 1884), 3.
- <sup>77</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institute: A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (4 November 1882), 2.
- <sup>78</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institute: A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (4 November 1882), 2.
- <sup>79</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institute: A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (4 November 1882), 2.
- <sup>80</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (12 November 1881), 3.
- <sup>81</sup> 'Lurgan Mechanics' Institute', *Lurgan Times* (12 November 1881), 3.
- <sup>82</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institute: A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (4 November 1882), 2.
- <sup>83</sup> 'Elocutionary and Musical Entertainment', *Lurgan Times* (20 January 1882), 2.
- <sup>84</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institute: A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (4 November 1882), 2.

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- <sup>85</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institute: A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (4 November 1882), 2.
- <sup>86</sup> 'A Worker', 'The Free Library', *Lurgan Times* (31 October 1891), 3. The 'club-like character' was also complained about by 'A Member', 'A Needed Reform', *Lurgan Times* (13 December 1884), 3.
- <sup>87</sup> 'Forward', 'The Lurgan Free Library. A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (21 November 1891), 3. This was originally sent to the editor of the *Northern Whig*.
- <sup>88</sup> 'Forward', 'The Lurgan Free Library. A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (21 November 1891), 3. This was originally sent to the editor of the *Northern Whig*.
- <sup>89</sup> 'Forward', 'The Lurgan Free Library. A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (21 November 1891), 3. This was originally sent to the editor of the *Northern Whig*.
- <sup>90</sup> 'Forward', 'The Lurgan Free Library. A Suggestion', *Lurgan Times* (21 November 1891), 3. This was originally sent to the editor of the *Northern Whig*.
- <sup>91</sup> John C. O'Reilly, 'The Lurgan Free Library', *Lurgan Times* (28 November 1891), 2.
- <sup>92</sup> John C. O'Reilly, 'The Lurgan Free Library', *Lurgan Times* (28 November 1891), 2.
- <sup>93</sup> 'Sayings and Doings', *Lurgan Mail* (1 October 1904), 3. Also see 'Lurgan Free Library', *Lurgan Mail* (24 September 1904), 2.
- <sup>94</sup> 'Sayings and Doings', *Lurgan Mail* (1 October 1904), 3.
- <sup>95</sup> 'Sayings and Doings', *Lurgan Mail* (1 October 1904), 3.
- <sup>96</sup> 'Pro Bono Publico', '[Letter to the Editor] The Public Library', *Lurgan Mail* (29 January 1944), 1.
- <sup>97</sup> 'Pro Bono Publico', '[Letter to the Editor] The Public Library', *Lurgan Mail* (29 January 1944), 1.
- <sup>98</sup> 'A Lecturer', *Lurgan Times* (2 February 1884), 4.
- <sup>99</sup> 'The Mechanics' Institutes', *Lurgan Times* (13 December 1884), 2.
- <sup>100</sup> 'Lurgan has Last of Mechanics Institutes', *Lurgan Mail* (27 November 1953), 6.

