



# Libraries through the lens

## Library of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics

**THIS month's Library through the lens takes us to Hungary and the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME). Founded in 1782 the BME was among the first institutions to offer university-level education to engineers.**

Thomas Guignard says: "There is debate around whether it is, in fact, the oldest, with its main competitor being another Hungarian institution, the university of Miskolc, itself the successor of the University of Mining and Metallurgy in Selmecbánya in today's Slovakia.

Regardless of who was there first, the foundation of such institutions was a sign of the growing importance of the formation of engineers at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution.

"A library wasn't very high on the list of priorities of these early technical universities, however, beyond the odd bookshelf in professor offices. Nor was a purpose-built location, and it's only in 1882 that BME received a building worthy of its status, together with a library. That location, which today houses the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), was soon superseded with an

even larger and grander one on the banks of the Danube, which opened in 1909.

"At the back of the complex, BME architecture professor Samu Pecz added a separate pavillion for the library. The Neogothic structure was organised in three wings radiating from a central hall. To the south was a series of offices and small reading rooms. The west wing held the collections, on iron-reinforced floors connected by a spiral stairway. Finally, the north wing was the grand reading room that is still in use today, as we can see from the image above."