

Max Eyth

A Fowler worker who became a famous German writer and founder of the German Agricultural Society



Max Eyth (pronounced Max Eyt as the English 'th' sound doesn't feature in German speaking) was born on 6th May 1836 to parents Edward and Julie in Kirchheim Württemberg. Previously educated in the Protestant seminary where his father taught he became interested in Engineering from an early age. From 1852 to 1853 he studied at the Polytechnic at Berg near Stuttgart. He served an apprenticeship at G.Kuhb in Stuttgart.

In 1861 Eyth went to England taking on a few engineering jobs before he joined John Fowler at the new Steam Plough Works in Hunslet. He worked on developing Fowler's steam plough designs. Quite an artist he also designed the company's stand at the 1862 World Exhibition in London.^[1]

Below - Max Eyth painting "Heath Plow to Lopau (June 1903)"^[1]



I got to know John Fowler, who stood by his steamploUGH in the midst of a circle of pleasantly animated farmers who were congratulating him on the prize of the Royal Agricultural Society of England just won. I found him in a stubble field before a broken implement of mysterious appearance, full of interest and zeal. A splendid man of about 34 years old, big and stately, black hair and affable, with a laugh that did good to all within a hundred yards of him, he read my letter [of introduction from Alfred Tylor, a London brass founder whom he had befriended], shook my hand, but could not use me.^[2]

Fowler soon changed his mind though. *My friend Tylor in London reminds me about you. If you are inclined to commence work in my factory, just recently started, you will find a vice. As soon as opportunity offers, I will take care that you learn steamplothing. After that we must see. I believe in the future of the thing.*^[2]

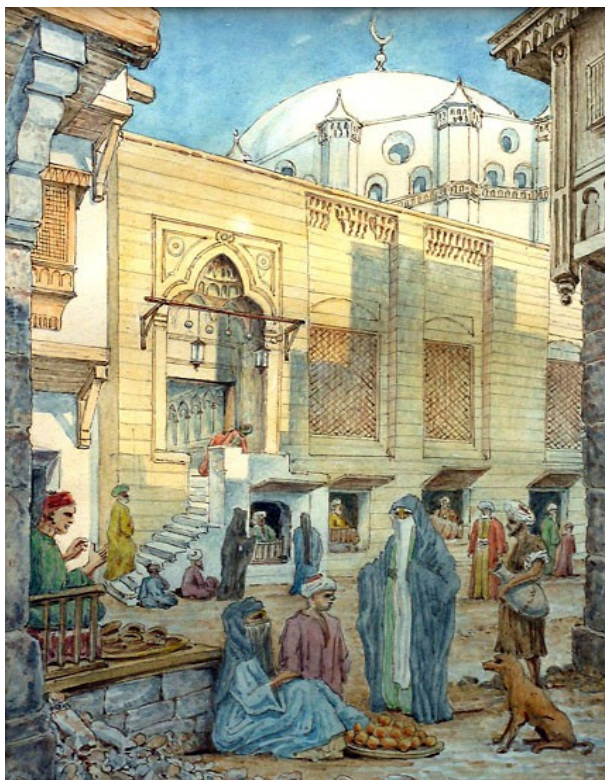
From 1863 he travelled extensively selling Fowler products in Egypt, North America, Peru and Russia. These overseas sales trips were essential in establishing important export orders that made John Fowler the massive company it became.

Eyth's tales of his travels introducing mechanization to developing countries often read like action adventure novels and his father kept letters sent home about his travel. These stories as well as a number of his poems were released as 'Hiking Book of an Engineer' in 1871^[1]

Below - Max Eyth painting "My Tent In Sheikh Kaffr (1864)"^[1]



As well as writing a lot on his travels he also made many sketches and paintings, in all he produced around over 1000 drawings and watercolours, now belonging to the Ulmer Museum.



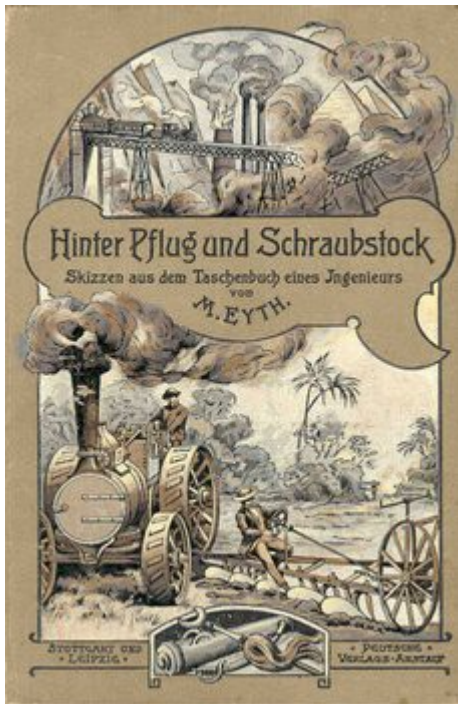
As well as representing the company overseas he did plenty of work back in Leeds on Fowler's designs. One interesting Eyth design was in 1877 for a traction engine with 12 foot diameter hind wheels, sort of a steam monster truck that fans of steampunk fiction would surely appreciate. The very real 'Steeplechaser' engine "*looking like a squirrel in a rope drum*" according to Eyth himself, was not a success. The prototype did sell but came back to the works in 1885 to be rebuilt. "*It steers well as any, it pulls rather more and runs very much better, but only a perfect fool would buy it*"^[2]

In 1882 Max Eyth left Fowlers and returned to Germany. He founded the German Agricultural Society in 1885, a similar set up to the Royal Agricultural Society of England whose shows Fowler's frequently attended.

In later years Eyth published many more books including more tales from his Fowler days in 'Behind the Plough and Vice' released in 1899 and the novel 'The Tailor of Ulm' in 1906

Max Eyth died in Ulm on 25th August 1906^[1]

Max Eyth Books



The Bridge over the Ennobucht

Hiking Book of an Engineer Volumes 1-6 1871-1884

Monk and Mercenary (stories) 1882

Behind the Plough and Vice (short stories, 2 volumes) 1899

The Struggle for the Great Pyramid (novel, 2 volumes) 1902

The Power of Our Time (Autobiography 3 volumes) 1904-1906

The Tailor of Ulm (novel, 2 volumes) 1906

Bibliography

www.maxeyth.de (in German) [1]

The Story of the Steam Plough Works, Michael Lane[2]

