



Book review

Eminent Civil Engineers — Their 20th Century Life and Times; David Doran (Ed.); Whittles Publishing, 1999; 281 pp., photos, illustrations

You are right but that is what is wrong, You stand still but life moves on, To live is to change and not just to be, If you can't then your youth is gone. (Ove Arup)

Keith H. Whittles, the publisher, and David Doran, the editor, should be highly commended for the idea of presenting this humble but inspiring book to the civil engineering profession.

This collection of essays is most humble thanks to the wonderfully human tone of the contributions by 30 prominent, mostly British engineers. It is also inspiring because it sends out an important message to the young generation of civil and materials engineers: this is a most consequential field of human endeavor, resonant with beauty and challenges, and in great need of and potential for innovation.

The individual authors, including several representing the field of civil engineering materials (e.g., Peter Hewlett,

Gunnar Idorn), expose their practical experience and thoughts on a variety of issues. These encompass, among others, the role of civil engineering in development of civilization, creativity and innovation methodology, importance of fundamental and specialized education, importance of aesthetics, thoughts on career and happiness, and importance to advanced engineering of multidisciplinary approach and team cooperation.

The selection of the prominent 20th century engineers—contributors is, as one might expect, somewhat arbitrary and incomplete. It would be interesting to compare the presented thoughts to those of prominent engineers and thinkers in other countries, specifically in North America and continental Europe, but also elsewhere. Nevertheless, this book is highly recommended: engineers, teachers, and students can learn from it.

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