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Built: The hidden stories behind our structures **by Roma Agrawal.** **Publisher: Bloomsbury.** **First publication: 2018**

Bookstores and thunderstorms in Bloemfontein are few and scattered far apart. Whenever you find yourself in either of them, be grateful and cherish the moment. Global warming might explain scarcer thunderstorm activity, but to find the reason for the tragic declining demand for printed paper, we might have to ask the "millennials" to Google it.

My latest encounter with one of my favourite bookstores revealed the colourful cover of a newly released book entitled *Built*. This was neatly tucked away under the architecture section.

This book is a maiden voyage by an energetic and inspiring 35-year-old female engineer, originally from Mumbai, India. She is currently an associate director at AECOM and a fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers. Roma Agrawal obtained her BA degree in Physics from the University of Oxford in 2004, and her MSc Structural Engineering degree from Imperial College London, in 2005. Her fascinating résumé includes the impressive "The Shard" building in London (the tallest building in western Europe). She shares her engineering knowledge and experience as well as some personal stories with her readers in a practical and educational book, written in the first-person.

Similar to the title, the chapter headings consist of single noun terms with no

numbering system. The introductory chapter, "Storey", could also be spelled "Story", as it tells the story of how the author fell in love with physics and engineering. The remainder of the chapters, "Force", "Fire", "Clay", "Metal", "Rock", and so on relate to the content of the chapter, except for the "Clean" chapter dealing mainly with the ironically dirty London sewerage system. Each chapter opens with a personal experience that flows into an engineering problem. There is, however, hardly any reference to the invaluable role of other professions in the built environment. It would have been interesting to learn about the design, financial, and execution challenges encountered with "The Shard". Chapters such as "Price", "Design", "Space", and "Time" would not have looked out of place. These may be the topics for her second book.

In my opinion, the perfect target market for this book would be the "millennial" or "Google" generation. Perhaps for tertiary scholars who consider a professional career in the built environment. (Does this generation read printed books?)

If you want to spoil your teenager this Christmas with a well put together vintage present, consider *Built* for R323 at Exclusive Books or R530 at Amazon.

Merry Christmas!