

# Book review

## Adventures in Management

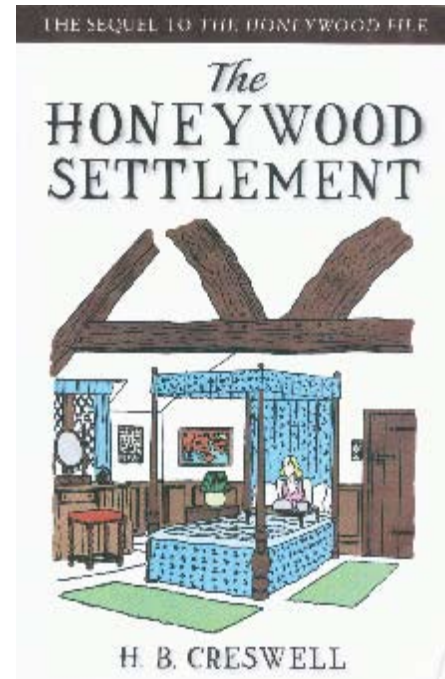
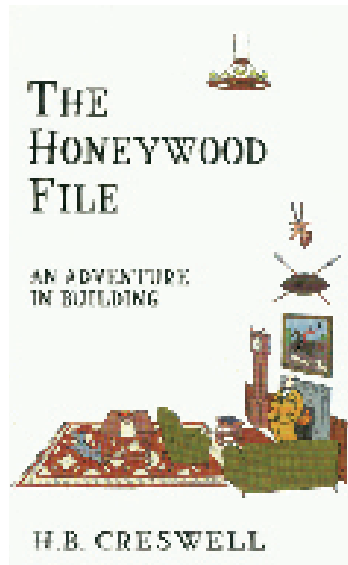
*The Honeywood File and The Honeywood Settlement* by Harry B. Creswell  
Academy Chicago Publishers, Paperbacks, ISBNs 0-89733-473-0 and 0-89733-566-9, 230 pp / 210 pp  
Reviewed by **John Freemayer**

Those who have ever had a custom home built probably know the adage—if it can go wrong, it will go wrong. *The Honeywood File* and *The Honeywood Settlement* are hilarious accounts about the adventures [or misadventures] of James Spinlove, a young architect who agrees to design and manage the construction of “Honeywood” mansion for a somewhat pompous Sir Leslie Brash and his “good lady.” Set in the 1920s English countryside, these complimentary satires brim with useful insights into human nature as Spinlove is put to the test by his client and a host of other characters, including tradesmen, town planners, lawyers and even a surveyor.

Although the author assures his readers that these books are works of fiction, they are put together as a long series of letters that could be easily thought of as true events. The author adds his commentary here and there, providing bits of after-the-fact advice, wisdom, and humor. Some American readers may find the British humor somewhat dry, yet many will surely be reminded of a troublesome client of their own.

In *The Honeywood Files* (first printed in 1929), Spinlove starts the design process, but the design keeps changing every so often at the client’s demand. When the mansion is finally ready for construction, the young architect assumes the role of a construction manager. As things proceed, we quickly see the faults of not having proper contracts and governmental approvals. At one point Spinlove explains to his client: “Had I known you were not aware of the custom concerning payment of architect’s fees, I would have explained the matter.” Sound familiar?

Having served his client in good faith, Spinlove manages to complete the mansion in the first ibook. All types of professional service provid-



ers would likely consider *The Honeywood File* part entertaining and part instructional. In a light-hearted manner, it is easy to see the faults of someone else.

*The Honeywood Settlement* (first printed in 1930), is a sequel to the earlier book, presenting ten months’ worth of letters exchanged between the architect and client, and with numerous subcontractors. From them we learn about construction defects and cost overruns—in short, about the problems of not carefully reading the small print of contracts or, in some cases, not adequately documenting contractual provisions. But, as in real practice, calm dialogue and compromise often prevail.

You probably are wondering how these books may apply to a surveying and mapping professional. They do because, in an entertaining manner, much can be learned from them about business practices and client relations. Maybe even more important, they remind us not to take everything in life so seriously. It’s all right to have some fun with our endeavors.