**Festschrift for Dame Lynne Brindley***(Alexandria: the journal of national and international library and information issues, 23, 3)*, edited by Andy Stephens and Caroline Brazier, Manchester, Manchester University Press in association with The British Library, 2012, 141 pp., price not reported (soft cover), ISSN 0955-7490

This richly diverse collection deserves being acquired as a monograph shelved alongside histories of the British Library (BL). Not only does it celebrate the achievements of the first professional librarian and woman to lead the BL, but it also presents essays of multiple value to library historians and management experts on the rise of digitisation and the birth of the e-library in British librarianship.

The 19 essays are largely from in-house, but national librarians from Denmark, Singapore and New Zealand (with some Maori text), but not Australia, also contribute. Colin Steele writes as a former colleague of Dame Lynne. The essays illustrate the various facets of Dame Lynne’s professional career both as Chief Executive of the BL and in earlier capacities. There is little overlap between essays that blend well to produce a unified picture of her capacities, harmonious personality and negotiation skills. The reader is struck also by the affection Dame Lynne evokes.

One author lists her inability to gossip as a factor that made her ‘trusted by all sides’. References to her courage pique curiosity, since this implies struggle and opposition. These do not emerge clearly, but her ‘victories’ are evidence enough of superior political and professional skills. Certainly she has an amazing record of securing cooperation and agreement with formidable partners in intricate negotiations. Team building, a particular strength of hers, characterised her tenure at the BL. Another author writes of her ‘generating literally wonderful creative dissatisfaction...in her defining and communicating her vision for the future and her laser-like clarity of vision through the most complex range of issues’. The instructive contribution by Malcolm Read (‘The JISC’) is based on close observation by a colleague working with her in the 1990s on the Joint Information Systems Committee in the higher education sector. There is much important historical information given here. The contribution by Andy Stephens (‘Lynne Brindley and the British Library 2000-2012’) is an excellent summation of the breadth and variety of her contribution as both a leader and innovator with all the requisite managerial skills.

Amid all this wealth two articles seem to stand out. ‘The National Library at a Crossroads: The Digital Content Revolution and its Consequences’ is by the former Danish National Librarian, E.K. Nielsen. It is an impressive general analysis worth serious study. The second essay is something of a bombshell: ‘Lynne, Leadership and Libraries’ by Janet Wilkinson, Director of the John Rylands Library. She states: ‘our
profession will miss her. Her legacy surely dictates that we now seriously address the leadership vacuum in our profession that we have been trying, unsuccessfully, to confront in recent years’. Ms Wilkinson delivers some smart punches.

R.L. Cope
Sydney