

Foreword

Professor Daniel Branch

The life-blood of any department in any major research university is its postgraduate community. It is among this constituency that the cutting-edge research is being conducted and the inventive relationships between future collaborators are being formed. The challenge (as always) is to find outlets for this creative energy. *Retrospectives* provides just such an opportunity for publication of the very best historical research by postgraduate students.

The journal is based in the History Department at the University of Warwick. Its editorial board, many of its contributors and most of its reviewers are drawn from the postgraduate community in the department.

Like the three previous volumes, this volume is notable for its breadth, innovation and the manner in which it conveys a sense of the excitement of postgraduate research. Although the uncertainty of funding and the demands of teaching or other employment present significant challenges to every student, it is also true that postgraduates enjoy a great privilege in being able to focus on their research subject with few other distractions. It is a privilege that most will never be able to enjoy again in their subsequent academic careers.

This volume is an admirable showcase for such work. It provides an opportunity for the authors of the articles that follow to demonstrate the value of innovative methodologies, the benefits of interdisciplinary approaches and the rewards of exploring new avenues of historical research.

Successive generations of editors have done well to make *Retrospectives* sustainable. Many similar initiatives come to a halt when the founding editors move on; longevity is a significant challenge in a setting where those involved will spend probably a maximum of four years in the host department. The fact that the journal is now in its fourth volume is a testament to the hard work of the current editorial board, led by Benjamin Redding, and the sound foundations left by its predecessors.

This is not to infer that *Retrospectives* is simply surviving. In fact, the journal has received a record number of papers and book reviews for consideration over the past year. The volume of submissions means the current editorial board has to work even harder than its predecessors. But like their

predecessors, the current editors are helped a great deal by the high quality of papers that they are able to publish.

There are many reasons why I am proud to be part of the History Department at Warwick. Its postgraduate community and the creative energy of its members, as exhibited in this volume of *Retrospectives*, are two of these. This volume provides a fine platform of the exciting work done by this group and their counterparts from elsewhere. I hope you will enjoy reading it.

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