Editorial

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One pleasure of serving on the board of *Midland History* is the opportunity to read and assess the entries for the annual *Midland History* Essay Prize. The prize of £400 is offered each year for the best essay on an historical subject relating to midland England. Candidates must not, at the date of submission (31 October of each year) have published a book or an article in a major journal. Entries have to be works of original research, not hitherto published or accepted for publication. In 2017 we received an excellent range of submissions and the prize winner, Nicola Blacklaws, a PhD student at the University of Leicester, wrote an outstanding contribution on the poor law and social housing in Leicestershire in the late 1920s. The essay was published in the Spring 2018 issue of the journal (vol. 43, no. 1). Much new and original scholarship, which is shaped by historiographical agendas, methodologically sophisticated and embedded in primary evidence, is taking place inside and outside universities by postgraduates, heritage professionals and others.

Contributions from established scholars also reveal the depth of research into the history of midland England. The articles in this issue: on Anglo-Saxon Mercia, the coast of medieval Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire in the first Civil War, clergy in post-Restoration Warwickshire, the Pentrich Rebellion of 1817 and church building in nineteenth-century Staffordshire, range chronologically and geographically across the region. Individually, they embrace archival evidence, archaeological investigation, landscape studies and approaches derived from military, medical, cultural, social, political and ecclesiastical history. Several raise questions which move beyond the local and regional to illuminate national histories and the different ways in which historians make sense of the past.

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