

In a word

Give us our daily bread

THE LANGUAGE WE use defines our ideas. This column seeks to look at how language has evolved and how it might be used to better advantage in the struggle for a fairer society. Here we look at the word "lord" – as in "The Lord is my shepherd" and "landlord".

The word derives from the Old English *hláford*, once *hláfwearð*. It meant literally loaf-ward or bread-keeper, and originally referred to the head of the household who provided bread for his dependents. Intrinsically, this role involved the notion of stewardship and responsibility to the community.

From here the word came to have the more general meaning of someone in a position of authority over others – a master, ruler or husband.

When Christianity began to make inroads into Britain from the 6th century onwards it would have been natural to translate the Bible's 'dominus' – the Latin for God or Christ – into 'Lord'.

The Anglo-Saxons had no problem with reinventing their language to suit incoming ideas and ideologies – God, heaven and hell are also Old English words given new senses with Christianity's arrival.

It is tempting to read more into this – can we make connections with the loaves and fishes parable, or Jesus as head of the table at the Last Supper? It probably wasn't such a conscious translation, says Terry Hoad, tutor in English language and Medieval Literature at St Peter's College, Oxford (and editor of the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Etymology*). He notes there was another Old English word that fulfilled the same role – *dryhten* (troop leader) – and meant both the Christian 'Lord' and the leader of a company of men. From the earliest examples of written text in Britain 'lord' was being used in the secular sense and to mean God. The only specific reference to the Lord literally as a 'bread-keeper', Hoad says, occurs in the Old English Psalms, in the context of famine in Egypt.

Anna Crane

Bridge to the future

THE HENRY GEORGE Foundation is seeking the creation of a commission to look at alternative ways of paying the running costs of society.

The Citizens' Sustainable Taxation Commission initiative forms part of a wider project to reach out to other organisations interested in creating a sustainable society, including the Schumacher Society, Friends of the Earth and other environmental organisations.

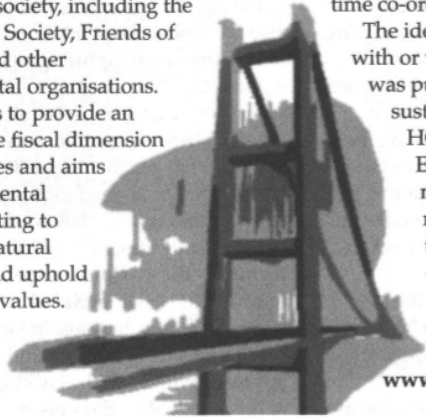
The aim is to provide an authoritative fiscal dimension to the policies and aims of environmental groups wanting to safeguard natural resources and uphold community values.

A parallel initiative, called

Building Bridges, aims to provide a forum to discuss alternatives to dipping into the public purse to pay for public services. A series of meetings will be held on diverse subjects around tax and subsidy. The series kicks off in the Autumn.

The hope is that various stakeholders will provide funding to employ a part-time co-ordinator.

The idea of a Taxation Commission, with or without government support, was put forward at a meeting on sustainable taxation last year. The HGF together with Friends of the Earth suggested the commission might be set up to audit, monitor and offer alternative tax policies to those that are clearly regressive and dysfunctional but are currently relied upon for revenue.



www.HenryGeorgeFoundation.org

A great gift, a lasting legacy

BROWN'S LAST BUDGET made income and corporation tax relief available for gifts of land and buildings made to charity.

The Henry George Foundation occupies its present premises in the Fruit Exchange in Brushfield Street on leasehold. A freehold would be a great gift.

The new relief is available for gifts made on or after the 1 April 2002 by

companies, or 6 April 2002 by individuals. A wide range of assets may now be gifted to charity with the donor receiving a tax reduction.

If you have a property you could bequest or gift and would like to discuss this, please contact the Henry George Foundation's administrator, Gordon Brennan, on +44 (0) 207 377 8885.

On the Waterfront

Fresh ideas and viable solutions to the UK's transport woes are being generated by a series of conferences

READERS MAY RECALL seeing a brochure advertising a conference entitled Using Land Value Gains to Finance Transport Infrastructure.

This event was organised by Waterfront, a commercial company that has run high-profile policy conferences for 10 years.

Most of Waterfront's conferences focus on transport issues but we do not believe that transport can be understood in isolation. In particular we have run a

number of issues on the importance of integrating land use and transport planning.

We are also moving beyond transport; for example running a conference in London on 22 October, called Tackling the Housing Shortage.

Land&Liberty editor Peter Gibb has agreed to speak to give the conference a radical edge.

