

Land&Liberty

communiqué

putting people at the heart of economics

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this issue comes with the first issue of the HGF land value monitor and the season's news cuttings supplement

agm YWCA, London 22nd November

The Foundation's AGM will be held in central London on Saturday November the 22nd. The venue is the YWCA's Central Club in Portland Place. Following the formal proceedings, after lunch, members will have an opportunity to hear about the latest developments at **Land&Liberty**, and help define the brief for the Foundation's new fundraising strategy (see inside)

appeal books, please!

The Foundation library needs more books.

The opening of its Edinburgh premises has enabled a renaissance of the library. The country's only land reform collection of significance has been set up as a lending library. It is hoped that students across the disciplines will be attracted to use this unique resource in pursuit of their studies.

The library's catalogue has now been digitized and will be available online for distance students to consult. A 'hotdesk' links the paper archive with web resources of interest to students of rent-for-revenue reform.

Any donations will be gratefully received. Please send unwanted relevant volumes - books, magazines, pamphlets, papers - to the library at the Edinburgh address. Don't worry that you may be sending in duplicates or unneeded material: we can use it to raise funds for the Foundation - by selling it in the bookshop's growing second-hand section.

appeal The Single Tax, Volume II (1895)

Sometime in the dim and distant past, the Foundation's only copy of *The Single Tax* bound volume II, 1895, was lent out to an interested reader. It never came back.

The Single Tax was an early name for **Land&Liberty** magazine. Without this volume, the Foundation's **Land&Liberty** collection is incomplete. An impending Lottery application is likely to be compromised by its absence.

We would very much like to have this volume in the library. Returns or even gifts would be gratefully received - in a plain, unaccredited package if necessary! Thank you very much.

Bob Andelson

It is with sadness that we inform our readers of the death on the 8th of November of our colleague and friend Dr Robert V Andelson.

conference the IU heads for Madrid

The International Union for Land Value Taxation knows how to pick its locations. It's currently planning its 24th international conference - to be held next year in Madrid, Spain.

Registrations are already being taken. For further details contact the IU at iu@interunion.org or by post - the IU shares its London office with the Foundation - see address on the back page.



The Foundation's Edinburgh bookshop

bookshop now open

The Foundation's new high street shop on Edinburgh's Haymarket Terrace saw its official opening on September 9th when well-known figures from Scottish public life welcomed the Foundation to the Capital. Read more on page 2.

staff new faces

Dawn Tinning is the Foundation's new administrator. She takes over from Gordon Brennan who left the post last month after four years service.

Dawn comes to the Foundation from Edinburgh's Queen Margaret University College where she was School Administrator.

Also joining the Edinburgh office - which with the temporary presence of German Alexander Zabelberg is turning into quite an international environment - is Dane Lars Rindsig.

Rindsig is working an internship with the Foundation until Summer 2004 - during which he will be developing communications.

Nearing the end of his degree in Danish and Media Science at Aalborg University, he is a member of the Danish Justice Party and the Danish Henry George League.



Dawn Tinning



Lars Rindsig



congestion charges - the debate continues



remembering 9/11

breaking ground

LVT and 'the business of politics'

Holyrood, the bi-weekly magazine bringing Scottish politics to the business sector, did an extensive feature on land value taxation in its November 3rd issue.

Centrepiece is an article by Antonia Swinson, author of new book *Root of All Evil*.

The magazine quoted several MSPs, on their thoughts on land value taxation.

Cross-party Scottish political interest in land value taxation continues to grow. The Executive has announced yet another review of local government taxation. In reply to a parliamentary question from Mark Ballard MSP, First minister Jack McConnell confirmed that the review's terms of reference would include lvt. McConnell's deputy, LibDem Jim Wallace MSP, interviewed in *Holyrood* said - "I look forward with interest to the case I assume will be made for lvt."

Wetzel woos the Socialists

HGF member Dave Wetzel, vice-chair of *Transport for London*, recently spent a week in Edinburgh taking his message to the politicians and their advisers.

Wetzel and Foundation chief executive Peter Gibb met with key policy people from Scottish public life, including Scottish Executive economists and transport specialists.

Foremost on their itinerary was shadow spokesperson on transport Kenny McCaskill MSP, Green Party parliamentarians, Capital transport leader Andrew Burns, and the promoters of the proposed new Borders railway project.

The duo also met up with the executive group of the Scottish Socialist Party. In an extended presentation Wetzel explained why volume three of Marx's *Capital* should be their essential bedtime reading. Leader Tommy Sheridan led an interested question and answer session, in which Gibb sought to ground the ideas in the *realpolitik* of the Scottish socialist agenda.

Although the party presently promotes its 'Scottish Service Tax' as a replacement for the Council Tax, it proposes lvt as a replacement for Uniform Business Rate.

Korean media interest in LVT

LVT is now being highlighted in South Korea. House prices have been soaring for the last two years and for the first time ever in Korean history land value taxation is being considered seriously as a policy alternative.

President Roh Moo-hyun is determined to bring real estate prices under control. He has said that real estate speculations will not be tolerated and added that if the government's real estate policy was not to not work properly, he would consider introducing a stronger measure.

Mass media speculate that the 'stronger measure' is probably land value taxation; the President's top policy aide co-authored the book, *Henry George Revisited 100 Years Later*.

HGF welcomed to Scottish capital

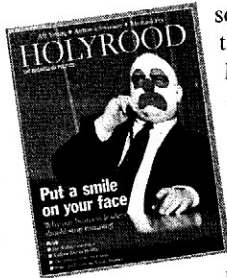
September the 5th saw the official opening of the Foundation's new bookshop in central Edinburgh. The event was celebrated with an informal reception. Welcoming the Foundation to the city were MSPs Mark Ballard and Robin Harper, Donald Reid the director of the Scottish Civic Forum, and the Rev Graham Blount parliamentary officer of Action of Churches Together in Scotland. They were heard by representatives of several



other organisations present. Both HGF Chairman John Bathe and Council member Albert Catterall also spoke. Catterall, Head of

Economics at the British Retail Consortium gave the business case for reform. The event was attended by several other HGF and Council members.

The shop is currently expanding its stock and is positioning itself as Scotland's bookshop for reform (of course with rent-for-revenue at the heart). The shop is a window for the public to the idea of land value taxation, and serves customers on a frequent basis. The premises are also the base for the four HGF officers working full time in Edinburgh.



One of Scotland's most magnificent wild landscapes is to be de-designated as a national nature reserve, because its owners don't want to meet the government's environmental management standards.

letter from the editor

Inverpolly Reserve, an intricate landscape of tiny islands, patchwork lochs and towering crags, just north of Ullapool on the west coast, was set up in 1962.

The sensitive management of around 10,000 acres of unique and valuable habitat is now likely to be ditched. Local populations of rare golden eagles and black throated divers may be at risk.

Landowners the wealthy Vestey family have successfully argued that their private commercial interest take precedence over either the environment or the public interest. The Vestey family are infamous landowners in Scotland. After making more than a billion in the global meat trade, their name became synonymous with tax evasion. Schemes in the 80's using foreign-based trusts were reported as saving them millions. "We're all tax-dodgers, aren't we?" Edmund Vestey was quoted as saying at the time. Edmund's cousin Lord 'Spam' Vestey shares with him 30th place in the UK top 100 rich list - with an estimated fortune of £700m.

The Nature Reserve includes the world famous Stac Pollaidh mountain. With the stunning landscape now threatened, part owner of the estate David Davies said it was "a shame", but that "we've got to make a living." Scottish Natural Heritage, the government agency charged with protecting the country's natural heritage, says it lacks the legislative backup to force the landowners to act in the public interest. Author of *Who Owns Scotland* Andy Wightman concludes "if nature reserves are to mean anything, SNH needs stronger powers to designate them. It should not have to rely on the whim of landowners."

The Vestey family want to run a deer herd over the estate of such a size that experts say it will degrade the fragile environment. Hungry deer eat sapling trees in winter. Pressure from browsing red deer has been identified as the main culprit in the failure to re-establish Scotland's endangered Caledonian Pine Forest.

The landowner's desire for what is seen as unsustainable deer numbers is being passed off in the name of necessary estate management. 'Business' reasons are being cited as the reason SNH's land management demands must be rejected. Red deer stalking attracts lucrative income from Italians and other wealthy tourists. But there is another reason for the landowners' management aspirations which is seldom spoken of publicly.

The capital values of Scottish highland estates are often calculated - not on an acreage basis - but on a headage basis. The paper value of an estate is boosted by around £10,000 for every stag shot a year. The same arrangement goes for salmon landed on the river bank, and trout taken from the loch.

By increasing, or avoiding reducing, the size of its wild deer herd, the Vestey family are raising the market value of their property. The public interest in the land, and the security and health of an environment of world importance, are both the losers for this.

The justification given for dumping the National Nature Reserve status is the unavailability of commercial pressure. But the reasons for the imminent loss of Inverpolly are not so much to do with business as with speculation.

The private interest of some of the wealthiest individuals around is being allowed to ride roughshod over the claim of the community and the ecological wellbeing of the land.

Is that a good thing?

Peter Gibb
gibb@LandandLiberty.net

Conference success in Dublin

On October 9th and 10th the Foundation held a conference on the land question in Ireland. The event was a collaboration with Irish think tank Feasta.

Peter Gibb reports on the aims and accomplishments of the conference

Around a hundred and twenty people attended the Foundation's major conference this year. *Land: the claim of the community* was organised in partnership with the Irish think tank Feasta - the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability. The two-day international event in Dublin attracted delegates from all over Ireland and the UK, and from across the social sectors and the political spectrum. In the audience were councillors and members of the Daol representing Fine Gael, the Irish Labour Party, the Irish Greens and Sinn Fein.

The full programme included over twenty speakers from around the world. They included Fred Harrison from CLPS, money and debt economist Richard Douthwaite, member of the Scottish Parliament Rob

Gibson MSP, Transport for London's vice-chair Dave Wetzel, 'Gaian democrat' John Jopling, the IU's UN representative Alanna Hartzok, Kevin Cahill of the Times Rich List and Josh Vincent from Philadelphia's Center for the Study of Economics.

The event aimed to clarify the nature of the community's claim on the land: it looked at Ireland's long history surrounding the land question, and examined its current land-related problems. Papers were presented to set the scene on subjects such as the ancient Brehon Laws. 'Problems' were then looked at, such as the Tudor plantations, the issue of the Irish village, and housing affordability in Dublin.

The 'problems' having been identified, the conference then sought out 'solutions'. Attempts were made to universalize the

common understanding of Ireland's situation, and set its tradition in the broad context of international experience. Case studies were presented from around the world, including the Scottish community land tenure movement, the Niger Delta Fund, Social Housing in London and urban regeneration of the US rustbelt. A series of workshops developed a range of initiatives and ideas for ways forward.

The event attracted considerable media attention. It was universally hailed a huge success. It is hoped the two organizations will be pursuing more joint projects in the future.

A transcript of the conference proceedings will be available shortly. Contact your local Foundation office for further details. Funding permitting, a follow-up book is planned for publication in the spring. **L&L**

Changing the rules of the game

A view from the Dublin conference floor by **Leonie Humphries**

A vision of a 'multicultural, shared social space' was conveyed at this two day event - achieved through an understanding of sharing in the 'surplus' of humanity's combined endeavours. This would provide a balance between individual claims (promoted through the economics of the market) and the claim of the whole community, from which all individuals also benefit.

A wide range of issues were covered at the conference. The event focused on Ireland, yet also studied many other cases, as well as the broader issues of land reform and alternative systems of ownership and taxation. It was argued that these alternative systems could enable a shift away from the pressures on productive enterprises, and towards the provision of public revenue from unearned windfall gains derived from ownership of land and natural resources.

Speakers from around the world provided the floor with experience and intelligent analysis on a variety of issues, including historical perspectives and solutions to the current problems in housing, transport infrastructure and the environment.

Working examples of land value taxation

in America, community land trusts in America and the UK as well as schemes to collect resource taxes in the US and Africa were outlined.

The inevitable road to ruin on the boom/bust cycle was graphically described: the cycle will hit rock bottom in Ireland between



Josh Vincent -keynote speaker

around 2007 and 2010 if the country fails to rise to the challenge of collecting the 'community's claim' - ie. the 'rent' of land and natural resources. The inevitable result, it was argued, is that Ireland will become marginalized, and will experience all the associated problems, whilst EU subsidies go east to new members. Worse than this, the UN predicts that in 30 years time one third of the global population will be living in slums, if current policies are left to run their course.

The underlying message that came across during these two days was that the rules of the game need to be changed. Governments must take responsibility, and use their power to change the laws to both stabilise the current situation and work towards a fair and sustainable future.

Solutions are available, but a new language will be required to connect with the business community and with politicians. The need is for simplicity, neutrality and fairness.

The last word, and my favourite pun of this conference, must go to Dr William McCluskey, who began his talk saying that 'property tax reform is a growth area'. But even as house prices rocket, neither he nor the audience seemed to appreciate the irony of this statement. **L&L**

Both feet on the ground

In this essay, first published in the May 1957 issue of **Land&Liberty** as part of the article series 'Personally Speaking,' **Vic Blundell** describes how 80 years ago he first came into contact with the ideas of Henry George.

If my early environment had been the deciding factor in the formulation of my philosophical and political outlook I would have been a Socialist. My friends and associates were nearly all Socialists and all around me was 'evidence' of the failure of capitalism. There was bitterness and anger among the working classes as they lost their independence in the dole queue and their self-respect under the "Means Test." They took it for granted that because unemployment and other social ills existed within the framework of free competitive enterprise, the latter was responsible for the former. Private enterprise, they were told, produced the wrong things; instead of houses, clothing and food for people in need of them, there were motor cars, smart hotels and all kinds of luxury goods for the rich. It was necessary to plan so that the right things were produced. The factories, machinery, shops, etc, were built by the workers and, therefore, it was argued that they should be nationalised. My would-be political educators believed that not only was this a matter of simple justice but that it would end the exploitation of man by man.

In the late twenties, while still in my teens, I was a regular visitor to open-air meetings in Finsbury Park, North London, where audiences filled and overflowed the large recreation ground. Squeezed in among the main political parties were small groups battling for attention and when I grew tired of listening to the mob orators, I would invariably finish up as one of a small group around JW Graham Peace, leader of the Commonwealth Land Party. From him I learned of the rights of man, economic rent, land speculation, free trade and all the ramifications of free enterprise and social justice. Urged on by my elder brother, Stanley, I began to read *Progress and Poverty* and as I came to understand the philosophy of Henry George more clearly the defects of Socialism became more apparent.

I addressed my first public meeting at the age of 18 and felt the keen edge of



Vic Blundell 1911-2003

Vic Blundell has died at the age of 92. For nearly half a century Mr Blundell ran the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values - the predecessor of the Henry George Foundation. He became the vital bridge between the roots of the movement which grew around Henry George at the turn of the last century, and those who are carrying forward the inspiration and ideas into the twenty-first century.

In the thirties Mr Blundell trained as a salesperson and then became the manager of several branches of Littlewoods shoe shops in London. After the end of World War II he came to work with Arthur W Madsen, secretary of the United Committee.

Mr. Blundell was a driving force behind the Henry George School evening classes, where many later reformers found their cause. He became Mr. Madsen's successor in the late fifties - and held that post until his 70th birthday. He was also one of the longest serving editors of *Land&Liberty*.

Mr. Blundell was tireless in his debating of economic arguments, and steady in his championing of the truth virtues of the reform which had been set out by Henry George.

Mr Blundell is survived by a son, Jon, who lives and works in Japan.

the tongue of the experienced heckler. Often I got into arguments that left me the loser. It hurt, although I knew that my case was sound. Then I remembered my training as a salesman. The first thing a salesman has to learn is his stock. He must know every line thoroughly and be able to recite its qualities, construction, advantages, etc. As a young and raw economist the trouble with me was that I 'did not know my stock' In the years that followed I had to learn the answers to many questions on the economics of Henry George. The moral basis and the clear logic of the Georgist case were the twin forces that maintained my faith in what many tried to tell me was a lost cause.

I shall always remember one of my early mentors, Mr EO Edwards, dealing with an obstinate heckler. Patiently, tactfully and with great skill he demolished one by one every argument his opponent put forward. In the end the questioner, shrugged his shoulders and turning away said: "All right, but you will never do it." Then I saw the fire blaze in the eye of the speaker who up to that moment had maintained his remarkable self-control. Pointing an accusing finger at his heckler, he cried: "You will never do it, but don't you dare tell me I will never do it!"

The question that worried me most was not an economic one. It was "Why is so fundamentally simple a proposition difficult to 'put over'?" I came to realise that one cannot sow seeds in a garden overgrown with weeds and expect them to take root. Much of the work of those who seek to influence others lies in pulling up the weeds of prejudice. After all if we were right then all political parties were wrong! An over-simplification, no doubt, but not an easy position to escape from and not a good point at which to start an argument.

I moved to Liverpool and there met the late Mr EJ McManus from whom I first learned of the existence of study classes based on Henry George's

teachings. Subsequently I conducted classes myself in Nottingham.

I became a member of the United Committee in 1945 and in 1947 was invited to join the staff at Great Smith Street to assist Mr Madsen in the many aspects of his work and in producing Land&Liberty. The School, starting as a spare-time

“Then I remembered my training as a salesman. The first thing a salesman has to learn is his stock.”

activity, grew to absorb the greater part of my time and with the help of ex-students who have built up classes in their own areas or became tutors themselves, it has expanded year by year.

The School is not an end in itself but one of the roads that leads to our objective, and it has been of special interest over the past few years to watch and follow the development of thought in the minds of students as they go through the course. I have witnessed dogmatic political ‘sectarians’ emerge after three courses as quite different people.

There is no uniform approach to those we are seeking to influence. In the classroom, attention must be paid to every individual student and it is something of a challenge to the tutor when he is charged with the task of harmonising by the tenth lesson the outlook of personalities whose political outlooks spring from diverse origins.

It is an accepted maxim in advertising, as in window-dressing, that the first job is to capture and hold the attention of the person one wishes to interest.

The principles taught by Henry George and the many who preceded him cannot change with the passing of time but we must be ready always to adopt our methods of presentation so that we gain the respect of all with whom we come in contact. People today are more sophisticated than ever, more suspicious of radical change, less responsive to the emotional appeal, and more than ever conditioned to the planned economy mentality. Where possible we must meet people on their own ground or we will not be heard at all.

Let us face it. The ordinary voter

understands very little about economic theory - has little desire to understand it - does not regard it as particularly important, and has no inclination to do more than pass judgment on superficial issues or on mere political slogans and catch-phrases. Many vote from habit, prejudice, fear, or from a mere consciousness of belonging to a certain class. Yet Keynes’ ideas of full employment (monetary manipulation and inflation) have never been understood by the masses of the people; these ideas were introduced from the top and not from the bottom.

So that the fact there are few opportunities for nationwide publicity need not give a rise to pessimism - it is not a condition of success. The instigators of, and agitators for, a local income tax, a turnover tax, capital gains tax and other specifics are not waiting for, or seeking the support of the broad masses of the people. They are busy lobbying in the realms of local and national Government, among trade associations, unions and the many varied spheres of political influence. The same techniques are open to us. The objectors to the Egg Marketing Scheme were a mere handful of people - not more than ten in one million of the adult population of Great Britain, yet they came within an ace of success.

We, too, are a force out of all proportion to our numbers and we are winning the support of people who have the will, ability and opportunity to shape policy in the political parties.

This is not to under-rate the value and effectiveness of reaching the general public

“I came to realise that one cannot sow seeds in a garden overgrown with weeds and expect them to take root.”

when the opportunity offers. For example, a small group of ex-students of the Welling Henry George School, now banded together as the North West Kent Branch of the Land Value Taxation League, recently collected more than two thousand signatures to a petition calling upon their local council to set up an enquiry committee to examine the

merits of site-value rating. The Council has agreed. Generous publicity has been and is being given by the local press and it would be fairly safe to assume that two years ago hardly anyone in that area had even heard of site-value rating. There is room for all approaches, the individual doing that for which he is best fitted and for which he has

“Where possible we must meet people on their own ground or we will not be heard at all.”

the best opportunities. The Henry George Schools are charged with the special task of ensuring that those who can be persuaded to join us know the case thoroughly, for any weakness in understanding shown by those responsible for leadership will correspondingly weaken our effectiveness. The Schools are an instrument of policy - not the policy itself; complementary to other forms of action - not an alternative. My experiences at Great Smith Street over the last ten years have shown me the need to be always ready for changes in the general political scene so as to grasp opportunities as they arise, to be flexible in outlook and not wedded to one approach.

Henry George said that the truth he tried to make clear would find friends - it has. We have had, and still have, in our movement all over the world, people with knowledge, ability, personality and buoyant enthusiasm - people who have succeeded in educating, training and winning the support of others. Yet the credit is really due to the power of that truth which Henry George made clear. Nothing can obscure the force of it and nothing can enslave it. The seed once sown becomes independent of the sower. It is a great joy and satisfaction to me to listen as I often do to one of my ex-students explaining a particular point or summarising our philosophy in a way which shows he is speaking from his own mind or heart; that the seed is sown, that there is an understanding and feeling in what he says far and away removed from the mere parrot-like repetition of lessons learned by rote. It is the crowning joy of all to realise that he is captured, not by myself but like myself, with a Great Idea. **L&L**

fresh thinking

Congestion charges - against ...

The debate on the merits of congestion charges continues: presenting the case against is **Richard Giles**

Land&Liberty (Summer, 2003) asks "is road pricing effectively a form of mobile LVT - levying a charge on those who monopolise valuable locations with their cars".

Congestion charges is seen as a tool to promote land value taxation and as a way to get up there with the latest environmental economists - and thus with the Green movement. It all makes sense.

But Henry George wrote in *The Land Question* that "to a clear understanding of the whole subject, the question of principle must necessarily precede that of method". Land value taxation, congestion charges; both are methods. The questions is: What is the principle?

If congestion charges are a form of land value taxation, they are governed by the same principle. The principle, Henry George tells us in *Progress and Poverty*, is equal rights to land. Where persons lay claim to the exclusive use of land, they should pay to the community a ground rent that reflects the market value of its advantages.

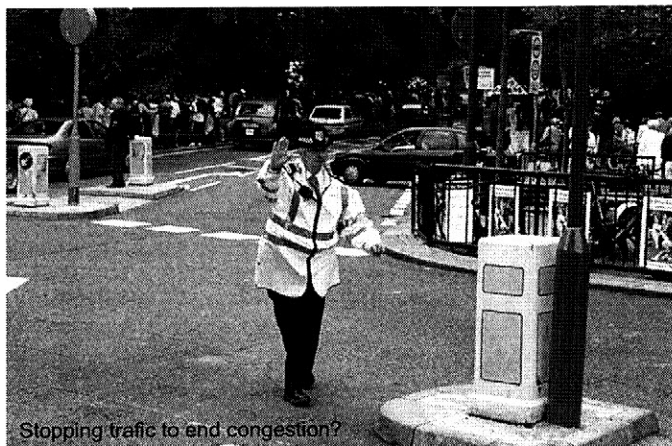
Other land is common land and George suggests that its use is more like the use of a club, governed by custom and courtesy. To put a charge upon such common land for the purpose of excluding some from using it is contrary to the principle of the equal use of land. The way this problem has been dealt with is to use words which suggest that what we are dealing with is private land subject to rent.

Thus, **Land&Liberty** uses the word 'monopolise' to suggest what motorists are doing when they use the road. Other opinion says that moment by moment motorists are asserting 'exclusive use' of land, and thus they must pay a rent. Those terms are not just strained when applied to common land, they

are wrong and dangerous. Simply users of the roads are not 'in effect' or in any other way possessing land. Let one of them stop just for an instant in Sydney when they might move, and that is made abundantly clear.

The idea that makes it easy to think that common land has been privatised springs from the idea that land is owned by the community. It is not; it is the rent of land that is owned by the community. Land is there for all to enjoy equally.

Once it is thought that land is jointly owned by the community, or nationalised, somebody



Stopping traffic to end congestion?

representing the public such as a council assumes the right to say what will happen to it. And, just as in the Soviet Union where the state owned the land, the individual has then effectively lost any rights in it.

Not only this but the officers of that public body administering 'our' joint rights in land begin to assume that it is this body who owns the land, which means, in effect, that those officers (elected and unelected) own it. As Henry George warns us, government will always attempt to take as much power to itself as it can. In other words, these congestion

charges will multiply, grow in complication and breed other interferences with freedom of movement.

For some time George himself was unclear on this vital question, maintaining that land value taxation was just a more practical and subtle way to make land common property than schemes of land nationalisation. It was only later that he asserted that equal rights to land were not joint rights to land - and most definitely denies land nationalisation.

By embracing congestion charges, we group ourselves with those 'advanced thinkers' who are well on the way to taking charge of our private lives, who are substituting a mass of legal prescriptions with for the customs and courtesies by which we have lived for generations; who are replacing principle with rules.

These congestion charges which are a tax on movement contradict George's own view that no charges should even be made for the use of public transport (let alone for using roads). You will remember that he pointed out, in the same way as putting a charge on the use of lifts in buildings would diminish rents in those building so too charges for public transport would diminish rents alongside thoroughfares.

Congestion charges are just another interference with that spontaneous or unconscious cooperation which George said in *The Science of Political Economy* lay at the base of production. Congestion charges are an interference with movement. From my own experience, the glamour of congestion charges is that they are not seen as base and dangerous. This can only be dispelled by absorbing George's ethos. But, as they say, pigs might fly. **L&L**

Fundraising - gearing up the action

The Foundation's Council of Management has initiated a priority strategy for fundraising. The project builds on the preliminary strategy work pursued over the last two years with marketing man Brian Niblett, process consultant George Clark, and communications expert Alan Reid.

Discussions are now taking place with specialist fundraising professionals. An in-house fundraising executive may be appointed.

First under discussion are reserves policy, financial management systems, mission statement, and aims. Next up will come a new business plan which will look

at income streams, marketing and public relations, board development and succession plans, membership and supporter policy and fundraising.

Foundation members will have an opportunity to contribute to this process. A brainstorming workshop is to be held as part of the AGM day event. **L&L**

... and for?

Peter Gibb listens to Richard Giles and sets out a few of his own thoughts on congestion charges

To my mind the issue of congestion charges is a useful one for us to think on: if doing so does not lead to decongested roads, at least it will lead us closer to decongested minds.

It seems to me that roads can be considered as, or occupy and function as open-access 'commons' for the free use of all, only to the point at which their aggregate use has reached an intensity at which their *de facto* users at any time come to prevent their free use by all others at that time. That saturation point may be triggered perhaps by physical congestion, environmental pollution, road safety considerations, onerous development or maintenance requirements, or some other determinant upon which the community democratically agrees. It is at that point of saturation that a resource of space becomes something which the community must charge

for, in order that those excluded from its use are compensated - by those who enjoy the advantages which its use bestows. Prior to that point of saturation, the resource functions quite happily as an *open-access* system: afterwards as a managed common.

The socio-economic management of our common resources is a matter which is dynamic and not static. As humanity's use of any natural resource increases, and as competition for access to any particular advantage provided by the resource of community intensifies, so new and more active management of that resource is called for.

(On the subject of 'land ownership'; I think that concept obfuscates much which needs clarity: we should speak rather of the allocation of overlapping rights over land, some private, some public.)

Prior to the development of settled communities, there was no need for anything in practice like land value taxation. The compensating, by the monopoliser of any

location, of the rest of us so excluded from that location, becomes necessary only with the development of intense, sophisticated and urban-centred land-use. And this is clearly so with buildings and other static uses.

But it is just so with roads: while and to the extent that the unhindered use of paths and roads worn by the feet, hooves and wheels of previous generations is free to all, then they can be considered as 'open-access' systems. At the point that they become community assets the use of which is not available to advantage us all equally, then roads become 'commons' the use of which has to be managed: thus city road pricing and congestion charging. Congestion charging is a rent collecting public revenue mechanism.

The principle does not extend to every instance of charging which cash-strapped public authorities may seek to impose. The Skye Bridge toll, for instance, is an iniquitous entry fee to Skye, which disadvantages its community's economic development and social mobility.

I suspect that much of the difference in the two positions being argued here is simply the result of differences in the respective experiences and notions of what the reality of a road is. **L&L**

Remembering September 11

Remembrance of September 11 should not be an excuse for the advancement of certain American and European causes, says **Jon Mendel**

The International Relations scholar Maja Zehfuss has observed that one thing both George W Bush and Osama Bin Laden hold in common is that they wish to ensure we remember the events of September the 11th 2001. As Zehfuss argues, this demand for remembrance has been misused to justify extremely damaging US policies. Attempts to understand why certain US policies might be unpopular in most of the world are often dismissed as attempts to justify or surrender to Al Qaeda's appalling terrorism. This mode of remembering 9/11 has debilitating consequences for those of us seeking to challenge the current norms of international politics - it is a block to political change.

Whilst terrorist acts should be abhorred, 'commemoration' of 9/11 is being used as a moral justification for an American 'way of life' - aped to a substantial extent in Britain and

Western Europe - that is both unjust and unsustainable. While Bush may be correct to suggest that Al Qaeda is trying to destroy the American 'way of life', to claim that changing this lifestyle would therefore be insulting to the victims of 9/11 is a fallacious argument.

“ Whilst terrorist acts should be abhorred, ‘commemoration’ of 9/11 is being used as a moral justification for an American ‘way of life’ ”

America, along with the other 'advanced' capitalist societies, must move towards a more equitable and sustainable distribution of natural resources. The taproot of the terror problem and its solution will be found this way. In any case maintaining the rate of consumption

needed to maintain the US 'way of life' will soon lead to the Earth's atmosphere being overloaded with greenhouse gasses. The natural disasters which American 'ways' invite may make the human response of Al Qaeda's terrorism look relatively benign.

The best memorial for those lost on 9/11 would be to abandon the American 'way of life'. No way of life can endure which requires others' forfeit of their birthright. While the victims of 9/11 should be remembered - and events this tragic clearly deserve commemoration - the cost cannot be that we forget or abandon our political struggles. Zehfuss argues that, if the political consequences of remembering September 11 become too negative, we should 'forget September 11'.

We must come to commemorate 9/11 in more positive ways, and render unnecessary such forgetting. **L&L**

The author is grateful to Professor David Campbell, Dr Simon Philpot and Sue Severs for their assistance with research that has provided a basis for this article.

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diary

22 November

YWCA Central Club, London

Henry George Foundation AGM

Information has been sent to members.
See details on the front page.

24 November

St. John's Church, Edinburgh

Time to Tax Land and not People

Edinburgh based group, Friends of LVT sponsors a public meeting. Speakers will include writer Antonia Swinson, Robin Harper MSP and HGF member Dave Wetzel. See www.timetotaxland.org

27 October 2003-9 January 2004

Wellcome Library, Euston Road, London

Ambition and Distraction

An exhibition on Silas Burroughs, the founder of the Wellcome trust - and a personal friend of Henry George. See <http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/events/>

3 January, 2004

The Henry George Foundation New Years Party

HGF hosts a new years party for its members. Details will be sent out nearer the event.

scotland another seed germinates

Following the Foundation's public meeting in Edinburgh last year *Time to Tax Land and not People* - a new organisation has been formed to take forward the idea as a periodic event.

The *Friends of LVT* will hold a *TiTLanP2* meeting in Edinburgh on the 24th of November. See above for further details.

letters

A second letter from Afghanistan

I've just returned from the second of three planned trips to Afghanistan. My work there continues with the capacity-building project in higher education.

This visit I obtained a hard copy of *Land Rights in Crisis: Restoring Tenure Security in Afghanistan* by Liz Alden Wily. You will be interested to know that she has been preparing an additional piece also for the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit - *Land and the Constitution: Current Land Issues in Afghanistan*. A draft is being prepared which I understand will be completed soon and released on the website in the near future. I'll keep my eyes open and advise you accordingly.

The reference to 'the constitution' in the title refers to the forthcoming new national constitution. This has been in the process of development for several months. I think it will be put in place in early 2004, for national elections scheduled for next June.

Alas, the general outlook for this troubled country does not seem to have improved. Numerous development efforts cannot meet the huge expectations. The security situation outside the capital has worsened, though some of it is simply criminal activity. You've likely seen reports about Taliban regrouping and infiltration from Pakistan, and increasingly larger clashes with US-led forces.

According to observers, the US preoccupation with Iraq makes its future support for Afghanistan somewhat in doubt.

Michael Sinclair

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