

I am sure that everyone reading the **Land&Liberty**, editor's letter in the Autumn 2009 edition will agree with the statement: "Fiscal reform that returns community-created value to the exchequer is the way forward." You were good enough to print my review of 'The Spirit Level' in the last edition. However, quite properly, you omitted my final paragraph because this was technically not part of the review but included my proposals for actions needed to deal with the necessary fiscal reform. It reads:

"There is no silver bullet. We must support those struggling to deal with the downstream problems created by our unequal society but, most importantly, tackle the upstream solutions which are available. In consequence, we should be prepared to pursue issues at the basic level by improving the unsatisfactory fiscal and monetary system. Let us therefore support a high pay commission, recognise the need to eliminate tax havens, tax avoidance and evasion, press for a Tobin tax, and insist on effective regulation of the banking sector and the separation of retail from investment banks. Indeed, strong support is developing for the introduction of an annual land value tax to reduce taxes on labour and enterprise and thus ensure a return to equality, avoid further economic crises and provide the funds for investment in new green economies. Let us all strive together to protect our future."

What I would like is a debate among your readership on this issue. Do readers agree there is no silver bullet in the current economic climate? Do they accept that there are measures other than LVT that need to be implemented? Do they agree that political pragmatism is necessary

to go alongside the principles espoused by the Henry George Foundation? I hope some readers will join the debate.

John Lipetz

More Economics Tutors Needed

Alongside the spring edition of *Land and Liberty*, the Editor encouraged me to send out a letter of invitation to HGF members to consider teaching Geogist Economics at the University of the Third Age U3A.

Five people responded to the call and it looks as though at least two new courses may get started in the autumn. You will recall that the basic idea was for potential tutors to join their local U3A (i.e. The University of the Third Age), and offer to teach Economics. In particular to teach the economics as propounded by Henry George. This approach has the advantage that the local U3A will publicise the course and arrange the enrolment of students as well as provide the necessary accommodation. Time was of the essence if we were to get the publicity embedded in the U3A's annual course brochures for the September term.

Five people may sound rather a thin response, but it is a start, and we can learn from the experience. If the planned courses in West Molesey and Epsom come to fruition, then, together with the courses in Guildford and Woking, which I already tutor, we will have doubled our impact.

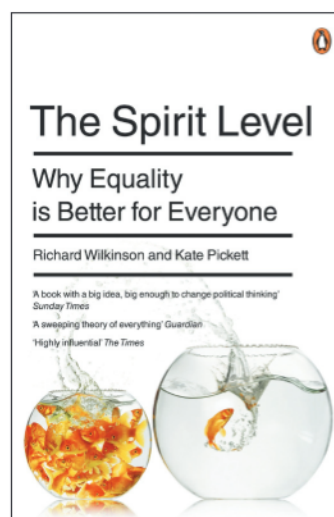
There are 761 U3A's in the UK with nearly ¼ million members so it is a rich field for us to 'plough'. So please begin now to

think about the idea of becoming a U3A economics tutor next year.

It is worth remembering that Henry George did not just tell us to 'tax the value of land', he also gave us a structured set of ideas about how societies work economically. In doing so, he explained why slumps and booms occur, why there are high levels of unemployment, and the true nature of unearned income. In addition he showed us how to live in a free society without limiting

Teaching such material can be very rewarding. But we must get on with it, time may be shorter than we realise. Why? Well, part of the reason seems to be that land values have been rising (on average) at about 4% p.a. while wages have been rising at 2% p.a. This will lead to an imbalance with more and more people living off rent and less and less creating the real wealth of which rent is a part. Clearly, a pathway to self-destruction.

Ray Ward



the equal freedom of others. Since George's day we have learned, through the work of professor Tideman and others, just how inefficient and wasteful are the economies of nations who reject these ideas.

It seems to me that many Geogists have a gut feeling that adopting land value taxation would have powerful social effects. For example, there would be less crime, happier and better educated people, with better health and more mutual trust. All these things and more besides have now been shown to be factually true. I strongly recommend that you either read "The Spirit Level", reviewed in **L&L** (1227) or go to www.EQUALITYTRUST.COM on the web.

Mansion Tax—a Step in the Wrong Direction

For 150 years the Land Value Tax movement has proclaimed that one of the main benefits of the system is that improvements are not taxed. I therefore find it difficult to comprehend why the Liberal Democrats think that a Mansion Tax is a good idea, let alone a 'crude form of Land Value Tax' as suggested by John Howell in his letter in the Spring issue.

Such thinking only serves to confuse the essential message and undermine the principle of collecting the annual rent for public revenue.

Furthermore, the idea that the MT tax can be used to increase the personal income tax threshold and put £700 in the pockets of the lowest earners only serves to compound the error. Surely we are all familiar with Churchill's account of what happened to rents when the toll-bar on a bridge over the Thames was lifted. Sooner or later the State handout will be absorbed in