The last few years has borne witness to an extraordinary growth in government activities. Fiscal stimulus spending, the ramping up of public debt, untrammelled increases in regulation affecting factor and product markets, and the burgeoning growth of the national security apparatus have made us feel less happy, less prosperous, and less safe.

If there is any consolation—if not a silver lining—to counter these trends, it is that our diminishing economic and social freedoms has led to an upsurge in interest in classical liberal and libertarian ideas throughout the Western world.

The new libertarian wave has been especially pronounced in the United States—as epitomised in the increasing popularity of Ron Paul and his son, 2016 presidential candidate Rand Paul—but to a lesser extent in countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. Libertarianism’s growing fan-base is aptly reflected in the explosive increase in articles, blogs, books, social media accounts, videos, and websites all seeking to explain the fundamentals and applications of economic, political and social freedom.

Among young people—who arguably bear the greatest brunt of a larger public sector and other manifestations of diminishing freedom—there appears to be a particular zeal in the ideas of liberty. Organisations such as Students for Liberty are attracting hundreds of people to their international conferences, and surveys indicate a new interest in classical liberal ideas among the Millennial generation.

This renewed injection of enthusiasm into the libertarian movement in the West, and indeed worldwide, cannot be doubted, and it is certainly welcome.

By the same token, there is...
freedom would be well known to many readers of this journal, with its ultimate genius resting on the fact that ‘markets are based on consent. No business sends an invoice for a product you haven’t ordered, like an income tax form’.

But what can a classical liberal or libertarian say about social and political issues which, in this country and others, tend to be, more often than not, detrimentally crowded out by left progressive voices? A great many things, in fact, as demonstrated by Boaz. Being social creatures, human beings invariably ‘feel a deep need for connectedness, for love and friendship and community’ found in families, churches, schools, clubs, fraternal societies, condominiums, associations, neighbourhood groups, and not to mention all the myriad features of civil society are indispensable to pursue their own interests in voluntary association with others.

Boaz notes that these desirable features of civil society are compromised in the presence of a large governmental welfare state, which stifles charity and undermines those moral attributes necessary to maintain viable communities.

The Libertarian Mind expertly canvasses the political basis of libertarian philosophy, with an emphasis made throughout on the importance of the rule of law, applicable to the most and to the least politically powerful alike, and a constitutionally constrained government which is democratically accountable to its citizenry.

An impressive feature of David Boaz’s important literary contribution is the breadth of contemporary issues he is prepared to analyse and interpret through the lens of libertarian philosophy. These include some of the more significant economic policy issues of raising growth, reducing inequality, restoring sound public finances, and ensuring less costly and more responsive education, health and welfare payments and services.

Boaz also delves into some of the crucial social matters of our time, including how to eliminate racism, poverty and crime, and how a freer society will uphold family values, protect civil liberties, and ensure environmental amenity.

The Libertarian Mind will unquestionably come to represent a standard bearing tract concerning the ideas of freedom and liberty for generations to come, and to that end David Boaz deserves a great deal of gratitude for his original insight and contribution to the modern libertarian revival.