Correspondence

Mathemetrics

DEAR MR QUADLING,

I was interested to note your contribution (Note 62.9) in the March 1978 *Mathematical Gazette* as it reminded me of a fact I discovered some time ago, quite by chance.

Taking the accepted equivalence 1 inch = 2·54 cm, 1 statute mile = 1·609 344 km. Playing with a calculator, I fell upon the remarkable fact that ln 5 = 1·609 437 912 and remembered seeing what I thought to be this number elsewhere. It will be seen that this number as a approximation to the above allows an error of less than 0·006%. In the event of compulsory metrication it occurred to me that printing ln 5 after each number on road signs would be no less absurd for the bulk of the population than the conversion itself! It could be argued that such a move would satisfy both schools of thought; traditionalists would still be able to gaze upon familiar numbers whilst modernisers would not be able to claim conversion had not taken place.

Yours sincerely,

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See how they run

DEAR EDITOR,

Observation suggests that the feet, or specific points on the feet, of a running adult describe alternate cycloidal arcs.

Can any reader find evidence (e.g. from a photographic sequence) to support this conjecture?

Yours sincerely,

W. AHERNE

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Reviews

Primary mathematics: a handbook of suggestions for teachers, by K. Auckland and others. Pp vi, 122. £3·25. 1977. SBN 0 333 19920 0 (Globe Education)

This handbook is the outcome of work over a period of ten years with the Nuffield Mathematics Project by some teachers in the Doncaster County Borough. Much of the work of the Project was disseminated through Teachers' Guides, and the book under review is a collection of classroom activities which interpret the Guides in a form which is immediately presentable to children. Topics such as sorting, addition, area, tessellation are each dealt with systematically, with no commentary as to requisite age or stage of development at any given point.

The Nuffield Mathematics Project has been characterised for many teachers by its theme "I do—and I understand", and this book supports the view that the giving out of information is not of itself sufficient to promote good mathematical development in