percentage of the cohort than the O level.

We seem to have arrived at the present situation because it was thought necessary to teach everybody mathematics, and that everybody was capable of learning mathematics. I would question both: certainly there is a requirement for most people to have a facility with number, but how many actually need mathematics beyond arithmetic and very simple algebra? Perhaps we should take a leaf from the classicists' book and provide a 'Classical Civilisation' course – call it 'Mathematics for Living' – which is designed for all the cohort, and a 'Latin' course – call it 'Mathematics' – which can then have a rigorous approach to the subject. It could cover the material in the present mathematics and additional mathematics syllabi, and provide a sound footing for the A level course. I already hear cries about disadvantaging the less able, but the present system does the opposite: it does nothing to challenge the more able, and provides a poor foundation for their further studies.

Reference

1. Tony Gardiner, The Art of Knowing, *Math. Gaz.* **82,** 495 (November 1998), pp. 354-372.

Yours sincerely,

PETER MILDENHALL

Bury Grammar School, Tenterden Street Bury BL9 0HN

DEAR EDITOR,

Let $\tau(n)$ be the number of positive integers not exceeding n that are expressible as the sum of two squares. For small values of n, the ratio $\rho(n) = \tau(n)/n$ is around 0.35. For example, $\rho(50) = 0.36$, $\rho(100) = 0.35$, $\rho(150) \approx 0.37$ and $\rho(200) = 0.36$. Does this relation continue to hold for larger values of n? Perhaps a reader knows of an asymptotic formula or could test the result further using a computer.

Yours sincerely,

Canon D. B. EPERSON

Hillrise, 12 Tennyson Road, Worthing BN11 4BY

DEAR EDITOR,

J. R. Goggins has pointed out a mistake (my typing error) in the article on Napoleon triangles [2]. Both entries $30 - \theta$ in family A on page 416 should be $30 - 2\theta$, the sextet being $(\theta,\ 30 - 2\theta,\ 90 + \theta;\ 2\theta,\ 30 - 2\theta,\ 30)$.

Using an improved search program, my computer has found another adventitious set – (15, 30, 51; 24, 27, 33) – bringing the total to 39.

Adventitious angles occur in other contexts. Some years ago C. E. Tripp investigated quadrangles with integral angles [4]. These are related to the sextets by transformations such as that illustrated in Figure 9 of my article. Also J. F. Rigby has drawn my attention to a paper discussing the angles associated with triples of concurrent diagonals of regular polygons [3]. These are related both to Tripp's and my adventitious angles. Rigby's results demonstrate the existence of rational adventitious sextets that are not in any