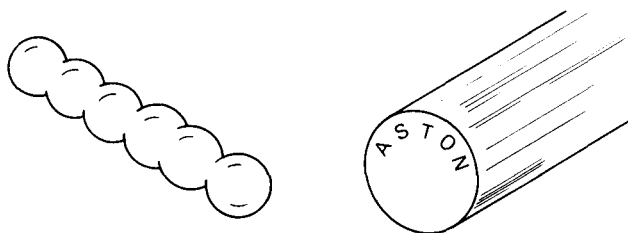# Correspondence

No rock or barley-sugar?

DEAR EDITOR,
   Re note **65.22** may one suggest extending F. Chorlton's concluding paragraph?

'It follows that if a surface of revolution is intercepted by two parallel planes distant x apart and taken perpendicularly to the axis of symmetry and if for all admissible values of x the area of curved surface so intercepted is proportional to x, then the curved surface is wholly or partly that of a sphere *or a succession of contiguous spherical zones with equal radii and collinear centres, the cylinder being the limiting case*.'
   (The latter case is referred to twice in the course of the note, but has escaped mention in the summary.)

<div align="right">Yours sincerely,
DONALD HALFPENNY</div>

27 Cuckoo Hill, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 2BA

Reviews

Mindstorms: children, computers and powerful ideas, by Seymour Papert. Pp 230. £9·95. 1980. ISBN 0-85527-163-9 (Harvester Press)

Seymour Papert is a man with revolutionary ideas about improving education and those ideas in his book, *Mindstorms*, should be seriously considered. His viewpoint is that education should encourage children to make sense of what they learn and to identify with it. Many teachers will heartily agree with this viewpoint and will wish to know how he suggests that it can be achieved. They must not react with horror when he suggests using computers, for he does not see these as obedient electronic processors but as objects to think with, "objects in which there is an intersection of cultural presence, embedded knowledge, and the possibility for personal identification."
   Two stages of Papert's career have provided the theoretical foundation for his extensive work with primary age children. Firstly, he worked with Jean Piaget for five years and since then he has made use of epistemological aspects of Piaget's theories, with which mathematics teachers are likely to be familiar. Secondly, he worked with Marvin Minsky at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he investigated aspects of artificial intelligence which consider the nature of the intelligent functions of people. From the combination of these theories he has developed (a) ideas about how children learn and how they should learn, and (b) a computer language, LOGO, which is the vehicle for such learning. This book describes his ideas and how they can be applied through LOGO.