

DEAR EDITOR,

My thanks to Tom Roper for his enthusiastic discourse on 'The mathematics of bowls' [1]. I did receive the definitive account of Maurice Brearley and Beverley Bolt [2] in Australia in which it is established that for level, constant retardation greens the angle of delivery of the bowl is the same for any length of jack. Other mathematical bowlers have also offered evidence and then practical advice. Has my bowling improved? Well – yes – I have confidence in theory being put into practice.

Yours sincerely,

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References

1. T. Roper, The mathematics of bowls, *Math. Gaz.* **80** (July 1996) pp. 298-307.
2. M. N. Brearley and B. A. Bolt, The dynamics of a bowl, *Quarterly Journal of Mechanics and Applied Mathematics* **11** (1958) pp. 351-363.

Paul Erdős (26 March 1913 - 20 September 1996)

Already many short obituaries for Paul Erdős have been published in newspapers, and soon there will be biographies in the journals of learned societies. Indeed, in the not too distant future, there will be whole books on the man and his mathematics. For now, let us offer *Gazette* readers a first few words of appreciation.

As a human activity, mathematics requires its share of legendary players, and it is a privilege to have been around when Erdős was a living legend. No matter how we loved hearing or reading about his idiosyncratic wisdom and eccentricities, Erdős will be remembered first and foremost as a setter and solver of problems in mathematics. From his wide ranging knowledge, he conjured up problems which were usually interesting and frequently significant. Besides having a huge arsenal of technical 'weapons' with which to attack such problems himself, he also knew to whom such problems should be given. If his friends could not solve them soon enough for his taste, he would offer money to encourage their continued efforts. He loved beauty in mathematics, and he used to say that God has a book which contains the best proof of every theorem, so that his highest praise for an elegant solution was that it was 'from the book'.

We should also add that, however unworldly in his personal conduct, he was not unaware of current affairs and worldly troubles. Indeed, the many of us who had the good fortune to have met him will long remember his care, concern and kindnesses towards others. Farewell our good friend. Now you can read the book in peace.

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