

The Times, Letters to the Editor

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 18 2018

Maths and real life

FROM PROF PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, I agree with Henry Coverdale's view that pupils should not abandon maths at 16 (letter, Sep 13). Sir Adrian Smith's review of post-16 mathematics, published in July 2017, and the government's white paper, Building a Britain fit for the future, published in November 2017, recognise the need for mathematical and quantitative skills studied post-16 for entry into higher education, and for the future workforce.

It is therefore reassuring that the government is committed to increasing participation in mathematics post-16. Core maths, in particular, has been designed to meet the justifiable concerns raised by Andreas Schleicher, the education director of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Its focus is on developing fluency and confidence in applying known numerical and mathematical skills, techniques and methods to new problem areas; and on using and applying mathematics and statistics to address real-life scenarios.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL GLAISTER

SATURDAY MAY 5 2018

Teachers' holidays'

FROM PROF PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, In your news report "Teachers offered a year's paid leave to boost recruitment" (May 3) you state that teaching "is renowned for its generous holidays — 13 weeks a year".

Teachers work extremely long hours during the week and often at weekends, spending much of their time in the so-called holidays preparing for the term ahead, marking, keeping up to date with the many changes to the curriculum, learning about enhancements in approaches to teaching and the use of technology in support of learning, etc.

Anyone who is envious of teachers because of this myth of long holidays should try their hand at teaching and make a judgment for themselves. Before doing so, however, they might want to check out the salary levels for the majority of teachers.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 25 2006

Place your bets

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Presumably the likelihood that the London Olympics will start on time in 2012 (letter, Feb 23) will be increased significantly if favourable odds are offered to anyone wearing a hard hat?

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 9 2005

Football's ashes

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Presumably goalposts will require a slightly larger urn?

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

SATURDAY MARCH 12 2005

Houses of Parliament at loggerheads over anti-terror Bill

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, I hope that the farce in the Houses of Parliament is being viewed from abroad merely as an elaborate stunt in aid of Comic Relief.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
March 11.

FRIDAY JANUARY 23 2004

Need to sharpen TV-watching skills

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Should teenagers follow in their parents' footsteps, or pursue a career in their favourite pastime? Your headline "TV is as important as maths, says Jowell", (some editions, January 21) would seem to offer many of our youngsters a credible alternative.

Our daughter has already made up her mind.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
January 21.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 2 2003

Brown and Blair speeches assessed

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, There are many different routes to the same destination and, when following the wrong route, it is usually possible to effect a U-turn without the aid of a reverse gear.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
October 1.

MONDAY MAY 19 2003

Fickle factor

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Although the national infidelity figures of 9 per cent for women and 14.6 per cent for men appear to cast the male population in a poor light (report, May 15), the mismatch surely demonstrates that these women are actually more promiscuous than their male counterparts?

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
May 15.

SATURDAY MARCH 8 2003

Council tax and local responsibilities

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Although I should be celebrating the recent increase in my council tax of 11.7 per cent, it being lower than the average 12 per cent over each of the last five years, I can't help feeling that the cumulative increase of 82 per cent is out of step with 19 per cent for my salary over the same period.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
March 5.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 8 2003

Fuel formula

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Mr Douglas Goodman's mathematical formula to prove that his daughter's petrol tank will always be empty when she returns home (letter, February 6) is commonly known as the law of diminishing returns.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
February 7.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 26 2001

Wind-up

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Having heard about the lifeline offered to so many in Africa by the wind-up radio, and recently paying almost half of the original cost of a watch to have the battery replaced, I wondered whether there has been any progress on the development of a wind-up version of the wrist watch?

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
September 25.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3 1998

From start to finish

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Following years of practical experience on the matter, I should like to offer my own (fairly succinct) piece. *How to wash up*, as the natural successor to Delia on cooking and Nigella on eating (letter, October 30).

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
October 30.

MONDAY OCTOBER 27 1997

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, For my part, I am hoping that the EMU native to Europe will display the same characteristics as its antipodean namesake. Despite a profuse amount of flapping, it never succeeds in getting off the ground.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
October 23.

SATURDAY AUGUST 26 1995

Capital letters

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, I have always been openly sincere (Mr J.A. Hill's letter, August 19) but secretly hopeful, and remain so.

Yours
P. GLAISTER

MONDAY MAY 29 1995

Do calculators spoil our children?

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, As one of many lecturers nationwide charged with smoothing the transition from school to university for students embarking on a mathematics degree, I very much welcome the School and Curriculum Assessment Authority's inquiry into pupil's use of calculators. It is my impression that many of these students lack basic arithmetical skills.

It is easy to forget that calculators, like their more modern counterpart the computer, are merely tools to help those who already understand what they are doing. Giving a primary school pupil a calculator is like giving an infant a word-processor before it can write.

For my sins I also scrutinise students' calculators before they take them into an examination. This helps to minimise the opportunity to cheat. I find it deeply disturbing that many students now treat their calculators like a life-support machine which they cannot do without.

I would like to see the current trend reversed.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

THURSDAY JULY 14 1994

Off the rails?

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, If the recent figures from BR concerning the number of trains that they hope to run during today's one-day strike by the RMT union are to be believed (report, July 13), then a linear extrapolation based on a one-day strike every week, a six fold increase on the number of trains running during the first strike, and the 20 per cent of total proposed for today, imply that the whole rail network will be back to capacity just in time for Christmas.

Having two one-day strikes a week is good news, therefore, since this should only serve to hasten matters.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
July 13.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1993

Into the siding?

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Whatever type of locomotive is depicted, a carriage full of standing passengers is surely a must.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

SATURDAY DECEMBER 5 1992

Fit and proper

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, The decision by the Danish company Lego to build a theme park on the site of the former Windsor Safari Park (report, December 3) should come as welcome news for some of those hit by the recession in this area, particularly small firms of builders, or should I say firms of small builders.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1992

Always behind

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, I frequently lose the button from my trouser back pocket whenever I sit down on a wooden chair with horizontal slats. The button shoots off with immense speed, never to be seen again. The obvious solution is to remove the jacket *after* sitting down, but I always seem to forget.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

TUESDAY DECEMBER 18 1990

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, I thought that it was widely accepted that, in any worthwhile system of appraisal, an appraisee is encouraged to make constructive comments or criticisms about any aspect about their working environment, including the role of managers. This makes the process not a one-way, but a two-way process, and leads to the most effective management of personnel.

Unfortunately, this concept does not seem to be mentioned in the recently announced system of appraisal for teachers in England and Wales.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
December 11.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 22 1990

Maths for all

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, A computer scientist will add 1 and 2 bit by bit.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 13 1990

Once removed

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, Whilst I share the concern of my fellow Britons over our old people, I fail to see how a Grandparents' Day ("Life and times", September 12) will alleviate the problem. To be a grandparent it is neither necessary nor sufficient to be old.

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER

THURSDAY MARCH 8 1990

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, On learning the community charge that my wife and I will each have to pay in April, I fear that, in our case at least, we will finally have to put to rest that old adage that "two people can live as cheaply as one".

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
March 5.

THURSDAY MARCH 30 1989

Softly, softly

FROM DR PAUL GLAISTER

Sir, With the advent of the modern plastic dustbin, the ever-decreasing population of house-wives and what seems to be an increase in the mean wind speed over the United Kingdom, may I offer a new collective noun for common usage – a “rumble” of dustbins?

Yours faithfully,
P. GLAISTER
March 23.