The history of the Mathematical Association

DEAR EDITOR,

I am currently embarking on a project to produce a history of the Mathematical Association, from 1870. I hope this will appear in the form of a book for distribution to all members of the Association before the end of the decade!

The Mathematical Gazette has been the organ of the Association since 1894. The journal is itself a valuable historical resource and special commemorative numbers were published in 1913, 1929 (the 200th), 1948 (the 300th) and 1971 (Centenary Issue). From 1970 the late J. T. Combridge worked on the *Gazette* to produce a valuable set of notes on the Association's history, upon which I hope to build in my own study.

The *Gazette*'s own history is itself a feature of the Association's development which I intend to explore. More generally, I would be very grateful to hear from anyone who may be able to help me with any aspect of the Association's history: advice, interesting source material and oral or written evidence would all be welcome.

Yours sincerely,
MIKE PRICE

1 St Catharine's Way, Houghton-on-the Hill, Leicestershire LE7 9HE

Mike Price's letter reminds me that the centenary of the *Gazette* is approaching. If readers have any ideas on special contributions for the centenary edition, or any other suggestions of how we might mark the occasion, then I would be delighted to hear from them.

V.W.B.

Reviews

Generating mathematical activity in the classroom, by Marion Bird. Pp 83. ISBN 0-9508587-0-6 (West Sussex Institute of Higher Education Mathematics Centre)

Generating mathematical activity in the classroom was first published by the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education in 1983 and has now been reprinted by the Mathematical Association (available from the Leicester Office). The book consists of work carried out by a class of eleven year olds taught by the author. Each of the fifteen sections begins with a brief description of the lesson—for example:

"I asked each member of the class to draw a triangle on a piece of tracing paper, then to fold each side of the triangle exactly in half. Everyone's fold-lines met at a point. I invited the class to try other triangles and, at the same time, to think of questions they could ask themselves about the activity. These questions were raised:

'Do the folds always meet at one point?'

'If so, why?'

'Sometimes the folds meet inside the triangles, sometimes they meet outside. Why does this happen?'

'What happens to isosceles triangles?'

'... And to equilateral triangles?'

Different pupils then chose different questions to tackle."

There then follows the work done by the children, in some cases rough jottings and in others more polished final write-ups. Here we see children having the confidence to ask their own questions, to make conjectures and to engage in the process of proving.

This book does not preach. The author simply says "This is what I did" and in half a dozen pages at the end describes her method of working in the classroom. These pages are further