DEAR EDITOR,

I was glad to see that so many had taken up Parameswaran's challenge [1, 2], but disappointed that no one had investigated the gap between the 2-digit S•P numbers he gives as examples and the upper limit of ~60 digits that any such number can have.

My investigations discovered no S•P numbers with fewer than 10 digits (assuming no significant errors in the search program I used), other than 135 and 144, given in [1]. My suspicion is that there are no S•P numbers other than 135 and 144.

The sub S•P numbers appear more common. A search for all such numbers with 5 or fewer digits gave: 15, 18, 24, 45, 48, 288, 378, 476, 756, 864, 1575, 39366, 69984.

References

1. S. Parameswaran, Numbers and their digits – a structural pattern, *Math. Gaz.* **81** (July 1997) p. 263.
2. Paul Belcher *et al*, On S•P numbers, *Math. Gaz.* **82** (March 1998) pp. 72-74.

Yours sincerely,

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Editor's Note: The question about S•P numbers is dealt with by Alan Beardon and Robin McLean in the next issue.

DEAR EDITOR,

Anthony Lo Bello (*Math. Gaz.* **82.** pp. 102-104) falls into a typical survey analysis trap with his analysis of the Mill data. There is 34 percent missing data. We do not know why they are missing, and so we can surely not disregard them in the analysis. Perhaps the simplest approach would be to assume under the null hypothesis that they should be equally divided amongst the days. The chi-squared numerators then stay exactly the same, but the denominators all increase to about 180. The final chi-squared value then becomes about 13.6 which is a far cry from the p-value of 0.0022 – much nearer 0.05 and non-significant.

However, all of this still begs the question of why these data are missing and no conclusions can be drawn until we have evidence on this.

At the end of the day all we can say is 'conditional on the day of the crime being reported, there is evidence of a non-uniform distribution over days' – hardly the positive result inferred in Mill's Autobiography.

Yours sincerely,

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