Editorial

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many readers who take the trouble to send in their gleanings. I know that these give many great pleasure, and I heard recently that the staff of one of our great daily papers were aghast to find themselves pilloried in our pages. Whether we will ever induce the journalist to have his mathematical pronouncements checked by someone qualified seems doubtful though. Readers will remember the *Times* leader's recent sally into "Newtonian mechanics" ($k = mv^2$), so when I read on the front of the *Times* for 6 September that one of the leaders would be about British Telecom lengthening our telephone numbers I knew that it would contain a howler of considerable dimensions. And so it did. "Furthermore, there will be far greater likelihood of wrong numbers, which is increased ten thousand-fold by using four extra digits", it thundered. I leave it as an interesting exercise for readers and their pupils to show that, assuming any digit has a probability p of being mis-dialled, the only value of p consistent with the *Times*'s ten thousand is $p = 0$. When Simon Jenkins became editor of the *Times* he made a lot of fuss about getting the punctuation and grammar back to scratch in his paper. But clearly, when its a matter of mere numeracy *he couldn't care less.*

NICK MACKINNON

The second iteration
1991 Presidential address

MARGARET BROWN

It has been my good fortune in life to have been able to work with inspiring and generous people. When I was writing this address, I found myself thinking particularly of one, Geoffrey Matthews, to whom I still often turn

263