Letters TO THE EDITOR

'Stonkered'
Dear Sir—Mr. E. F. S. Clarke and Mr. K. J. Chapman, in their paper on the cable-laying gear for the CANTAT submarine cable,* refer to a device called a 'stonker', a 'some-
what arresting title, of uncertain origin'. I think I can help investigators in their inquiries.
I realised the need for a device for stopping runaway cables and repeaters, and dubbed it a 'stonker'. But although I suggested a rather crude device for this purpose, I did not invent the word, which
was familiar to me in the form of its past participle 'stonkered', meaning 'stopped' or 'frustrated'. This word does not appear
in any dictionary as far as is known, but it is not uncommon in Scotland.
Scots mercenaries once fought in Sweden, and probably imported a number of words, such as 'bairn' and 'ken', when they returned. Perhaps this one, which has a military meaning, may be among them. There is a Swedish word 'stanga' (rhymes with 'longer') meaning 'to butt', 'to gore', 'to immobilise each other by locking horns', and hence to 'hold one's own' or 'to hold immobilised'. It has equivalents and cognates in all Nordic languages, including
Anglo-Saxon. The Icelandic equivalent can have the sense of putting one's foot forward to stop suddenly (cf. also the
German 'stänken', to wrangle).
I do not suggest that the above derivation is correct, but it seems plausible, and, if one considers 'stonker' as a coined 'arresting' word, it is much more appropriate than I thought at the time.—Yours faithfully,
K. E. Latimer
129 Bridge Lane
Golders Green, London N.W.11
6th August 1963

Flux cutting or flux linking
Dear Sir—I regret that I failed to make myself clear to Mr. C. Hargreaves (Journal, March 1963, p. 118, and July 1963, p.300), but if he will sketch the magnetic field distribution for one or two different positions of the rotating ring relative to the
fixed ring he will, I think, appreciate that there is no basic difficulty in realizing the three conditions stated by Dr. A. Clayton, namely a uniform field in the air-gap, zero
field inside the inner ring, and constant

(zero) flux linkage with the armature winding. Since there is no change of flux
linkage, neither e.m.f. nor torque can be
developed by the winding as a whole.
From the flux-cutting viewpoint, in
amplification of my previous remarks, I
should like to offer the opinion that
• the conductors situated in the air-gap experience an e.m.f. and torque in a
manner analogous to that found in a
Gramme-ring armature
• the conductors on the inside of the
rotating ring give rise to an (oppositely
directed) e.m.f. and torque in a manner analogous to that operative in a slot-

wound armature.
The yokes Y, in Fig. 1 of Mr. Hargreaves's
first letter, correspond to the teeth, which
carry nearly all of the field flux, according
to the degree of saturation. Further, since
both e.m.f. and torque are proportional to
the total flux in the machine and since the
flux crossing the gap is necessarily equal to

that entering the yokes, it follows that
the magnitudes of the total e.m.f. and torque
developed by the outer conductors are equal
to those produced by the inner conductors,
thus giving zero resultant effect.
The basic principles involved have been
admirably expounded by Mr. K. J. Binns
—Yours faithfully,
D. P. SAYERS
Central Electricity Generating Board
157–168 Blackfriars Road, S.E.1
22nd August 1963

Ball lightning
Dear Sir—I was interested in the article in
the May 1963 Journal, p. 202, on fireballs,
as I have studied collated reports of similar
phenomena in New Zealand. These include
one that travelled across rough terrain and
'bounced' off a tall tree, having an aerial
path of at least 400 yards.

The propagation of the fireball could be
more simply explained than in the article
by assuming that the fireball held a net
charge and moved along an electrostatic
gradient. The ball could be regarded as a
hot-air balloon with an ionized skin,
friction with the atmosphere causing heat
and maintaining the thermal equilibrium.
The presence of electrostatic fields is a
known feature of thunderstorms, and is
more readily established than resonance
effects to explain the propagation of the
ball.—Yours faithfully,
H. Elder
41 Wade Street
Wellington N.2, New Zealand
10th July 1963

Flux cutting or flux linking
S. A. Swann, PH.D., MEMBER

Electricity from waste
G. B. Lincoln, MEMBER

Why ‘Associate’?
D. P. Sayers, B.SC., MEMBER

Why ‘Associate’?
G. B. Lincoln, MEMBER

Ball lightning
H. Elder, ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Electricity from waste
H. Elder, ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Flux cutting or flux linking
D. P. Sayers, B.SC., MEMBER