Editor—We were interested to see the article ‘Basics of electricity for anaesthetists’ in this journal. However, we would like to point out a number of important issues. The mains voltage in the UK has recently been defined as 230 V, and the transmission voltage is around 11 kV. Recent changes have led to the provision of three separate lines to a substation (live or phase conductor, neutral conductor, and protective earth conductor). Finally, biphasic defibrillator devices were not discussed, and are now almost universal in the UK; details of the detailed physical principles have been published.

Declaration of interest
None declared.

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Reply from the authors
Editor—We would like to thank Prof. Tooley and Dr Magee for their interest in our article and on pointing out the change in main voltages in UK. The nominal European voltage is now 230 V, 50 Hz (formerly 240 V in the UK, 220 V in the rest of Europe), but this does not mean that there has been a real change in the supply. Instead, the new ‘harmonized voltage limits’ in Europe are now: 230 V ± 10% ± 6% (i.e. 207.0–243.8 V) in most of Europe, and 230 V ± 6% ± 10% (i.e. 216.2–253.0 V) in the UK.

As far as biphasic defibrillators are concerned, that is a separate topic in itself and the idea of the article was to cover the basics only.

Declaration of interest
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