



“Perfect,” said Prof Harrison. “I’ll go and get the weather balloon – Prof Methven, you go up to the roof and get ready to catch it.”

They went their separate ways – Prof Harrison to the store room to get a weather balloon, and Prof Methven to the roof. Once the balloon was fully inflated, Prof Harrison tied on the wind vane and launched.

However, Prof Methven’s attempts to catch the balloon were not successful. “Oh... wait!” he said. “It’s OK – I’ve managed to free the wind vane from the weather balloon! ...Oops. Aaaargh...! ...Oof! Hey! I’ve found my bicycle!”

The next suggestion came from Prof Clark. “We have been using a drone recently to measure the boundary layer. We could tie the wind vane to the drone and fly it up to the roof.”

“But you will need someone to go up to the roof again,” said Prof Ambaum.

“Right,” said Prof Clark. “And it would be easier to pilot it from the roof. We need to find someone reliable, dependable, and who never gets anything wrong.”

“Clear for take-off, captain,” said Prof Methven, back on the roof, this time with the radio control of Prof Clark’s drone in his hands. However, his early attempts at controlling the drone were limited in success.

“Hey! I think I’ve got the hang of it now!” said Prof Methven. “All I’ve got to do is catch it. ...Where’s it gone?” ...Hey! I’ve found my bicycle!”

“Right – there’s only one way left to sort this,” said Dr Woolnough. “This calls for some world-class skill. Time to get out the croquet mallet.”

“But you’ll break it,” said Dr Dacre.

“It’s fallen off the roof twice already – I think it will be OK,” said Dr Woolnough.

“But you’ll still need someone on the roof to catch it,” said Prof Ambaum. “Someone... reliable and dependable and who never gets anything wrong...?”

“Ready, Prof Methven?” shouted Dr Woolnough.

“Ready when you are,” said Prof Methven from the roof.

Dr Woolnough lined up his shot. And he struck it with a mighty crack.

“Ooh, look – it’s my bicycle again!” said Prof Methven.

“Nice work, Dr Woolnough,” said Dr Dacre.

“I just duffed it,” said Dr Woolnough.

“You’ve sent it straight through the window of one of the PhD offices – no doubt straight into the Panto Cupboard. I am sure it will be used extensively through this year’s panto. In other words, we won’t see it again until after panto season!”

“Bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-blah!” said Prof Clark.

“We’ll have to find something we can use as a wind vane in the mean-time,” said Prof Ambaum. “Something reliable, dependable that never goes wrong...”