

## MR METS EPISODE 9: #PROF\_HAWKINS AND THE COMPUTER TROUBLE

We begin this year's episode with an announcement. So far, we have made a total of eight episodes of the Mr Mets. The last three of those episodes have begun with an apology to Prof Clark. And this year is no exception.

We apologise once more to Prof Clark for the way he has been portrayed in recent episodes of the Mr Mets. To reiterate: he does NOT talk about himself all of the time, he does NOT frequently hit himself on the head with a plastic bottle, and does NOT stand on one leg and hop up and down. We apologise once again and assure Prof Clark that he will not be made to look foolish in any way in this episode of the Mr Mets.

However, we wrote this episode of the Mr Mets having been told that Prof Clark would not be in the audience tonight as he had a prior engagement. He has since rearranged that engagement and is in fact in the audience tonight. As we found this out too late to rewrite the story, here follows a second apology to Prof Clark for anything that he might see in tonight's episode.

And now, time for *The Adventures of the Mr Mets!* Episode 9: Hashtag, Prof-Underscore-Hawkins and the Computer Trouble.

It was a beautiful day in Happy Met Land. Prof Harrison and Dr Tailleux were taking a break on the balcony, enjoying the sunshine. Prof Harrison sat, musing about new designs of radiosonde, while Dr Tailleux worked hard on his Mac. Surely just another normal day in Happy Met Land...?

"Do you get the feeling we are being watched?" said Prof Harrison.

"Pigeon," said Dr Tailleux, not looking up.

"Goodness gracious," said Prof Harrison. "A pigeon carrying a letter! I can't remember the last time I got a letter by pigeon! It's all fast, super-modern e-mails."

"It has been a long time," said Dr Tailleux, still not looking up.

Prof Harrison picked up the letter and opened it. "Oh!" he said. "It's from Mr Blanchonnet over at Central IT Services. Apparently, e-mails aren't working again. 'The e-mail system is down. Many other programs are not working properly. We are taking remedial action immediately. We aim to have everything back up and running in three days.' P.T.O.... 'Please spread the word around Happy Met Land. We couldn't afford enough pigeons to tell everybody.' ...Three days?"

"My computer works all right," said Dr Tailleux, smugly. "I have a Mac."

With that, Prof Harrison charged off to start spreading the word about the computer trouble. He knew that this was a very important task, and that he certainly wouldn't have time to be distracted by anyone engaging him in a very long chat.

His first stop was Prof Clark's office. But Prof Clark was more interested in talking about himself than hearing what Prof Harrison had to say about the computers. He had recently been introduced to a new game on his smartphone and he wanted to tell everyone about it.

"It is a strange game," said Prof Clark. "You get a picture of a random person's face. According to my undergraduate class, you have to guess whether they are right-handed or left-handed. If you think they are left-handed, you swipe to the left. If you think they are right-handed, you swipe to the right. At least, that's what they told me."

Prof Harrison sighed and looked at his watch. He had already been in Prof Clark's office for half an hour. But he was finding some entertainment in the prank that the undergraduates had clearly played.

“What’s strange about it, though,” continued Prof Clark. “People in the game do send you very weird messages. But they only seem to come from the people that I think are right-handed. Someone messaged me the other day saying that they liked my enormous heron.”

“Before you go on,” interrupted Prof Harrison, “I need to tell you about computer problems. Nothing is working properly -- even e-mail. ITS even sent a pigeon.”

“Oh, that’s OK, I can do all my work on my smart phone,” said Prof Clark. “It’s not bad when you’ve got... ‘4G’...”

With Prof Harrison unable to continue delivering his message, computer problems were wreaking havoc across Happy Met Land. Prof Hawkins had just returned from another epic expedition to unearth past weather records from hidden archives. His latest trip had taken him to the Pyramids of Egypt, where he had unearthed some parchments that seemed to contain some weather data. Naturally, he had to tweet about them as soon as possible, from as many of his 41 Twitter accounts as he could. But, without the Internet working, he couldn’t access Twitter...

Meanwhile, in the library, Dr Thompson and Dr Shonk were busy with the Met Globe. Purchased previously for many thousands of pounds, they thought that it was time that the Globe was put to good use. After all, if it could display complex climate change patterns, surely it could be used to display a 360-degree view of Prof Ambaum’s head? Using Google, they had managed to find photos of his head from all angles. But, with access to the file system suddenly cut off, they could no longer retrieve the pictures...

Meanwhile, in his office, Prof Methven was sat doing absolutely nothing. Something in the back of his mind told him he had a meeting at some point today. But, with Microsoft Outlook not working, his calendar for the day was completely empty. In fact, he had been sitting in his office doing nothing for the past five hours.

There was a knock on his door. “Prof Methven? Are you there? It’s Prof Ambaum. You were meant to be in a monitoring committee meeting two hours ago. Are you there?”

“Hello?” said Prof Methven.

“You have also missed a group meeting and two servings of free food in the coffee room,” said Prof Ambaum. “Are you feeling all right?”

“Hello?” said Prof Methven. “...Hello?”

As the IT problems affected more and more of the Happy Met Landers, they did what all good academics should do when they cannot use their computers. Have a coffee break. But the mood at the coffee break was not particularly cheerful.

“How are we supposed to do any work?” grumbled Dr Thompson. “Without Matlab, how can I make interesting radar plots? Or build code that tracks Pokemon through Lower Earley?”

“Without the Internet, how can I use Twitter? Hashtag, Ed Hawkins. Hashtag, irritated. Hashtag, get it fixed,” said Prof Hawkins.

“Most importantly,” announced Prof Ambaum, “without LaTeX, how can I get any work done on the sequel to my book? ‘Thermal Physics of the Atmosphere Part 2: the Entropy Strikes Back’?”

“Most importantly,” said Dr Shonk, “without Microsoft Powerpoint, how can I make this Mr Mets interval act?”

Prof Methven spoke up. “There was free food?”

“Even more importantly,” said Prof Hawkins, “why have IT not told us about the problems? Hashtag, Professor Hawkins. Hashtag, climate spiral.”

"No need," said Dr Tailleux. "They sent us a pigeon. They will fix it in three days. Prof Harrison was meant to be telling you all. But I don't know what has happened to him."

"Three days without computers?" said Dr Thompson.

"How will we cope?" said Prof Ambaum.

After a brief moment of thought, Prof Hawkins spoke up. "Right, I have a plan that could fix the computers in the next ten minutes. Hashtag, get it sorted. Hashtag, legend. I know someone who can help. But we must first travel to... NCAS World. Hashtag, Ed Hawkins. Hashtag, Real Ed Hawkins. Hashtag, all you other Ed Hawkineses are just imitating. But we must first cross Psycho World. Hashtag, dangerous. Follow me!"

The journey across Psycho World was treacherous.

They navigated their way through the corridor of sitting undergraduates. They managed to avoid inadvertently entering the Psychoanalysis Rooms. They crossed the Psycho Quad without incident, and managed to make it past the MRI scanner. They finally arrived in NCAS World, which had recently separated from Happy Met Land. Some say there was a vote among NCAS core staff to leave, that was won by 52% to 48%. Others say it was a logistical decision to move all NCAS members into the same building. Still, at least it had new carpets.

"Well, we've made it to the NCAS coffee room," said Prof Hawkins. "Hashtag, yeah! And I see that Prof Methven is already in the kitchen looking for free food."

At that point, they were greeted by a familiar face.

"WELCOME TO NCAS WORLD!" said Prof Woolnough in a strangely quiet voice. "Why is Prof Methven wearing a spoon and a stapler?"

"Oh, he fell into the MRI scanner," said Prof Ambaum.

"He's magnetic now," said Prof Hawkins. "Hashtag, John Methven. Hashtag, whoops."

"I see," said Prof Woolnough. "How unfortunate. It's so great to see people from Happy Met Land coming over here! Look -- here's Prof Sutton! He's pleased to see you too."

"Hello," said Prof Sutton. "What do you think of our new little place?"

"It's amazing! Hashtag, NCAS. Can I move over from Happy Met Land?"

"Can I move too?" said Dr Shonk.

"Of course," said Prof Sutton. "You can enjoy the facilities in our newly refurbished kitchen. We have brand new cutlery, crockery, frying pan, toaster... We even have a brand new dishwasher!"

"Be serious," said Prof Hawkins.

"Sorry."

"We need help from one of your number. Hashtag, NCAS CMS. At the moment, the computers are not working in Happy Met Land. Hashtag, compute-mageddon."

"Say no more," said Prof Sutton. "Follow me." He led them along to the corridor and knocked on one of the doors.

"Enter," said a voice from within.

“Mr Heaps?” said Prof Sutton. “I bring these people from Happy Met Land. They are having computer issues.”

“I need to send some urgent tweets. Hashtag, Ed Hawkins,” said Prof Hawkins.

“I need to get on with the sequel to my book,” said Prof Ambaum.

“We need to project Prof Ambaum’s face on the Met Globe,” said Drs Shonk and Thompson.

“Wait, what?” said Prof Ambaum.

“Computer troubles, eh?” said Mr Heaps. “Well, you’ve come to the right place. What do you want me to fix?”

“Hashtag, everything,” said Prof Hawkins.

“I will fix it in 30 seconds,” said Mr Heaps, “or else I will climb Helvellyn with my pants on my head. Cue, music.”

“Done! Now, who’s up for a game of squash?”

Mr Heaps had saved the day. With everything fixed, Prof Hawkins was able to send his tweets, Prof Methven was able to figure out what he was meant to be doing, Prof Harrison was able to escape from Prof Clark and his heron, and Dr Shonk and Dr Thompson were able to project Prof Ambaum’s head on the Met Globe.