

## Mr Mets 13: Prof Tailleux's Missing "Precious"

We begin this episode of the Mr Mets with an apology. ●

The Mr Mets has now been running as a Panto interval act for over ten years. In that time, we have been exceptionally mean to Prof Clark. ● We have implied he talks about himself all of the time, ● hits himself over the head with a plastic bottle, ●●●● hops up and down on one leg, ●● was pranked by undergraduates into signing up to both Tinder and Grindr, ●● and taught Prof Inness to floss. ●16● To clarify: SOME of those things never actually happened.

We apologise once again to Prof Clark for any offence caused. ● Yet again, we reiterate our request ● – if you want to avoid being parodied in the Mr Mets, ● don't do things that draw attention to us when we are writing the episode. For example, don't start bringing items to the coffee room that draw attention to you. ● Is that OK? ● Good. ●

● ...And now it's time for ● the Adventures of the Mr Mets! ●● Episode 13: "Prof Tailleux's Missing Precious". ●

### **[SCENE 0: Prof Hawkins in Egypt]**

It was another fine day in Happy Met Land. Some of the Happy Met Landers were out and about travelling. ● Hashtag Prof Hawkins was in Egypt for COP 27. ● He hadn't been invited. However, while taking part in the Baton Relay, he turned the wrong way ● at the Three Tuns crossroads. ● Despite his exhaustion, he now held the ● World Record for "longest distance ever run to a major international conference". ●●

### **[SCENE 1: Prof Tailleux's office – he has lost his laptop]**

● However, not everyone in the Land was happy that day. Prof Tailleux ● was very sad. ●● He had lost his laptop. ● His precious, ● precious Mac. Without it, ● he didn't know what to do with himself. ● Last time ● he saw it, it was on a table in the coffee area. ● As far as he could remember, anyway. ●● Every day, he asked ● at the School Office if it had been handed in. ●●● Mrs Robinson ● was always willing to check in the ● lost property cupboard, but it was never there. ●●

● On occasion, around the Land, you could hear him walking down the corridors, whispering: ● "My precious... my precious... where is my precious...?" ●

### **[SCENE 2: Happy Met Landers chat in the Coffee Area]**

In the Coffee Area, ● it was time for a break and the Happy Met Landers were ● standing around with their mugs of coffee. They had plenty of time for chatting ● – thanks to another IT failure, ● they had had no access to the Unix system now for 19 days, ● effectively shutting down the entire Land's research output. ●● Still, they were looking on the bright side.

"We may not been able to do any research," ● said Dr Inness, "but I have been able to spend ● more time focusing on teaching. My first year undergraduate class ● can already draw perfect tephigrams. ● And it's only week four."

● "I have used the time to develop the greatest radiosonde the world has ever seen," ● said Prof Harrison. ● "As well as all the usual sensors, this one has a propeller ● – so as well as going up and down, it can also go sideways. ● How about you, ● Prof Methven? ● What have you been doing?"

● "Well, I found a working computer," ● said Prof Methven. "I have been sat at it for the last ● 19 days. I mean, it's not particularly fast and doesn't seem to ● calculate things very well. ● But it does have a screen, some numbers in the corner and buttons. ● It also makes occasional pinging noises. ● It's over there in the kitchen."

● Dr Inness sighed. "Have you ● been trying to run Python code using the ● microwave again?" ●●

● Prof Methven thought for a moment. ● "Ah! So ● that's why people keep putting pots of soup inside my monitor. ● Ha!" ●

Their conversation was interrupted ● by the arrival of Prof Clark. ● Hello," he said. "Look – as requested, I am ● not talking about myself, or ● drawing attention to myself in any way." ●●

●● “What’s that?” asked Prof Harrison.

● “What’s what...?” ● said Prof Clark. “Oh, ● this? It’s my ● coffee swinger. ● Doesn’t everyone have one?”

● “No,” ● said Prof Inness. “I always use the ● handle of the mug.” ●

● “What happens you get excited and forget you are ● holding it?” said Prof Harrison. “Do you end up throwing ● coffee across the room?”

● At that moment, ● Prof Shine arrived. ● “Good news, everyone!” ● he exclaimed. “We have decided that this building ● is to be renamed! ●● The call for ideas for its new name opens now – so get thinking! ● There will be a meeting next Monday ● when you can pitch your suggestions to us. The ● best suggestion wins.” ●

●● “Yay!” shouted Prof Clark. ●● “...Oh.” ●

### **[SCENE 3: Happy Met Landers present their ideas to the panel in the Synoptic Lab]**

The following Monday, in the Synoptic Lab, ● a panel gathered to listen to the Happy Met Landers’ building names. On the panel with ● Prof Shine was ● Prof Singarayer and ● Prof Tailleux. ● With his laptop missing now for several days, he was starting to go a bit strange. ●●●●

● The first idea came from ● Prof Illingworth.

● “Imagine a place,” he began, “that honours the ● most important area of meteorological research. A place where ● ZDR and D-to-the-six rule supreme. ● We put a large ● radar on the roof ● and name it ● ‘Chilbolton Towers’ – making it the world’s ● largest, steerable, pointable ● meteorological building.”

●● “I think it’s brilliant!” ● said Prof Singarayer. ●

● “It might be a bit ● expensive putting a radar on the roof, ● though,” said Prof Shine.

● Next up was ● Prof Brayshaw, recently promoted to one of the many Heads of Department.

● “Imagine a place,” he began, “that ● honours an important area of research. A place where ● renewable energy and the cutting of fossil fuel emissions is at its heart. ● We put a ● large wind turbine on the ● roof and call it the ● ‘Eternal Wind Building’. We would be the first ● meteorological building that powers itself.”

●● “Awesome! I love it!” ● said Prof Singarayer. ●

● “It might a bit loud, ● having a wind turbine running on the ● roof all day,” said Prof Shine.

● The next idea was from ● Prof Feltham.

● “Imagine a place,” he began, “that honours a ● very significant area of research. A place where the cryosphere is at the ● centre of all we do. ● We study sea ice and polar processes in all their detail. ● We capture a large ● iceberg from the Arctic and install it on the roof and call ourselves ● ‘The Ice House’.” ●●

●● “Perfect!” ● exclaimed Prof Singarayer. ●

● “Why is everyone suggesting ● putting things on the roof?” said Prof Shine. ●● “We only need a new name – not major ● architectural plans! ● Still – at least we haven’t had anyone suggesting naming it after themselves. Who is next?” ●

● “Prof Ambaum.” ●

●● “Imagine a place,” began Prof Ambaum, “named after a ● legend in the field of atmospheric physics. ● After all, what would meteorology be ● without atmospheric physics? I know my ● MSc class absolutely love it. My suggestion ● was therefore to name it after someone for whom ● atmospheric physics is their middle name. Well, it nearly is. ● The ‘Maarten ● Atmospheric Physics Ambaum ● Building’. But then – ● something happened and I realised this building could ● never bear my name.”

●● “What happened?” said Prof Shine.

● Prof Ambaum scowled. ●● “Prof Frame ●● gave a presentation about potential vorticity in WCD. ● In the third week of the Autumn Term!”

●● “What is the problem with that?” ● said Prof Singarayer.

● Prof Ambaum sighed. ● “Because suddenly, all my MSc students wanted to know what ● potential vorticity is. I tried to explain it using the maths in Second Edition of my book. ● But – I don’t understand potential vorticity! ● No one can ● really explain what it means. ● And then ● I realised what this building should be named. After the ● one person who understands potential vorticity – and the ● one atmospheric physicist greater than me. ● I ● therefore propose ● – ● ‘The ● Prof ● Sir ● Brian ● Potential ● Vorticity ● Hoskins ● Building’. ● Or maybe just ‘Brian Hoskins’ for short.” ●

●● “I think it’s perfect,” ● said Prof Singarayer.

● “I think we’ve got a winner,” said Prof Shine. ●

#### **[SCENE 4: the renaming ceremony takes place in the Stairwell]**

● A few weeks later, ● the Happy Met Landers ● gathered in the ●● stairwell for the ● Grand ● Renaming ● Ceremony. ● There was a ● buzz of ● excitement, possibly ● partly ● fuelled by free ● wine and nibbles. ●

● “Ladies and gentlemen!” ● called Prof Charlton-Perez. “Thank you all for coming to the ● Grand Renaming Ceremony! ● And thank you, ● Prof Shine, ● for creating such a great event.”

●● “Hooray!” shouted Prof Clark. ●● “...Oh.” ●● “...OW!” ●

●● “And now ● we begin with a few words on the ● construction of Happy Met Land ● itself from the ● Reverend Professor ● Ian James!”

● “Bless you, my children,” said Prof James. “In the beginning was the ● word, and that word was to build thyself an ● awesome building in which ye may study thine ● atmospheric science. And ● lo, with the help of many of my ● meteorological brethren, I did ● design the Land for thee. ● Constructors came forth to assist in its grand erection ● and, after ● three score weeks and ● ten, yonder Land was complete. ● And Prof Brian Hoskins did ● look upon our creation, and saw that it was good. ● Amen.”

● “And now, ● without further ado,” said Prof Charlton-Perez proudly, “our ● special guest for the day will unveil the plaque. ● Ladies and gentlemen, ● Knight of the Realm, ●● Professor Sir Brian Potential Vorticity Hoskins!”

● “I am so honoured,” ● said Prof Hoskins, “that you chose to name this building after ● me. When I heard it was to be named after someone, I guessed ● it would end up as something like the ● Maarten Atmospheric Physics Ambaum Building. ●●● So, ● it gives me ● great ● pleasure to name this building...” ●

● “Stop!” shouted Mrs Robinson, suddenly. ● “Stop the ceremony! Something dreadful ● has happened.” ●

●● “What has happened?” ● said Prof Charlton-Perez.

● “Someone has jammed the ● shredder again!” ● exclaimed Mrs Robinson. ● “I put signs up everywhere saying, only ● five sheets of paper at a time. I send e-mails saying, ● don’t put anything in that isn’t paper. ● And I go in there ● and find that someone has attempted to ● shred a large piece of plastic. Look!” ● Gasps went up around the room. ●

● “But that’s the plaque!” ● said Prof Charlton-Perez. ● “That should be on the ● wall behind the curtains! Then ● what is actually there?” ●

●● Prof Hoskins opened the curtains. ●● Another gasp ● of surprise ● was raised around the room. ●

●●● “What is the ● meaning of this?” ● asked Prof Charlton-Perez.

● ● “We can explain,” said the PhD students. “In true ● panto tradition, we made a ● fake plaque. We found ● an old piece of ● worthless plastic lying around in the coffee area and thought it would be ● funny. But it was intended as a ● panto prop – it was never meant to be put on the wall.” ●

●● “Then I can explain,” said ● Prof Shine. ● “I left the ● real plaque on a table in the ● coffee area and told the ● contractors to mount it on the ● wall. They must have mounted this ● worthless piece of plastic instead. But I have ● no idea how the real version ended up in the shredder.”

●● “Then I can explain,” said Prof Singarayer. “We made ● digital designs of the plaque before it was made and ● printed out the design on less than five sheets of paper ● for the Organising Committee. ● Once the real plaque was made, I sent the ● paper copies for shredding. ● Someone in the School Office must have shredded the plaque by mistake.” ●●●●

●●● Suddenly, Mrs ● Robinson realised who had shredded the plaque. ●●

● “So we can take down this ● worthless piece of plastic and replace it with the ● correct name,” said Prof Hoskins. ●

● “But look,” said Prof James. “Thy ● worthless piece of plastic seemeth to have a switch. ● I wonder what doth happen if I were ● to press it?” ●

●● “My precious!” ● shouted Prof Tailleux, ecstatically. “You’ve found my ● precious!” ●

***[SCENE 5: the real plaque is revealed; the fake one is remade and used in the panto]***

● So, order was restored in Happy Met Land. ● The correct ● plaque was attached to the wall ● and the building officially renamed ‘The Professor Sir Brian Potential Vorticity Hoskins Building’. ● Or just ‘Brian Hoskins’ for short. ●●

● With Prof Tailleux’s laptop ● returned to him, the ● PhD students made a new fake plaque ●● to use in their panto. ●●●

● Everyone found the panto absolutely hilarious that year. ● Well, nearly everyone... ●

● **THE END** ●