

If I hear another global warming joke, I'll . . .

. . . go completely insane. Climate change doesn't mean we'll have lots of lovely weather all the time, you numbskulls

Giles Coren

Right, there is something that is going to have to stop right this second, and that is people making jokes about "If the globe is warming up then where did all this snow come from, eh? Eh? Tell me that?" Because it is driving me crazy.

And when I say "people", I mean mostly columnists, cartoonists and comedians. I know there is nothing else to write about at the moment (God help me, I'm writing about people writing about the snow) and I grant that it was a nice little coincidence that the Copenhagen summit happened just as it started snowing, but please, people, stop making jokes about the weather in relation to climate change. Stop pretending to be surprised that you had to put a scarf and hat on this morning when the world is supposed to be warming up. The two things are not related. Nobody who understands the science is claiming that global warming (if it happens) is going to make Britain hotter in the long run.

You hear me? Nobody is saying that, not the bleeding-heartested, most climate-credulous ladyboy Yakult-drinker in Islington. It will do the opposite. Global warming will *in the end* interfere with the ocean currents, knock out the Gulf Stream, and remove the protection we have from the icy Nordic weather that is our due, as sharers of the same latitude as Siberia. Britain will get colder. So this joke about the weather just isn't there.

Do you understand? It's called "global warming", but that doesn't mean "nice warm weather". So please stop making these stupid, stupid jokes in my newspapers and on my television.

Every bloody spring it's the same. As soon as there is a nice sunny day the climate-sceptic jokemeisters say: "If this is global warming, then bring it on!" Ha ha ha.

Idiots! Don't you get it? Those sunny days are because Great Britain is protected by the Gulf Stream, thanks to a finely balanced climatic status quo that will change if, as some people believe will happen, world temperatures rise by a couple of degrees over the next few years.

Can you get it into your thick skulls? If global warming turns out to be true, Britain weather will go bonkers. It will snow all the time. Weather might be like this more often, not less. Those unseasonably sunny early springs are exactly what there will be fewer of, not more. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

Good. So then you grasp that there is no irony at all in "people going on about so-called global warming when there is snow on the ground"? I am not saying that the snow we are having now is because of global warming. It is not. Although it is an example of what we will have if global warming happens (regardless of whether it is man-made or the result of a Vulcan farting epidemic on Mars). The cold weather now is a change of weather, okay? It's not a change of climate. The two things are completely different, however endlessly hilarious you seem to think it is to confuse them.

I appreciate how enjoyable it is for middle-aged rightwingers, who think that climate change (along with racial prejudice, gender inequality and Aids) is a lefty invention by softies on Camden Council, to make a mockery of it every time there is any sort of weather at all, but it is driving me absolutely insane.

If you don't understand it, DON'T TALK ABOUT IT! And if you don't believe in it, and you think that recent global temperatures have followed an upward trend because of something to do with sunspots and solar cycles and that climate change is just a way for certain endemic quasi-socialist, wealth-baiting principles to manifest themselves politically

in the aftermath of communism, then SAY SO! But for Christ's sake don't keep making fools of yourselves with this endless bloody idiot joke about how nice it would be if we had hotter summers in England and didn't have to go to the Mediterranean every year. Because there is no joke to be made.

- (I very nearly wrote "there's snow joke to be made" — the worst cold weather gag in the history of the world, including all those dreadful, dreadful puns on Wednesday and Thursday about "CHILLY wind at No 10" and "FROSTY atmosphere in the Cabinet" and "Brown GRITS his teeth" and "The silence of David CHILL-i-band". Actually I made those last two up, can't think why nobody used them . . .) Non-cricket people look away now. For in the wake of Thursday's heroic draw with South Africa I am going to give the England team some advice about bats.

I rather hesitate to write about cricket, being now practically the only *Times* columnist who is not a former England cricketer (even Libby Purves, I dare say, used to open the batting for the ladies). But I do feel future match-saving situations could be made a little bit less stressful for everyone if the England team had a bit of a think about their equipment.

We were batting for a draw. We were not attempting to score any runs at all. South Africa had spinners bowling at both ends for some of the time, and from one end for almost all the time (I say "spinners", but what they had was men who bowled slowly — the names of Duminy and Harris are not going to go down in history alongside Ramadhin and Valentine or Laker and Lock, more likely alongside Cannon and Ball, and other absolute jokers), and they had fielders crowded round waiting for catches to pop up off the face of what should have been totally dead bats.

And the England boys all came sauntering into the crease, as usual, with their huge, modern bats, three inches thick and sprung like a child's trampoline, which they don't even knock in any more, but bring out fresh from the polythene each time they play so as to maximise the chances of sproinging gigantic sixes over the stands.

Surely, these bouncy, aggressive bats, built for the lofted drive, the slog sweep, the switch hit for six over cover point, are very dangerous things to be holding out there when you're just trying to drop the bat on the ball, kill it stone dead, and get ready for the next one.

The shot that Prior played low into De Villiers' hands at short leg off Duminy just wouldn't have carried 30 years ago with the sort of bat I grew up with.

These super-springy bats are perfect for the modern attacking game most of the time (I used one myself for the first time last season and was delighted to find that it introduced into my game a totally new shot: the tentative forward defensive prod for six) but isn't there an argument for the England team's having a few old-fashioned, thin, knocked in and beaten up, totally middle-less bats to use when, as seems to be happening more and more, they are playing out time for a draw?

If they haven't got any out there with them, I've got one here I could send. It leans against the wall in the corner of my study for when I'm listening to *Test Match Special* while I write and suddenly have to play a cover drive, and I can tell you that I have never, ever hit one in the air with it. Every shot goes for four through a perfectly bisected gap between the fax and the photocopier. All along the ground. Lovely.