

Paul Barford

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/user/paul_barford

request-250251-bc0d9784@whatdotheyknow.com

23 February 2015

Dear Paul Barford,

Thank you for your request for information from the British Museum. Your request has been dealt with in accordance with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

Your request, received in the Museum on 26 January 2015, was:

I would like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act for a copy of all internal communication of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and Treasure Department(s) from 21st May 2012 to the present day inclusive which:

- (1) make reference to myself or my discussion of heritage matters (whether or not directly by name), or
- (2) refer, whether by name or not, to something on my Portable Antiquities Collecting and Heritage Issues blog (<http://paul-barford.blogspot.com/>), or
- (3) refer to correspondence or enquiries from me requesting information from the PAS and Treasure Department or its members of staff whether or not a reply was issued to me.

This is not a request for personal data, but a request for information on reactions to issues I have raised on heritage matters in the period concerned.

I request therefore a review of documents of the PAS and Treasure Department for the requested information, including but not limited to documents and emails by and between the staff of the PAS and Treasure Department (both internal staff and PAS staff based in the regional offices) as well as all PAS and Treasure Department staff and members of the public (in particular metal detectorists). In particular, I would like copies of any exchanges of the above-mentioned character on the forum of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (the one mentioned here

https://www.academia.edu/10055694/Portable_Antiquities_Christmas_meeting p. 7).

If one part of this request can be answered sooner than others, please send that

information first, followed by any subsequent data.

If you need any clarification then please email me. Under your section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance I would expect you to contact me if you find this request unmanageable in any way so we can determine how best to proceed.

In response to your request please see below copies of all internal communication of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and Treasure Department(s) from 21st May 2012 to the date of receipt of your request which make reference to yourself or your discussion of heritage matters (whether or not directly by name), which refer, whether by name or not, to something on your Portable Antiquities Collecting and Heritage Issues blog (<http://paul-barford.blogspot.com/>), or which refer to correspondence or enquiries from you requesting information from the PAS and Treasure Department or its members of staff whether or not a reply was issued to you, and copies of any exchanges of the above-mentioned character on the forum of the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Please note that personal information has been redacted under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act where disclosure of the information would contravene one or more of the data protection principles.

This concludes the response to your request. I hope this information is helpful. If you are dissatisfied with this response and you wish to make a complaint about how we handled your request, please contact me in the first instance. Your complaint will be handled under our internal complaints procedure and you will receive a response within 20 working days of receipt.

If you remain dissatisfied with the way your request has been handled following the outcome of our internal review, you have a further right of appeal to the Information Commissioner. To make such an application please contact

FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

You can also contact the ICO Helpline on 0303 123 1113 or complete the online complaint form at: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints/getting.aspx>

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Denvir
Information Manager

Legal Services
British Museum
cdenvir@britishmuseum.org

Vincent Drost

Vincent Drost

From: Paul Barford [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 September 2014 17:13
To: Vincent Drost
Subject: Re: [SPAM] RE: Public query

>> just joined the Scheme [...] when it comes to Treasure finds, we do not publish records before inquest. <<

Thank you for your reply. You joined the Scheme in July and have already been entering quite a few Treasure items as "portable antiquities" among the non-treasure items which the database was set up to record, frankly, I do not see what the "inquest" has to do with that.

Whether or not there has been an inquest, the number of '22000' artefacts suddenly has appeared among the non-Treasure items on the portable antiquities database, and the finds are still present in the total.

As I asked, can you tell me the 'official' name of the findspot and whether this was a hoard? Also were there exactly 22000 items in that group, or is the figure an estimate? Is there now an individual record of each of those 22000 portable antiquities in the database?

Thanks

Paul Barford

----- Original Message -----

From: Vincent Drost
To: Paul Barford
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2014 5:21 PM
Subject: [SPAM] RE: Public query

Dear M. Barford,

I have just joined the Scheme and I have been instructed that when it comes to Treasure finds, we do not publish records before inquest. The Treasure find I've been working on in due course when I am instructed by the central unit.

Best wishes,
Vincent Drost

Vincent Drost
Project Curator: Romano-British coin finds
c/o Dept of Coins & Medals
British Museum
Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3DG
[REDACTED]

From: Paul Barford [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 September 2014 20:36
To: Vincent Drost
Subject: Public query

Dear Dr Drost,
it would be very much appreciated if this week you could find time to answer my query.

There seems to be a persistent problem with the database, not all of your entries are visible...

thanks

Paul Barford

----- Original Message -----

From: Paul Barford
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 08, 2014 9:02 PM
Subject: "22000"

Dear Dr Drost,
can you tell me what the astonishing number of "22000" objects which you entered on the PAS database on Monday 8th September consisted of? Was it a hoard? Where from? Is that a real number or an estimate, and are all of those objects recorded individually to the link level, or just photographed in bulk?

Thanks

Paul Barford

Vincent Drost

From: Michael Lewis
Sent: 24 September 2014 11:46
To: Sam Moorhead; Vincent Drost; Ian Richardson
Subject: Re: Paul Barford

The price of fame I guess...

----- Original Message -----

From: Sam Moorhead
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 11:42 AM GMT Standard Time
To: Vincent Drost; Ian Richardson
Cc: Michael Lewis
Subject: RE: Paul Barford

Dear All,

Just picking up the thread at home. It is my fault as I always adopt the no response mode and should not have advised Vincent to write back. I thought it would get PB off Vincent's back. Like Michael, I never read his blogs.

Sorry Vincent.

Sam

From: Vincent Drost
Sent: 24 September 2014 11:26
To: Ian Richardson
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Michael Lewis
Subject: RE: Paul Barford

Hi Ian,

You're right, I think that's what happened. He just checked the statistics and found this large amount without knowing what it was. Of course, he still doesn't.

Best,
Vincent

From: Ian Richardson
Sent: 24 September 2014 11:22
To: Michael Lewis; Vincent Drost
Cc: Sam Moorhead
Subject: RE: Paul Barford

Hi all,

I think that what happened was that PB was keeping an eye on the overall ticker as it approached a million and when, all of a sudden, it went over, he was able to simply query the database statistics <http://finds.org.uk/database/statistics/annual/datefrom/2014-09-08/dateto/2014-09-09/> to work out easily that Vincent had been the one who added a huge number of objects in one record. You don't need to be logged in to see these stats.

I wonder if the same thing would have happened if Danielle has created a record when the hoard was found (last year) and that the quantity was simply updated at a later date? It is really frustrating to have such a useful tool, which helps make our work more transparent, used in a mischievous way.

Sorry you are feeling the pressure Vincent.

Best,
Ian

From: Michael Lewis
Sent: 24 September 2014 11:08
To: Vincent Drost
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Ian Richardson
Subject: Re: Paul Barford

It's no one's fault. He is a tricky one to deal with, especially as we feel we ought to reply. But he is so mischievous I think it is fine to ignore him...

From: Vincent Drost
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 10:56 AM GMT Standard Time
To: Michael Lewis
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Ian Richardson
Subject: RE: Paul Barford

Hi Michael,

I'm going to ignore him completely from now on. Sorry about that (sorry Sam and Ian to involve you in this).

Let's forget about that crossed out image...

Vincent

From: Michael Lewis
Sent: 24 September 2014 10:50
To: Vincent Drost
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Ian Richardson
Subject: Re: Paul Barford

Hi Vincent,

I am not sure I agree with Sam and Ian's advice as once you email him he seems to think it is justification to go for it.

We could ask him to remove your crossed out image, but he would only blog about that also... Maybe we just have a crossed out image of you on our website also, which I am sure would irritate him more.

Michael

From: Vincent Drost
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 10:27 AM GMT Standard Time
To: Michael Lewis
Subject: RE: Paul Barford

Hi Michael,

Thank you for your reply.

As he kept asking, I've sent him a short reply in consultation with Sam and Ian. Below is what I wrote:

"Dear M. Barford,

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Best wishes,
Vincent Drost"

I probably shouldn't have but I don't think this changed anything. I understand now that I have to completely ignore him and his blog.

I'd like him to remove this crossed out picture of me from his blog though but there's probably nothing to do about it. Anyway, PAS didn't do anything wrong and everything will come clear on Friday, you're right.

Vincent

From: Michael Lewis
Sent: 24 September 2014 10:11
To: Vincent Drost
Cc: Sam Moorhead
Subject: Re: Paul Barford

Hi Vincent,

I saw Philippa the other day and she said you had replied to him - is that so? Maybe she got that wrong.

Dan said that when the record was created it was visible for a moment, hence he knows you created something, but knows not what exactly.

I know it is not nice for you (I have had this in the past also), but it all will come clear on Friday won't it? I think we then simply explain (but not to Mr Barford directly - as he thrives on the fact people react to his postings) that it was on review whilst work continues. Anyway why would we want to reveal what the 1M find is before our press launch - there would be no point of a press launch would there? He is just a sad man with too much time on his hands. Best ignored...

Michael

From: Vincent Drost
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 09:44 AM GMT Standard Time
To: Michael Lewis
Cc: Sam Moorhead
Subject: Paul Barford

Dear Michael,

Sorry to bother you. I came across Paul Barford's blog. I know he is a troublemaker. He obviously has a problem with the fact that the record on Seaton is not published and he is making it personal. Even if this is nonsense, I have to say that it is a bit embarrassing. I would like to ask your opinion about it. Below are some of his post on this issue.

<http://paul-barford.blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/milliongate-pas-gone-numbers-crazy.html>
<http://paul-barford.blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/dr-vincent-drost-invisible-man-of-pas.html>
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All the best,
Vincent

Vincent Drost
Project Curator: Romano-British coin finds c/o Dept of Coins & Medals British Museum Great Russell Street, London,
WC1B 3DG


Vincent Drost

From: Ian Richardson
Sent: 24 September 2014 12:14
To: [REDACTED] Michael Lewis; Vincent Drost
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Daniel Pett
Subject: RE: Paul Barford

Grrrr... and he loves pointing out that people from the BM read his blog! What wasn't helpful was that a few years ago there was a story in the guardian which cited him as evidence of critics of the scheme/treasure law/metal detecting. Oh well – as Roger might say, life's too short to get annoyed at such things.

Cheers,
Ian

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 September 2014 12:08
To: Michael Lewis; Ian Richardson; Vincent Drost
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Daniel Pett
Subject: RE: Paul Barford

Hi all,

I know it is difficult when PB makes you a personal subject of one of his ill-informed blog posts -- it has happened to me too in the past -- but the best thing to do is ignore him. He has been trolling PAS for years to little effect and PAS has done nothing wrong.

My advice would be to avoid viewing his blog posts as he uses Google Analytics to see where referrals have come from, what search terms were used, and the location of people who visit his website. This is grist to his mill. Worse still is that regularly viewed blog posts will climb the ranks of Google and be more likely to turn up in search results for your name.

[REDACTED]

From: Michael Lewis
Sent: 24 September 2014 11:24
To: Ian Richardson; Vincent Drost
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Daniel Pett; [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Paul Barford

Dan said he and [REDACTED] were going to look at how the counter works...

From: Ian Richardson
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 11:21 AM GMT Standard Time
To: Michael Lewis; Vincent Drost
Cc: Sam Moorhead
Subject: RE: Paul Barford

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All the best,
Vincent

Vincent Drost

Project Curator: Romano-British coin finds
c/o Dept of Coins & Medals
British Museum
Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3DG
[REDACTED]

Vincent Drost

From: Paul Barford [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 September 2014 10:13
To: Vincent Drost
Subject: Re: Public query Seaton Hoard

The inquest was on the 12th September, no? You wrote on 16th.
Thanks.

So it WAS an estimate then? The PAS database contains real numbers plus estimates. That is worth knowing. We would not like people to be misled would we?

Thank you for your answer, one can always count on the British Museum.

Paul Barford

----- Original Message -----

From: Vincent Drost
To: Paul Barford
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2014 5:21 PM
Subject: [SPAM] RE: Public query

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Project Curator: Romano-British coin finds
c/o Dept of Coins & Medals
British Museum
Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3DG
[REDACTED]

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Thanks

Paul Barford

Ian Richardson

From: Ian Richardson
Sent: 09 July 2014 15:36
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Helen Geake
Subject: RE: Treasure case 2014 T90 - Anglo-Saxon grave goods from Hollingbourne, Kent

Sorry, I confused myself. I saw that it was called Hollingbourne recently somewhere, including by Barford, so I assumed we had reverted to that title. I will make a note to use 'Maidstone area'. Helen, please note for your report.

Thanks,
Ian

Sam Moorhead

From: Paul Barford [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 December 2013 12:26
To: Sam Moorhead
Subject: Fw: West Wight and Hayle groups

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Mr Moorhead

in 2007 <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/198789> you wrote "the only comparable site is Hayle in Cornwall where a number of similar coins have been found and recorded on the PAS".

Penny Walton also mentions this group in her thesis (2011, p. 233) , but again gives no link tyo the actual recordsas far as I can see.

I tried to find these records, but nothing relevant was brought up by the PAS search engine - am I doing something wrong, or do they appear under a different name perhaps?

how many coins were there, how were they found and in what way were the Hayle coins comparable to the West Wight group?

Many thanks,

Paul Barford

Sam Moorhead

From: Michael Lewis
Sent: 24 November 2014 09:32
To: Eleanor Ghey
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Roger Bland
Subject: RE: Beau St hoard criticism

I am not opening it as he gets a thrill when he sees people using the BM IP address... I'd just ignore. If you get sucked in he will just play with it.

From: Eleanor Ghey
Sent: 24 November 2014 09:00
To: Michael Lewis
Subject: Beau St hoard criticism

Hi Michael

I know we don't normally engage with Paul Barford but his comments about the Beau St hoard have been bothering me a bit because Verity seems to have been dragged into it. His criticisms are based on false assumptions – the cataloguing of the hoard is being done with money from the HLF bid and the involvement of C&M (ie not PAS) staff was to prepare the coroners report to meet the Treasure Act requirements only.

I completely understand if you don't want to get involved (and I won't) but I just wanted to make sure you were aware,

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2014/11/the-beau-street-hoard.html>

Best wishes

Eleanor

Sam Moorhead

From: Roger Bland
Sent: 24 November 2014 09:37
To: Michael Lewis; Eleanor Ghey
Cc: Sam Moorhead
Subject: Re: Beau St hoard criticism

As Michael says, after many years of this type of treatment from Barford we've learnt that it's generally best not to respond to him, as he will always have the last word.

Roger
Roger Bland
Keeper, Department of Britain, Europe & Prehistory
British Museum
London WC1B 3DG
Tel.: [REDACTED]

From: Michael Lewis
Sent: Monday, November 24, 2014 09:31 AM
To: Eleanor Ghey
Cc: Sam Moorhead; Roger Bland
Subject: RE: Beau St hoard criticism

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<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2014/11/the-beau-street-hoard.html>

Best wishes

Eleanor

FAO: Tony Doubleday
FROM: Michael Lewis
RE: Malmesbury

Hi Tony,

Find attached the blog-posting posted by Paul Barford in which he states 'PAS launders stolen coin' (see also para 5), which is a serious allegation that deserves a public apology, and also the revised version.

We are proposing to post the following statement on our website: 'There have recently been reports that PAS has been used to launder a rare Anglo-Saxon coin stolen from Malmesbury Abbey and a suggestion that this calls into question the reliability of finds recorded by the Scheme. As soon as we were informed that this coin might be stolen the FLO and Central Unit of PAS liaised closely with both Malmesbury Abbey and Wiltshire Police. We are very pleased that the coin has now been returned to its rightful owner. Although the object was recorded by the FLO it was not entered on the database. If PAS staff ever have cause to be suspicious about any of the objects offered for recording they will take action as appropriate'.



DW1

Grand Stirrup master

[select +replies](#)

[select](#)

[1](#)

[13 May '14](#)

[the-sorry-tale-of-surrey-searchers-and.html](#)

Finally a little cold revenge after the appalling way I was treated by Tate and his minion last year. A detectorist I hardly know tipped off Barford rather belatedly, so I felt able to add my views, albeit more carefully than I would have liked. Even so Barford cannot resist using this event to give veiled criticism to PAS.

Pity the informant only has 6 finds on the database - he needs to be a very clean pot if he's going to call the kettle black, as I have told him.

Reply

Richard

Most travelled FLO

select +replies

select

13 May '14

But he did say you were one of the best David which is high praise indeed

It is best to remove that hyperlink though as if anyone clicks on it Paul Barford can see we are looking at him from the staff forum.

Reply

Reply as new Topic



DW1

[Reply as new Topic](#)



[rtyrrell](#)

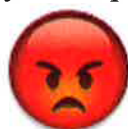
Queen of the camper van

[select +replies](#)

[select](#)

[24 Dec '14](#)

See my original post in Rallies re my xmas pressie!



Being slagged off by email already , by people who have no idea of the circumstances. I should have called in the professionals! After 40 yrs in the trade I consider myself qualified!!! [probably more than the critic] .Because of the Creslow Burial in Oct, I know there is no money to pay contracting diggers! How would I have got hold of any on an Xmas Sunday morning. I doubt we could have guarded it over night as the critic suggested. There were 160+ detectorists there some may have been bad guys....As to digging it hurriedly it took all day. There was no stratigraphy! It was sealed by undisturbed med soil with med pot in it. The lead it was wrapped in lay on the clay subsoil but no cut was detectable. It would have been good to have lifted en block but we couldn't do that so I



did the next best thing!

[Reply](#)

[5 people liked this. Like it too.](#)

[Reply as new Topic](#)



[DW1](#)

Grand Stirrup master

[select +replies](#)

[select](#)

[1](#)

[24 Dec '14](#)

Which all sounds absolutely fine given the circumstances. Good job it was found early on though,

given the shortness of light. Wish I had been there!

I see it's our Warsaw friend doing the criticising and wondering why his emails to you are bouncing!
Perhpas some follow up work may be possible?

Reply

[Reply as new Topic](#)



JulieC

select +replies

select

30d

Don't worry Ros. We all know you couldnt have done any more. You did a great job. Just ignore the Warsaw moaner. Nothing we do would have made him happy. xxx

Reply

[Reply as new Topic](#)



DW1

Grand Stirrup master

select +replies

select

30d

I've made him happy. He sent me a Christmas card!!

Reply

[Reply as new Topic](#)

DW1

Grand Stirrup master

1

27d

Every one will be different. In an ideal world (a Barford world) there would be time to open up a square meter or more, straighten the sides, and have enough room to leave the thing on a plinth and lift in one. Or there would be a helpful farmer who could park a heavy vehicle over it until such time as all the correct equipment and daylight hours were to hand. In the real world experience, observation and common sense play a large part and you work with whatever is to hand and fervently hope that no one is filming you.

BTW I see that the finder has only five other PAS records, none of which is a coin!!

dejp3

Chief Technology Chap

25d

Lovely. I'm being trolled by Warsaw and HA at the moment for sticking up for us.

[Reply as new Topic](#)



DW1

Grand Stirrup master

25d

I'd be happy to respond to PB if you like as I seem to have some kind of relationship with him. As it were. Not sure if Ros is replying??

[Reply as new Topic](#)



rtyrrell

Queen of the camper van

25d

Prefer not to have any dealings with PB. I wasted ages explaining myself over the Cold Brayfield Hoard & was ignored & misunderstood!

I wish I had stopped the filming as it makes it look as if the hoard was shovelled out in a rush when it actually took all day. I can't tell the world that there was no money for lifting the hoard on block because the Bucks Emergency Excavation Fund was spent on the Creslow burial in Oct. The detectorists breaking the hoard story too early, while I was trying to be on leave, has messed up the plans we had for launching that! Arrgh!

Funny how people assume that a story in the press is true & complete! Annoying how much they cut out. No mention of PAS, despite being told, I'm just 'an archaeologist'

I suppose I shouldn't care about my professional integrity being impuned after all these years!

On Monday I will have been in this game 40 years! My 1st archaeological job started in Jan 1975!

[4 people liked this. Like it too.](#)

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[dejp3](#)

Chief Technology Chap

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Don't feed the troll.

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[rtyrrell](#)

Queen of the camper van

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Trolls eat people!

I thought trolls turned to stone at sunrise but that turns out to be a Tolkein myth

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[DW1](#)

Grand Stirrup master

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His unremittingly negative attitude is completely counter-productive. It's a real shame as he could be usefully supportive.

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[dejp3](#)

Chief Technology Chap

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He'll never provide support. He will be nice to you to get info that he wants, then he will tear it up and selectively harrass you on points that suit his agenda whilst omitting key facts.

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[PeterR](#)

Epic record creator

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[24d](#)

Can't wait to hear more - as and when - and Ros don't let you get it down - I was trolled and insulted by warsaw after excavating a couple of hoards - I just emailed him with details of my line managers and the IfA and asked him to report me for unprofessional conduct - he never did (but also never retracted the posts).

With regard to guidance - happy to talk through excavation problems and report writing with anyone who needs urgent emergency help - as have done quite a bit in the past - but I know others on here have - so maybe we could have an emergency contacts page across the forum for advice if people need it urgently?

Happy also to look through or start to put together emergency excavation guidance and kit lists - but to be honest the best way of learning is to try and do - so it might be worth thinking of buddying up with neighbouring counties to lend a hand when people are out in the field.

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I await the call!

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DW1

Grand Stirrup master

8 Nov '13

<http://m.surreymirror.co.uk/articles/news/article/2004067414>

Annoyingly this is all taken from a short discussion which took place at my local club last Monday. I had no idea that the reporter/detectorist present was going to create a story and that that story was going to go online. It appears to suggest that the rally organiser was to blame, which he wasn't. There will be an article in the next Searcher. Paul Barford has already picked up on this but all I've done is refer him to the next Searcher - which he won't see.

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[KatieHinds](#)

Something else

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That is really annoying! Surely you need to be told if you are going to be quoted by a reporter in an article? Bet Pete isn't happy.

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[DW1](#)

Grand Stirrup master

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<http://paul-barford.blogspot.com/2013/11/focus-on-metal-detecting-conspiracy.html>9

Oh Gawd!!