

Paul Barford
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/user/paul_barford
request-250251-bc0d9784@whatdotheyknow.com

30th March 2015

Dear Mr Barford,

Internal Review of FOI Response

Thank you for your email of 2nd March 2015. You requested a review into the handling of a Freedom of Information response dated 23rd February 2015. Your request was:

"I am dissatisfied however with this response in the present form and wish to ask for a review of the procedure employed to deal with my request. This is for a number of reasons:

1) The unassociated and undated document (pdf page 18) from Michael Lewis [ML] addressed to the head of the British Museum Legal Department in Jan 2009 (well beyond my lower cut-off date) may have been included through carelessness. In the circumstances (<http://paul-barford.blogspot.com/2009/01/pas-launders-stolen-coin.html?showComment=1232798220000#c7698493079568099515>) its inclusion here equally can be taken as a thinly-veiled threat. Please explain why it was included.

2) Carelessness in compilation seems to be suggested in other instances, on p 20 of the pdf there is an email header in a forum thread where reference is made to my blog, but the content of the mail below is cut off (not redacted). Likewise in the thread on the affair with „the millionth find” (pdf p. 8) on 24th September, a new person [name redacted] cuts in, but the earlier mails where they were copied into the thread is not included, yet the content of his or her reply copied to others indicates that this earlier mail must have referred to me. Carelessness or design? How many other mails falling into the scope of my request were not included for one reason or another?

3) My request specifically referred to „whether or not directly by name”. The unwelcome discovery that your staff refer to me, among themselves at least, by a variety of pejorative terms instead of by name prompt the question concerning the search terms were used to find texts referring to me or my heritage blog. In particular, were your archives searched for „Warsaw”, „Poland”, „Moaner” and a number of other pejorative terms – including those in which it has been reported by metal detectorists that PAS staff have used to refer to me in their communications with the public? I must say until this week, I was disinclined to believe reports of such behaviour from PAS professionals, but now I have seen the material you supply, I am prompted to reconsider that

view and would ask you search again so the extent of this practice can be determined.

4) A noticeable fact is that although the Scheme and Treasure unit employs, according to the website (<https://finds.org.uk/contacts>), 56 people, the same three names account for the salient texts in all of the topics you disclosed to me, David Williams, Michael Lewis and Sam Moohead. Yet, in the period selected, I had written contact with more than a dozen FLOs referring to queries arising in the course of my research on artefact hunting and collecting in the UK, but there is no trace of that here, even though one would expect at least some of the issues raised to be consulted elsewhere in the organization. For some reason almost all of the material arising falling into the scope of my request was missed by your searches.

I have in mind in particular the matter of the controversy – still unresolved – of the coin of Proculus (November 2012, Rebecca Griffiths) which in the circumstances, it is very odd to not see reflected in any documentation in your response. There also would obviously be more documentation on the Hollingbourne Anglo-Saxon grave/hoard site (J. Jackson) falling within the scope of the request. Is there really no documentation referring to what an employee (Dan Pett) said at a public session (on film) on 21st May 2012 and which was later edited out? You have disclosed a single forum thread on the Lenborough hoard, but there is, we know, email correspondence to and from PAS staff (Dec 2014 and January 2015 Ros Tyrrell et al.) which although it falls into the scope of my FOI request, is simply omitted en bloc from the material you released. Then there is the analogous case of the Holt hoard excavated by a metal detectorist with a JCB (C. Trevarthen Jan 2015), this is also omitted despite being very recent. There are several other cases I know of which do not figure in the material you supplied, even though they quite clearly fall within the scope of my request.

[Please redact out the entire content of the replies of David Williams to me and my responses to him between 13/11/2013 to 11/9/14 inclusive – I have this all on my files and I see no need to disclose any of this material].

5) Can you confirm that in the forum of the Portable Antiquities Scheme there is no other material referring to me or issues raised on my Portable Antiquities Collecting Issues blog?"

I have asked about the inclusion of the document from Michael Lewis to Tony Doubleday (the Head of Legal Services at the British Museum) shown on page 18 of the PDF. Michael Lewis has confirmed that it was submitted to the Information Manager in error. The document is not dated and the Information Manager has explained that he was therefore unaware that it fell outside the scope of your request when he included it in his reply.

I have discussed the exclusion of a section of page 20 of the PDF from the British Museum's response with the Information Manager. It was excluded because the Information Manager believed that it fell outside the scope of your request as it consists of metadata rather than correspondence. I have nevertheless disclosed page 20 in full in Appendix 1, in case it is of interest.

I have reviewed page 8 of the PDF. The Museum does appear to have disclosed the email you refer to in its response, it is directly underneath the 12.08 reply of 24th September 2014 and was sent at 11.24 on 24th September 2014.

I have asked the Information Manager to review your request to ensure all relevant documents were disclosed in his original response, in particular correspondence with the Finds Liaison Officers and information held on the forum of the Portable

Antiquities Scheme. A number of additional documents should have been disclosed and I have included them in Appendix 2. Personal data has been redacted as before where this is exempt from disclosure under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act. I am very sorry for this oversight.

I have also asked the Information Manager to co-ordinate a specific search for references to "Warsaw", "Poland" and "Moaner" in relation to this request. No further documentation has been found. I was concerned by the tone adopted in some of the correspondence which was released in response to your Freedom of Information request. Therefore, although it falls outside the remit of this review, I have asked for this matter to be investigated further.

I am unable to redact the correspondence between you and David Williams as it has already been released in response to your earlier request. In any event I don't believe the existence of the material on your files would constitute an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I hope that addresses your concerns but I should, of course, confirm that you may refer this matter to the Information Commissioner for independent review if there is any part of my own review with which you are dissatisfied. 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 Yates
Deputy Director

Appendix 1



[Ian Richardson](#)

- 3

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Surrey Searchers General stuff

You have selected 0 posts.

[select all](#)

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of

3

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DW1

Grand Stirrup master

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[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.

[edited by [@MaryCK](#) to remove hyperlink]

Appendix 2

From: Julie Cassidy [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: 29 October 2013 13:49
To: Wendy Scott; Ian Richardson; Adam Daubney; Burrill, Charlotte [REDACTED] 'Teresa Gilmore'
Cc: Michael Lewis; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Childs Roman Coffin

This ring hasn't been reported to me.
As all finds found together as a grave deposit - are all those finds in the pic Treasure?
I just saw the news article in full - how deep did he go?! :{

Teresa - if you find out what field he is detecting on - he recorded some finds with me from Witherley when I first met him and I'll make sure they are all promoted/up to date for comparison if they are from the same field. I am sure some were treasure. He told me he had lost permission to detect Witherley!

I tend not to read Barford - I have enough depressing crap to deal with without looking for more!
Good luck with this one everyone!

From: Wendy Scott [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: 29 October 2013 08:19
To: Julie Cassidy; Ian Richardson; Adam Daubney; Burrill, Charlotte; [REDACTED] <mailto:[REDACTED]> 'Teresa Gilmore'
Cc: Michael Lewis
Subject: RE: Childs Roman Coffin

I assume this is a new Roman finger ring and not the one that Julie reported as Treasure?

If it is there is very little chance they will bring it to me, I know Roy/Dave is in contact with Teresa at the minute so maybe she will see it?

Really wish this would go away! Have you seen Barfords badly written attack on us? He seems to think a coffin is a PAS problem!

Wend

Wendy Scott MA AMA

Finds Liaison Officer

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

Tel. [REDACTED] fax [REDACTED]

Visit the PAS website at www.finds.org.uk<<http://www.finds.org.uk>>

From: Philippa Walton
Sent: 28 June 2012 16:09
To: Ian Richardson; Claire Costin; Roger Bland; Michael Lewis
Cc: Daniel Pett; Sam Moorhead; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Congratulations

I was going to say exactly the same thing Ian!

From: Ian Richardson
Sent: 28 June 2012 16:08
To: Claire Costin; Roger Bland; Michael Lewis
Cc: Daniel Pett; Sam Moorhead; Philippa Walton; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Congratulations

It must be because he thinks you are leaving the PAS...

From: Claire Costin
Sent: 28 June 2012 15:58
To: Roger Bland; Michael Lewis
Cc: Daniel Pett; Sam Moorhead; Philippa Walton; Ian Richardson; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Congratulations

Don't let him rain on your parade!

From: Roger Bland
Sent: 28 June 2012 15:57
To: Michael Lewis
Cc: Daniel Pett; Sam Moorhead; Philippa Walton; Ian Richardson; Claire Costin
Subject: Fw: Congratulations

It's the word 'sincere' I have a problem with ..
Roger Bland
Head of Portable Antiquities and Treasure
British Museum
London WC1B 3DG
Tel.: 020 7323 8611

From: Paul Barford
To: Roger Bland
Sent: Thu Jun 28 15:53:33 2012
Subject: Congratulations
Sincere congratulations on your new post, and best wishes for all the challenges ahead.

Paul Barford (Warsaw, Poland)

From: Lauren Grace Proctor [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 September 2014 10:06
To: Michael Lewis
Subject: RE: Weekend Hoard digging

Thanks Michael! Will do, just thought I'd check.

Lauren

Lauren Proctor

Finds Liaison Officer, North East England
Portable Antiquities Scheme
Durham (Mon-Weds): [REDACTED]
Newcastle (Thurs-Fri): [REDACTED]

From: Michael Lewis [MLEWIS@britishmuseum.org]
Sent: 23 September 2014 10:07
To: Lauren Grace Proctor
Cc: Roger Bland
Subject: Re: Weekend Hoard digging

Hi Lauren,

My advice is to ignore. Whatever you say will be twisted.

Michael

From: Lauren Grace Proctor [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2014 10:01 AM GMT Standard Time
To: Michael Lewis
Subject: FW: Weekend Hoard digging

Hi Michael,

I had this email waiting for me this morning. Having heard from some of the other FLOs I was just wondering if it's worth sending a polite, non-committal response or avoiding contact altogether?

Thanks,

Lauren

Lauren Proctor

Finds Liaison Officer, North East England
Portable Antiquities Scheme
Durham (Mon-Weds): [REDACTED]
Newcastle (Thurs-Fri): [REDACTED]

From: Paul Barford [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 September 2014 11:05
To: Lauren Grace Proctor
Subject: Weekend Hoard digging

Dear Lauren,

<http://paul-barford.blogspot.com/2014/09/focus-on-metal-detecting-hurried-hoard.html>

<http://paul-barford.blogspot.com/2014/09/focus-on-uk-metal-detecting-hurried.html>

<http://paul-barford.blogspot.com/2014/09/weekend-hoard-hoikers-group-photo.html>

Are you the FLO to which reference was made on the metal detecting forum in connection with the Dunelme Metal Detecting Club digging up over the weekend a hoard?

If so, may I ask, will you be telling them that they did the right thing hoiking it out like that, or will you be telling them that they should have asked for help recording it before they moved it?

What can be done to stop this kind of thing happening?

Thanks

Paul Barford