

NATASHA POWERS (MOLA): DAY OF [REDACTED]

July 11, 2014 MOLA Commercial Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2014 Mola, Museum of London Archaeology, Redacted

Day of Archaeology and I'm looking at something really exciting! Right now. ...and I can't tell you anything about it! Client confidentiality you see. Lovely site in [REDACTED] loads of [REDACTED] and some really nice evidence of [REDACTED]. This got me thinking. Commercial archaeologists are sometimes criticised for not making results available quickly enough, but there are lots of reasons why information doesn't necessarily become available as soon as you down trowels – reasons which I will now grossly oversimplify:

1. Getting it right – important in research, vital in a press release. Once it's out there you can never take it back, **no matter how much you might want to**. Just because I think I have found the earliest evidence of [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] doesn't mean I'm going to say so until I'm sure and that means until all the strat is sorted and I've had a chance to check out the literature, properly. (I'm pretty sure it is the earliest [REDACTED])

2. Mum's the word – it wouldn't be very sensible to tell everyone that you've found a load of shiny stuff/the Ark of the Covenant, until it's recorded, lifted and safely off-site, unless you have very good site security (if you think you've found the latter, I'd also refer you back to point 1). Clients may have all sorts of reasons for not wanting information released, including the nature of the site, the stage of the planning process that their project is at and because...



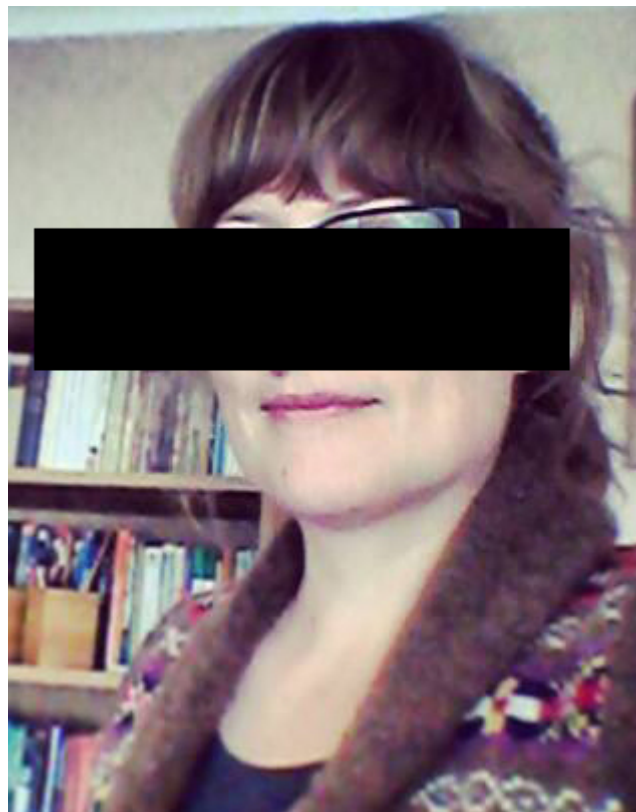
Shut your eyes. Don't look at it no matter what happens.

3. Timing is everything – Yes, publicity benefits the company and the client, but we also send things to the press because we've found something really exciting and want LOTS of people to know. Would the papers really have written about **an old set of false teeth** if the press release hadn't gone out for World Smile Day? So, if we hold back on telling the world about [REDACTED] until National [REDACTED] Week, then I reckon that's probably fair enough.

4. Some sites are bigger than others – the most important bit. The post-ex process is complex. Our recent site at [REDACTED] produced [REDACTED] contexts [REDACTED] finds and more than a dozen people are now working on it. It's going to take a while to check, integrate and analyse all that information, but this bit is the point of recording it in the first place (and vital for point 1). Even a small site report might involve half a dozen people. Good research and publication takes time.

5. Lack of funds – let's face it, it happens. When things go wrong, we have to be creative, and creativity takes time too...

So I'm afraid that I haven't got anything to show you for Day of Archaeology 2014, but you'll be able to read about the first [REDACTED] when it's published next year*



*Written by [REDACTED], Head of [REDACTED]
for MOLA*

***NOT GUARANTEED**