

Climategate: University of East Anglia U-turn in climate change row

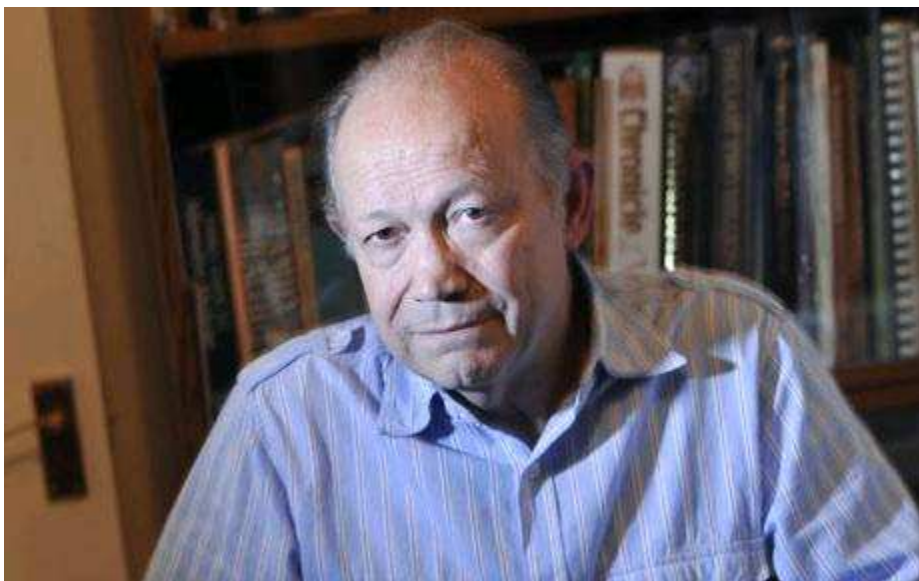
Leading British scientists at the University of East Anglia, who were accused of manipulating climate change data - dubbed Climategate - have agreed to publish their figures in full.

By Robert Mendick

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The U-turn by the university follows a week of controversy after the emergence of hundreds of leaked emails, "stolen" by hackers and published online, triggered claims that the academics had massaged statistics.

In a statement welcomed by climate change sceptics, the university said it would make all the data accessible as soon as possible, once its Climatic Research Unit (CRU) had negotiated its release from a range of non-publication agreements.



David Holland is seeking prosecutions against some of Britain's most eminent academics for allegedly holding back information in breach of disclosure laws. Photo: DAVID ROSE

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The publication will be carried out in collaboration with the Met Office Hadley Centre. The full data, when disclosed, is certain to be scrutinised by both sides in the fierce debate.

A grandfather with a training in electrical engineering dating back more than 40 years emerged from the leaked emails as a leading climate sceptic trying to bring down the scientific establishment on global warming.

David Holland, who describes himself as a David taking on the Goliath that is the prevailing scientific consensus, is seeking

prosecutions against some of Britain's most eminent academics for allegedly holding back information in breach of disclosure laws.

Mr Holland, of Northampton, complained to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) last week after the leaked emails included several Freedom of Information requests he had submitted to the CRU, and scientists' private responses to them.

Within hours, a senior complaints officer in the ICO wrote back by email: "I have started to examine the issues that you have raised in your letter and I am currently liaising with colleagues in our Enforcement and Data Protection teams as to what steps to take next."

The official also promised to investigate other universities linked to the CRU, which is one of the world's leading authorities on temperature levels and has helped to prove that man-made global warming not only exists but will have catastrophic consequences if not tackled urgently. Mr Holland is convinced the threat has been greatly exaggerated.

In one email dated May 28, 2008, one academic writes to a colleague having received Mr Holland's request: "Oh MAN! Will this crap ever end???"

Mr Holland, who graduated with an external degree in electrical engineering from London University in 1966 before going on to run his own businesses, told *The Sunday Telegraph*: "It's like David versus Goliath. Thanks to these leaked emails a lot of little people can begin to make some impact on this monolithic entity that is the climate change lobby."

He added: "These guys called climate scientists have not done any more physics or chemistry than I did. A lifetime in engineering gives you a very good antenna. It also cures people of any self belief they cannot be wrong. You clear up a lot of messes during a lifetime in engineering. I could be wrong on global warming – I know that – but the guys on the other side don't believe they can ever be wrong."

Professor Trevor Davies, the university's Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research Enterprise and Engagement, said yesterday: "CRU's full data will be published in the interests of research transparency when we have the necessary agreements. It is worth reiterating that our conclusions correlate well to those of other scientists based on the separate data sets held by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

"We are grateful for the necessary support of the Met Office in requesting the permissions for releasing the information but understand that responses may take several months and that some countries may refuse permission due to the economic value of the data."

Among the leaked emails disclosed last week were an alleged note from Professor Phil Jones, 57, the director of the CRU and a leading target of climate change sceptics, to an American colleague describing the death of a sceptic as "cheering news"; and a suggestion from Prof Jones that a "trick" is used to "hide the decline" in temperature.

They even include threats of violence. One American academic wrote to Prof Jones: "Next time I see Pat Michaels [a climate sceptic] at a scientific meeting, I'll be tempted to beat the crap out of him. Very tempted."

Dr Michaels, tracked down by this newspaper to the Cato Institute in Washington DC where he is a senior fellow in environmental studies, said last night: "There were a lot of people who thought I was exaggerating when I kept insisting terrible things are going on here.

"This is business as usual for them. The world might be surprised but I am not. These guys have an attitude."

Prof Jones, who has refused to quit despite calls even from within the green movement, said last week in a statement issued through University of East Anglia, "My colleagues and I accept that some of the published emails do not read well. I regret any upset or confusion caused as a result. Some were clearly written in the heat of the moment, others use colloquialisms frequently used between close colleagues."

He suggested the theft of emails and publication first on a Russian server was "a concerted attempt to put a question mark over the science of climate change in the run-up to the Copenhagen talks".

He added: "Our global temperature series tallies with those of other, completely independent, groups of scientists working for NASA and the National Climate Data Centre in the United States, among others. Even if you were to ignore our findings, theirs show the same results. The facts speak for themselves; there is no need for anyone to manipulate them."

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