

Minutes of a meeting of the Sutton Hoo Committee held at Burlington House
on Thursday, 27th May 1982

Present: Professor C. N. L. Brooke, P.S.A., in the Chair
R. M. Robbins, Esq., C.B.E., Treas.S.A., Treasurer
Paul Ashbee, Esq., F.S.A.
Dr. Rupert Bruce-Mitford, F.B.A., F.S.A.
Professor B. W. Cunliffe, F.B.A., V.-P.S.A.
Dr. Catherine Hills, F.S.A.
J. G. Hurst, Esq., F.S.A.
Professor Henry Loyn, F.B.A., F.S.A.
Robert Pretty, Esq.
Professor P. A. Rahtz, F.S.A.
Dr. M. S. Tite, F.S.A.
Mrs. Leslie Webster, F.S.A.
Dr. Stanley West, F.S.A.
Dr. D. M. Wilson, F.B.A., F.S.A.
E. V. Wright, Esq., F.S.A.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. David Attenborough and Mr. Martin Biddle, F.S.A.

1. Membership and functions of Committees

Formal approval of the composition of the committees was given as follows:

Executive Committee

The President of the Society of Antiquaries (Chairman) ✓
The Treasurer of the Society of Antiquaries (Treasurer) ✓
Two members appointed by the Society of Antiquaries: Professor B. W. Cunliffe, V.-P.S.A. and Professor P. A. Rahtz, F.S.A. ✓
A member of the Board of Trustees of the British Museum: David Attenborough, Esq. 5 Park Road, Richmond, Surrey.
Two members appointed by the British Museum: the Director of the British Museum, Dr. D. M. Wilson, F.B.A., F.S.A., and Mrs. Leslie Webster, F.S.A.

Sutton Hoo Committee

The President of the Society of Antiquaries (Chairman) and other members of the Sutton Hoo Executive Committee (including the Director of the British Museum and two members of the Steering Committee) ✓

The other members of the Steering Committee: Dr. Rupert Bruce-Mitford, F.B.A., F.S.A., and Mr. Martin Biddle, F.S.A. ✓

The Keeper of the Research Laboratory and Conservation Department of the British Museum, Dr. Michael Tite, F.S.A. ✓

Representatives of archaeological interests in East Anglia: Dr. Stanley West, F.S.A., of the Suffolk Archaeological Unit; Mr. Paul Ashbee, F.S.A., of the University of East Anglia; and Dr. Catherine Hills of the University of Cambridge.

A representative of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments: J. G. Hurst, F.S.A.

A representative of the National Maritime Museum: E. V. Wright, F.S.A.

A representative of the interests of related studies: Professor Henry Loyn, F.S.A.
Mr. Robert Pretty, Woodslee, Sway Road, Lymington, Hants. SO4 8LR.

Functions of the Committees

It was agreed that the functions of the committees should be as set out in the Agreement between the Society of Antiquaries and the British Museum on the Sutton Hoo project.

2. Funding

The Treasurer reported that sufficient funds would be available to embark on the first season's work, and gave details of the amounts so far promised by the Society of Antiquaries, the British Museum, the National Maritime Museum, the B.B.C. and private donors. However, as excavation got under way, larger funds would be needed and other sources of finance were still being sought.

A separate bank account would be opened, independent of both the Society of Antiquaries and the British Museum, and auditors would be appointed. The legal implications of forming a limited company to administer the project, with members of the Executive Committee as directors, were being explored by the Society's lawyers.

The importance of obtaining contributions in kind from sympathetic institutions was recognised and it was stressed that any financial contract with the B.B.C. should be irrespective of the results of excavation.

3. Access to the Site

Mr. Pretty confirmed his support for the project and his wish that the finds should go to the British Museum, but asked that a legal agreement should be drawn up to safeguard him from any claims by the Inland Revenue. This was agreed.

The Chairman reported an encouraging response from Mrs. Tranmer and her tenant, Mr. Colin Walker, and outlined plans for a further meeting with them on the site, accompanied by Dr. Bruce-Mitford, Mrs. Leslie Webster and Mr. John Miller, Mrs. Tranmer's solicitor, on 28th May.

Mr. John Hurst stressed that permission to excavate would not be given by the Secretary of State for the Environment without very careful consideration of the scheme, and of the views of those who would inevitably oppose it, but he believed that consent would be forthcoming, following the appointment of a Field Director, provided the application was sensitively and diplomatically framed. The possibility of holding a press conference to promote the scheme was mooted and, meanwhile, any press enquiries would be referred to the Chairman.

4. Viability

The policy document for a programme of research, which had been previously circulated, was generally welcomed as the basis for an application to the Secretary of State for the Environment and as a useful set of guidelines for the Field Director. The Consultant's comments on the document were tabled and it was agreed that any other member of the Committee who wished to submit comments to the Chairman should do so within one week.

It was accepted that, in the event of a "boat-component" being identified in any excavation, the National Maritime Museum would be brought in as adviser in the excavation and would play a major role in the recording and reporting thereof. "Boat-component" shall be taken to include also land facilities relating to the handling of boats.

Members voted unanimously that the scheme was viable, subject to effective and the funding/appointment of an exemplary Field Director, and that steps to secure the services of such should be taken.

5. Appointment of Field Director

The draft advertisement for the appointment of a Field Director was approved, and the preparation of a job description for distribution to enquirers would now go ahead.

6. The Consultant's Functions

It was accepted that these were clearly stated in principle in the Agreement between the Society of Antiquaries and the British Museum and the Consultant declared himself satisfied with the arrangement.

7. Condition and Protection of the Site

It was agreed that arrangements for the protection of the site should be left to the Field Director but, meanwhile, Mr. John Hurst reported negotiations on fencing the site and an application from British Telecom to lay cables underground on the site. The laying of the cable was to be discouraged.