

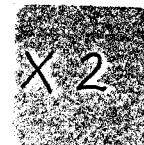


THE SUTTON HOO RESEARCH TRUST

Director of Research Project:
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Rea
Carver
Amis



From the Office of:
The Director

21st November, 1985

Professor J.D. Evans,
Institute of Archaeology,
31-34 Gordon Square,
London,
WC1H 0PY.

Dear John,

I am very pleased at the thoughtful (and generally favourable) reception for the Sutton Hoo Project Design. I have yet to hear from the Scole Committee, but am meanwhile preparing a summary of comments and have incorporated several suggestions in the revised text.

If I have judged the consensus of opinion correctly, the proposals are approved, but the estimates, although approved in principal, present difficulties. I have given some thought to the financing of the project, my own position and that of the Trust, and have sketched out a number of options which might serve as a basis for discussion on 4 December. I am circulating this letter to the Trust in any case, to save time; it will soon be clear if members disagree with my reading of the situation.

Option 1: Abort. We would admit that, regrettably, we cannot achieve an informative result within existing resources. The project would be wound up within two years (ending April 1988), this time being used for the preparation of the final report and negotiations for the safe-keeping of the site.

Option 2: Cut. I can identify three cutting options:-

2a : Cut the Director. It is this item which makes the project seem unusually expensive, since most research projects in the past have had a "free" director. If I could find an appointment which allows me to do Sutton Hoo in their time, the saving would be about £21,000 p.a.

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Council:

Appointed by the Society of Antiquaries of London: Prof. J.D. Evans (Chairman), Prof. B.W. Cunliffe, Prof. P.A. Rahtz, R.M. Robbins CBE (Treasurer).
Appointed by the British Museum: Sir David Wilson (Deputy Chairman), David Attenborough CBE, Mrs Leslie Webster.
Appointed by Suffolk County Council: Dr. S.E. West.

2b : Cut the staff.

In this case the site would be dug and written up largely by volunteers. The saving would amount to £40,000 p.a. but the writing up programme would of course be greatly extended; probably another ten years on top of the eight.

2c : Cut the site assistance. Saving about £10,000 p.a.; the site would of course take far longer to dig, but more digging could take place each year. The post excavation programme would have to be extended by four years, to compensate for increased time spent by the staff on site.Option 3: Raise the money. Here too I can see three options, depending on who takes responsibility.3a : The Trust takes responsibility. This is the case to date, as I have understood it, although I have occasionally prepared submissions, e.g. to the British Academy. For eight years the Trust members would need to raise £100-120,000 p.a. between them. It is of course open to the Trust to appoint more members, perhaps including those directly involved with fund-raising already, and also to appoint a fund-raiser, or retain a fund-raising Company. Within this option, the Trust would retain full control of the project, and simply issue a contract for the cost of the work to Birmingham. I would be free to concentrate on the archaeology, while producing publicity material as required by the financial managers.3b : The Sutton Hoo Society takes responsibility. In this case the Society's new fund-raising committee would undertake to find the additional £50,000 p.a. required by the excavation, as well as the money they need for the upkeep of the site. Under Prince Phillip, as president, they stand a fair chance of doing so, provided new committee members are found. They would also have the option of appointing professional fund-raisers. The Birmingham contract would be issued either by the Society or the Trust, depending on which is to have ultimate control of the budget.3c : Director takes responsibility. In this case, the Trust issues a contract to Birmingham for the amount it can afford, and I am left to find the balance in whatever way I can. I would certainly appoint a fund-raiser (with the money received from the Trust) as an essential first step. Since I also have a limited company ("Field Archaeology Projects Ltd.") for marketing purposes, the structure does actually exist within the University to raise money and to protect sponsor's investments.

Option 4: Reduce the sample. I think that any sample that does not include a transect across the whole site from east to west would be meaningless. Sectors 1,4 and 8 are therefore essential. This will take a minimum of 150 weeks if the proposed team is employed. A reduced programme would therefore have the effect of reducing the overall budget; each year some £100,000 would still have to be found, but this would not need to rise much above that in years 3-7, as at present. To reduce the programme to, say, just Sector 2, would in my view be worthless.

Option 5: Extend the programme. The restraining factor here is that the project cannot function at all at less than £65,000. However for around that sum, a certain amount of archaeology can be achieved, as shown over the past two years. About 1200 m p.a. can be dug, giving a programme length of 12 years. Mound 2 would be completed in about four years time.

I hope it is useful to have such options before us when we meet on 4 December. My own preference will emerge, but as I expect was clear from the earlier meeting, I do not believe that options 2,4 or 5 are really feasible. That is not to say that I will not give them further consideration.

Yours sincerely,



M.O.H. Carver