



Consuta Trust Newsletter - Winter 2014



Consuta steaming out onto the Thames from the Beale Park lake – 25th October 2014

Dear All,

2014 has had been a great steaming season with a lot of variety. The trip up the Kennet and Avon was a delight, and I hope can be repeated again in 2015. We also arranged a some crew boat handling sessions and think we all learnt a lot from these.

Since the last newsletter there have been a further two cruises during the fine late autumn weather, both to Shillingford Bridge, one was a special for the Fawley steam museum volunteers, and the other for our own supporters. A final steaming was supposedly to only blow the boiler down empty, it's always best to do this when in steam and hot; but it was a good excuse to take Consuta upriver and have lunch at the Swan Inn. Slightly embarrassing was the difficulty to get any starting draught up the funnel – the fire just wouldn't burn at first – I thought probably due to dampness in the smokebox after the funnel cap had been blown off.

Despite the operational difficulties due to the boiler design, Consuta has steamed well, this is partially due to some excellent coal which is brilliant. The engine also runs very well, the valve timing is excellent and the engine rotates with only 2 psi shown on the valve chest, admittedly very slowly. A minor issue now is that the throttle valve has a slight leak which does catch out the engine crew at times. This will be sorted during winter maintenance.

Another well known oddity is that the Windermere kettle drain uses the same drain pipe to the ashpan as the cylinder drains, so use of the kettle while in a lock causes the engine to turn slowly; the kettle drain steam goes into the engine via the valve chest drains; this will be corrected over winter. The main issue with the steam plant now is that we need a lighter boiler which is easier to manage at all times.



Consuta during the crane lift out being cleaned off – 31st October 2014

Removing Consuta from the water

The weather was lovely, warm and sunny for the crane out, the lifting and hull cleaning went well. Although we've done this many times now and it should be just a standard routine, however I'm always a little anxious about this operation so it's nice to have lots of helpers on the day, thank you to all who came along. At present Consuta is having to sit out in the open, but we hope shortly to move her under cover into the old cowshed.

We can now reflect and judge how well the trust has met its charity objectives during the year.

Thames Boat Museum

Detail work on this is progressing very well. One of the key features of heritage grants is that the HLF encourage people to participate and volunteer for projects which receive their grants.

We are currently drawing up costing details for the various services needed for designing, building and operating the museum. Some of these jobs will require paid professionals but others are open to volunteers who have the appropriate experience and/or qualifications. If you think you can contribute in anyway and would like to help please do get in touch. Volunteer work contribution plays an important part with lottery grant application, and reduces the project costs; volunteers work contribution is accepted as partnership funding. The HLF calculator for volunteer contribution is £350 per day for "professional" help, £150 per day for "skilled" help and £50 per day for "unskilled" volunteer help.

The Consuta Social

Our winter lunchtime social has been arranged for Saturday 21st February at the Beetle and Wedge Boathouse Inn. This is a delightful location where the dining room overlooks the Thames at Moulsoford and we hope you can come along. The menu and booking form are included here, your booking and payment needs to be submitted to the Trust before February 2015.



Have a lovely Christmas and hope to see you in the new year – Brian Smith & Trustees