



THE EMPIRE'S LAUNCH.

# The Consuta Trust

The advancement of education in the history of steam launches, by preservation, maintenance and exhibition of the steam launch **Consuta**

Patron: The Rt. Hon. Lord Strathcona & Mount Royal

## News Letter No. 23 — July 2005

Dear Supporter,

### We have a new Trustee

We are delighted to welcome Colin Henwood as a Trustee of The Consuta Trust.

### The Consuta Operational Season

Well, we might have had a late start to the operational season, but since Consuta has been back on the water it has been extremely busy, taxing our crewing resources. If you haven't put your hand up to volunteer to help run Consuta, now would be a good time. We can relax a bit now because the steaming schedule falls away for August and September only three/four events are planned, this should provide some opportunities for some training/supporter trips.

Consuta was relaunched on 18th May, the boiler was lifted in once she was afloat, and it then took a few further hours to join up all the bits of pipework.

The first cruise was a private outing for one of our supporters and friends, then a week later Consuta was on display at the Beale Park Boat show. This is a great event; our pontoon was in danger of sinking because of the number of visitors crowding around; a group of enthusiasts from Sweden also paid us a visit. Consuta was then steamed down to our mooring Charvil near Sonning, ready for a private garden party.

During these first outings we were busy trying out different coals; good steam coal seemed to be unobtainable. After these tests I can confirm that coal from the Rossington Colliery (derbyshire)

may be good for steam locos and traction engines, but would be unacceptable on the Thames. We had another sample of Daw Mill coal (a colliery near Coventry) courtesy of the Crofton Beam Engines, again rather too Smoky.

It was about this time we heard that there was some Polish Steam Coal in the UK, and this was being used by the Windermere Steamboat Museum and Gondola on Coniston. So during a Spring holiday to lakeland I brought a few bags back for trials on

*The old Wallingford Bridge during a private outing from the Beetle and Wedge*



Consuta; results although rather large lumps it steamed well. Derek found a Welsh Coalman (Burstons) who could deliver the same coal to us here in the Thames valley, not cheap though; we bought 2 tons. This was supposed to be the same Polish coal but it seemed much smaller, rather more smoky and more gritty than the stuff in lakeland, however it steams well.



*David Suchet on honorary umpire duty above Cleeve Lock*

A technique used by some firemen to keep down smoke is to have the steam blower on and jam the firedoor open a bit with a lump of coal, this provides top air to the fire and is quite acceptable; also the “little and often” firing technique also worked well.

Consuta provided an umpiring service at the Reading Town Regatta, speeds were high, with engine revs up to 530 rpm (16mph); those coxless quads are fast, even though during one of the races one boat ran into the bank! (sorry no pictures of this exiting event).

Since then Consuta has hosted The Transport Trust, made three trips during the Henley Festival, plus two private outings. Consuta was then taken up to the Goring and Streatley Regatta; quite delightful and usually a source of additional historic information about the old Springfield boat yard. Apparently the Springfield site is now owned by the Anne Carpmail Charitable Trust and we’ve been invited to go along and have a look at the remains of the old Sam Saunders Boat yard, (holy ground for the historians!)



David Suchet was honorary umpire during a demonstration umpiring run at he regatta, then it was off to Henley during late afternoon for the Trad Boat Rally the next day. Consuta was to provide a tripping service during the Sunday.

Consuta then returned up river on the Monday, for a private function at the Beetle and Wedge on Wednesday, followed the next day by an appearance at a





*Umbrellas keeping the hot sunshine at bay — Mapledurham Lock*

gathering of The Waterway Trust, the new Thames Boats Trust and the EA who brought along 'Windrush' and 'Seven Springs' as host boats. This all combined with Swan Uppers who were on the upstream reach from Pangbourne.

Our skippers have reported that the Public Display outings invariably cause great interest and numerous complimentary comments from onlookers. The splendid turnout of Consuta is all due to our crew volunteer efforts, so many thanks for this important spit and polish work.



So who is the Thames Boats Trust? Well they have recently been registered as a charitable trust to help set up a heritage boat museum on the Thames. Two of the Consuta Trustees (Tony and myself) are trustees of the Thames Boats Trust, and we are hoping that eventually that such a museum will provide a base for active craft like Consuta.

Consuta is currently back at our Sonning mooring following a private wedding function in Shiplake.

Looking ahead there are two private functions in August, then Consuta will return to Beale Park to join the Steam Boat Association Rally during 3/4th September. As already mentioned I'm hoping that we can arrange for some





*Afternoon tea stop with the Swan Uppers — just above Gatehampton railway bridge*

supporters/crew training outings during September, so why not consider join these activities.

At present there are probably more requests for outings than we can comfortably cover with our present crew volunteers. Maybe there should be a limit on the number of steamings through the year, let me know if you have any views on this?

During early June we took the opportunity to collect a Gray Marine engine that has been donated to The Trust. This petrol engine was taken out of Consuta in 1975 and we also have the rather nice curved glass engine casing that used to cover it, all very suitable as a museum display.

**Consuta DVD Video** covering Consuta outings from 2001 to 2004.

These DVD's are available from me at £5 each plus £1 postage – proceeds to our Trust fund of course.

### **Supporters**

Thank you for your continuing help, whether financial, labour or just moral support without which it would be difficult to keep Consuta operational

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