



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

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Consuta party framed by Henley Bridge during the Traditional Boat Rally on Sunday

Doesn't time fly. Consuta was successfully relaunched by crane onto the lake at Beale Park on Wednesday 16th April, a beautiful sunny and warm Spring day.

The weather on Easter Friday was also glorious so we steamed Consuta for the first time this year just to see if everything worked OK after the winter refit. No problems, we had a bit of fun moving two landing stages across the lake ready for the Steam and Sail event planned here for the Easter Saturday/Sunday weekend. (19th/20th April)

Sadly on Saturday the weather had deteriorated – with little sunshine and a cold wind. However Consuta was in steam on both days and proved very popular giving rides to lots of people. We collected nearly £100 from our donation box. Tony and his crew proved that Consuta could make some impressive sprint runs even within the confines of

Consuta website is:- www.consuta.org.uk

Trustees: Derek Brown Tony Cundick Graham Lindsay Geoff Newton Brian Smith

Registered charity No. 1076505



Fitting the boiler lagging

the lake, great fun for those on board.

Since Easter there have been several crew training sessions, on each occasion Consuta was taken through the awkward floating bridge onto the river to sample the delights of this part of the Thames.

Sorry that we didn't make any umpiring runs at the Henley Royal Regatta, we weren't invited – perhaps next year.

2004 of course is the 150th anniversary of the Varsity

Race and we'll be interested to see what celebration is planned for this.

In June Consuta was moved to a mooring on the Sonning Shiplake reach for the summer duration. This splendid private mooring has been made available at no cost to the Trust and we are very grateful to our benefactor.

Consuta has just completed a very busy weekend (18-20th July) having taken part in the Goring and Streatley Regatta, and the Henley Traditional Boat Rally. Pity these events clash, I understand this will be the case again next year – what a shame!

The Goring and Streatley Regatta has an interesting history, the first regatta was held above Cleeve Lock in 1874 but was discontinued at the beginning of WW1. After remaining dormant for decades, the Regatta was reconstituted in 1992 and is now a regular annual river event on this delightful part of the river. The site of the old Saunders Springfield Works (near South Stokes) is almost opposite the Regatta field although there is no sign of any of the old buildings now, these were allowed to fall down after WWII. We believe that Consuta was built here in 1898 for Mr. Clutton of Cleeve Mill for umpire duty at the Henley Royal Regatta.

Consuta first had to be steamed upriver from Sonning on the Friday, lovely trip with 10 on board. Then on Saturday (19th July) we set up our pitch at the G&S regatta site and steamed Consuta up and down to the delight of onlookers. Finally in the afternoon we were invited to follow the Streatley v Goring village 'fours' race down the course at a discrete speed. This





Easter Show at Beale Park

was a re enactment of a pre WW1 rally race scene, great fun and seemed to be very much appreciated by the regatta crowds. It is always gratifying the number of people who are interested in Consuta and some are able to add to our knowledge of her earlier history.

We weren't the only steam launch at the regatta because Ed Langley had the ex Salters

steamer Streatley here as well.

Consuta had to leave before the end of the day in order to get to the Trad Boat Rally at Fawley meadow before dark. We arrived about 9:00pm on Saturday evening after a wonderful cruise down river, this despite having to hand work four Thames locks.

Engineering work

The boiler steams much better now, so there are fewer complaints from the firemen.

Robin Wallace Sims has fitted a calerifier known as a Windermere Kettle. This device uses steam and it only takes a few seconds to boil a teapot's worth of water.

By late June the engine seemed to be making more noise than usual so the gurus have been looking into this to see what's up. The trouble with old machinery is that most moving parts are worn, so the big question is whether to replace all these bits with new or to make repairs to the worn components. I personally favour the later approach because it's nice to have any old engine as original as possible. This later approach is a challenge, and remedial progress can be slow. The engine problems are being resolved and it is becoming much quieter. More on this in the next newsletter.

Coal supplies

In the old days it was possible to obtain good quality Welsh Steam coal from almost any of the numerous coal merchants in all parts of the country. Now we only have a few coal merchants and there aren't many Welsh coal mines still in business, most Welsh coal is taken from open cast workings. Unfortunately quality varies from year to year, so one is frequently tempted by offers of steam coal from places such as Russia, Poland or even China. Consuta needs good steam coal otherwise lots of smoke or just poor steaming will be the end result.

Supporter news

Sadly we have to report the death of David Macgregor in May this year. David had become actively involved with the crewing of Consuta. Our condolences to family and friends. Graham Lindsay is still house bound much to his annoyance, but is keenly interested in all activities and is keeping in touch by phone and post.

Crew training

Several supporters have now sampled the interesting duties of operating Consuta.

The training outings have proved popular, so we now have several supporters who are quite proficient in the art of managing steam plant. One problem is that many members cannot spare the time to come along except at weekends. The Trustees are considering extending an invitation to various water based youth organisations, because it is important to encourage younger people to get involved.

Future of Consuta

A permanent home is required to ensure the long term future of the Consuta. I have been told that the cost of land plus a suitable boathouse for the viewing public would be eligible for HLF support. We still have hopes that Beale Park can make progress and establish a Heritage Boat Centre on this beautiful reach of the river. Another ideal place for Consuta would be somewhere near Henley, perhaps a wet boathouse by the Henley River and Rowing Museum. This question of a permanent home is a problem that the Trustees are having to seriously consider. As you can imagine there are many thoughts and ideas on this.

The Trustees would be interested in your views, so please let us know.

This newsletter is being sent as a hard copy to all our supporters on this occasion and I've enclosed a copy of our coloured promo leaflet. Those with email will be receiving all the various week by week notes which should give an insight on the latest movements of Consuta. If you want to be on this list but don't already get the emails, please let me have your email address.

Thanks to all for your continuing support

Brian Smith 31st July 2003

Scene at the Beale Park Boat Show in June

