



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

Newsletter No.14

April 2003

Winter work

Supported by:-



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

The Transport Trust
The Steam Boat Association
International Paints
The Amber Trust
Consuta Trust supporters club



Consuta raising steam in the Haddon Cut to move up river to Gatehampton

It is quite a while since we had the last Newsletter in November, so what is going on? Those who are on the emailing list should already have a good idea of what has been happening. Here is the story for those who aren't up to date – though not quite in chronological order.

Social Gathering in the Wargrave Village Hall on a Saturday in December.

Our thanks to Tony Barker for making the arrangements at the delightful Wargrave village hall. About 30 plus supporters came along and enjoyed a very nice meal, lots of social chat, plus plenty of videos and photos on show. We had video from various supporters including our memorable last trip up river.

Consuta Video

Ian Rutter, retired BBC editor, has volunteered to make a video of Consuta at the Henley Royal Regatta last year. If you have any video of this that he has not seen yet please let him know.

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

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

Registered charity No. 1076505

The Last Steaming excursion of Consuta in 2002.

Consuta was steamed up to Beale Park on Tuesday 19th November, the red boards were out and the river was a bit wild. Our intrepid helpers, some wearing life preservers, were Lyn Smith and Bernard Trim on crocodile watch (logs and snaggs to you and me) in the bow compartment, David Eager and Mark Smith in the engine room, Robin Sims for encouragement, Paul Smith with the video camera and myself in charge on the helm.

There had been a lot of rain and the river was in flood, mind you not nearly as bad as later in the year. It had stopped raining for a few days so the river had dropped a little and we were faced with move it or have it lifted out at Bushnell's. So it was decided to steam Consuta up river to Beale Park – transport by road was not an option.

The Tuesday chosen was a glorious sunny day, coal was loaded, steam raised and we tested the current – it wasn't that bad. At that moment a EA workboat went downstream just to show that the river was navigable. Our first lock was Shiplake, the rise was noticeably less than normal. After the lock cut we came out into the main current running I guess at about 3 to 4 mph. Consuta was steaming well with about 350 rpm on the engine, probably giving us a ground speed of some 5 mph. Robin said the islands looked much smaller than he remembered, I thought the river looked wider than I remembered. We passed David Eager's riverside home and noticed that his landing stage was well underwater, further up by the Patrick Stream, the garden of Norman Clarke's house (on stilts) was not quite flooded.

David wondered would we need to drop the funnel for Sonning Bridge, I said surely not our height was 8ft, Sonning had a summer clearance of about 14ft. I was slightly more worried about the effect of the current coming down the river channel from the direction of the French Horn. There was a round of applause when we went cleanly through the centre arch, good heavens they were more nervous than I was. If you want to read more of this tale please see the story in the SBA Funnel magazine.

By 4 o'clock after one of the best trips of the year, Consuta was safely moored and sheeted up alongside some pontoons in the new Haddon Race cut leading into the lake at Beale Park.

Craning Consuta out

On the 29th of November steam was raised once again for the very short river journey to the EA maintenance site at Gatehampton Railway bridge, where Consuta was to be craned out.

There were a dozen or so supporters present to help with this, and to wash the hull down before placing Consuta onto the road trailer.

We had an interesting tow across the farm tracks, the ruts in the track were so deep in places that the rudder tried to plow a furrow in the soft earth between the tracks, the inquisitive



cows were a bit of a nuisance as well. Consuta and trailer were finally parked outside the cowshed at Beale Park ready to be wheeled under cover another day.

A January workforce descended onto Consuta and disconnected a myriad of items to allow the boiler to be lifted out. Consuta was then gingerly moved into the cowshed, there were only inches to spare on the opening. It has rained very little since Consuta has been under cover, must be Murphies law. I would like to mention our thanks to the EA, Colin Henwood for their help with the lift out, to Dave Roberts for the use of his fork lift and especially to Richard Howard and the members of the Wednesday Club who are allowing us to keep Consuta in the Cowshed.

There have been frequent Wednesday work parties during the winter months, and a lot of cleaning and remedial work has been carried out. A week ago the boiler was moved into the open and steamed for the annual boiler inspection. With some minor valve leakage work to be remedied (now completed) the boiler has been passed OK for the season.

The boiler has now been put back into Consuta and we are just finishing off coupling up all those bits and pieces which were taken apart three months ago.

Consuta is to be launched in the week leading up to Easter, this is to be by crane. We did consider floating Consuta off the trailer – minimal cost in money but a bit of a worry that it might not come off the trailer OK.

So what is the programme for 2003, dates we have in mind are:-

- | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| • Beale Park Easter steam and sail event. | 19th – 20th | April |
| • Beale Park Boat Show | 6th – 8th | June |
| • Streatley and Goring Regatta | 19th | July |
| • Trad Boat Rally – Fawley Meadow | 20th | July |
| • SBA rally at Fawley Meadow | 13th – 14th | September |

Consuta will also be on the Henley reach during Regatta week. I should mention that Consuta is to be made available for private use during the regatta. In fact if you have a special day any time in the year and require something different for your guests, Consuta could be just the job. Please contact us with your ideas.

The Trust finances are reasonably secure for this year and should cover the basic annual running costs. We do however have to consider the long term, because from time to time there will be major costs for more than just the regular annual maintenance. Also there are all those things that would be nice to have, eg mobile facilities for our operational needs plus some workshop tools. The long term future of Consuta will depend on having a permanent base with public access, until we have this Consuta's future cannot be considered secure. The ideal place would be a Heritage Boat Centre at Beale Park, or perhaps at some other Thames location. Another alternative is a floating boathouse base with all the facilities for keeping and displaying Consuta, this would have the advantage of being capable of being moved as and when required.

Other things it would be nice to have or do:-

Take Consuta to Windermere in the summer months of 2004. This is the last year before the 10 mph speed limit comes into force on the lake. Cranage and transport costs for this would probably be about £3,000, such a visit would have to be financed by specific donations, it would not be appropriate to use general trust funds, any takers?

We already know that the boiler in Consuta is too heavy, so we would like a new loco boiler

better suited for the requirements of the launch. Cost of this is likely be about £8,000, perhaps we could open a special fund for this, anyone care to make a start?

Finances

Our Treasurer tells us that even the bank is now paying interest, about £3 a month. However all the big bills are coming up for payment, insurance, river licence, and mooring charges. On the bright side we have just received a quantity of coal donated by Tom Mason, the cost of the boiler inspection has been cover by Tony Cundick and John Porter – thank you, and Lyn & Paul Smith have made up the new boiler lagging muffs at no cost to the Trust – isn't that good?

Thank you to everyone who continues to give donations, without the regular monthly contributions we would be struggling. You will be pleased to hear that we have received about £2,400 from the Inland Revenue as a result of your gift aid donations. Also many thanks to those who are giving all those other items which are needed for annual refurbishment.

Operations

I am hoping that we can have more crew training sessions, the arrangements last year were a bit sporadic partially because of a need to sort out some of the minor engineering problems. Those who tried their hand on the engineering side later in the year found that Consuta is quite easy to handle now. It is important to encourage more volunteers to gain proficiency and help with the crewing, so this is your chance.

There is usually room for supporters as passengers during these training sessions, you will be very welcome, so do come along. I suppose one of the problems is contacting you if you don't use email services.

If you have any ideas of how you would like Consuta to be used or displayed please do let us know? The Trust really do need someone to manage our Publicity and PR – any offers?

Trustees.

I'm sorry to have to report that Graham Lindsay is house bound at the moment, and is presently unable to get out and about on public transport. He is however still very much in touch with our activities and makes great use of the telephone. The present five Trustees had just reached the full five years term of office (have we really been at it that long?). I'm pleased to say that all have agreed to stay on for another five year term, if they can stand the pace. In addition we were delighted to have been joined by David Eager who has agreed to become a Consuta Trustee.

I would like to thank my fellow trustees who have given unstinting support during the last five years, and also a thank you to all supporters for continuing to help us in so many different ways.

