



The Consuta Trust

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Dear Supporter

NEWSLETTER No. 3

01488 658795

As I write it is just about the end of November 1999. I am sorry that you haven't had any news since August – so here goes with the latest.

Volunteer work on Consuta

The hull was turned back (to right way up) on 20th August. The next task was for trust volunteers to paint the interior of the hull with a bilge paint. John Schofield managed to get a quantity of yacht primer, bilge paint and Toplac paint free from International Paints – we were all duly impressed by this acquisition. There were five painting parties, the work actually involved a bit of scraping – Colin called it surface scuffing – I think some of our volunteers were dismayed at the prospect of hand scuffing the glossy resin surface. Anyway with much grumbling the task was done – members protected fingertips by wrapping in masking tape – a boat builders trick apparently! The painting with Grey primer and Danboline grey paint was much more enjoyable, I noticed that some volunteers seemed to paint themselves liberally as well. One wag managed to paint himself into a corner much to everyone's amusement.

The total of volunteer hours work done at the boat yard so far comes to 420 man hours put in over ten separate working days. Thanks to everyone for that.

Current Boatyard work

Colin and his men have been commissioned to fit the seats make the floor support beams and make all the deck beams for the forward, aft and engine/boiler compartments. There has been much discussion (argument) about the correct historical restoration.

Tony Cundick has taken on the task of refurbishing the rudder and designing the steering arrangements. The original pulley block beam fitted in the stern has defied all ideas on how it could possibly work – we shall be interested to see what Tony produces in the end.

Geoff Newton – of wooden boiler fame – has now made a wooden engine with a crankshaft that rotates.

Some of the Trustees had a technical meeting with Colin Henwood yesterday. We fitted the wooden engine and boiler into the hull. I think everyone was surprised just how high the engine is. Yes, the Propshaft needs to be about 15 ft long, it seems that the longest piece of Stainless Steel available is only 4 metres (about 13 ft), so it will need a 2 ft extension piece – bother it! Consuta is really looking very good now with the engine and boiler placed in, and many of the deck beams fitted.

Anyway we were able to answer most of the queries about the decking details.

Other tasks

Bill Hall is getting some extra Thames type mooring cleats cast at his local foundry.

Those in the SBA who went to the Sidmouth Social event will know that I was asked to give a talk on Consuta. I had to do a little research on this and now realise just what a major technical advance the Consuta method of construction really was. The most important feature is that it allowed Sam Saunders to make a boat that was only two thirds the weight of other comparable boats of the time. No wonder Consuta was so fast. The technique was the precursor of all plywood/multi-veneer hull construction.

Alan Douglas has offered a preliminary drawing for a wet boathouse design. He has also offered to design a Consuta internet web site. We already have a rough and ready one on:-

www.consuta.dabsol.co.uk

Funding

Thanks to everyone who has given financial donations, large or small they are all very welcome – so thank you again.

Geoff has been dealing with the Inland Revenue and on claims for tax refunds to date we have managed to get an £8,000 refund on donations for the restoration fund – absolutely great!

Artist Michael Vicary has donated a very nice watercolour painting sketch of Consuta, I think it looks like the river at Henley? He has given this to us to use in any way we can for fund raising.

Lyn has been getting some colour photocopies of Michael Vicary's painting. She has framed these for general fund raising and to help promote our project. I took a few along to the Model Engineer Exhibition at Donnington and was astonished to find that a visitor bought one within the first half hour. We have been giving free copies to everyone who has been either a volunteer or has donated more than £100 – frames are extra and come in all sizes – I don't know where Lyn gets them?

Sadly – the Science Museum Prism funding application has been turned down. This is a great disappointment to everyone.

John Schofield has approached Raymond Baxter who was involved with Consuta during the televising of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race in the 1950/60's, and he has agreed to lend his name to our restoration fund raising efforts.

Both the Watercraft magazine and Classic Boat are interested in doing articles on Consuta.

A Consuta Base at Beale Park Pangbourne

The Consuta trustees are negotiating the use of a barn (cow shed) at the park for a one year period. The barn is about 110 ft long and 34 ft wide with easy access. The arrangements have not yet been finalised, more details later. This is certainly the location where volunteer effort will come into its own.

The exhibition by Watercraft – *Boats 2000* – will be based at the park from 18th - 21st May 2000, the Park are planning to have a cut to the Thames in time for this boat show.

Work and Funding at the boatyard

The present work schedule planned at Colin Henwood is for the completion of the covering boards and all decking, but it is likely that we will run out of Trust funds by the end of the year. It will be a shame if we are unable to complete this part of the work at the boatyard. It may be that you might consider a loan to the Trust to complete this work, if you think you can help in any way please contact Geoff Newton.

The DesVignes engines in Canada

Many of you will know that we have located two important DesVignes engines in Canada. The engines are the twin cylinder 6 + 6 × 7 from Maritana (sister to Consuta) and the very interesting twin 7.1/8 + 7.1/8 × 6 from Hibernia. The Trustees would like to get these back to this Country. The engine from Maritana would be used in Consuta, and Hibernia's engine will be of great interest to historians. The Trust have started negotiations with the owner.

National Historic Ships Committee

Consuta is now registered as a Historic Vessel and listed as a Designate Vessel see:-

www.st-and.ac.uk/institutes/sims/ukcore.htm

Brian Smith, 26th November 1999

Funding help and Donations please contact Geoff Newton: 01283 703721

Other thoughts or suggestions to me Brian Smith: 01488 658795