

Consuta Trust Newsletter - Spring 2015

Dear All,

We are now well into some lovely warm weather and the lush spring growing season so now it's the time to look forward to the boating season.

This picture shows displays of Loddon Lilies sometimes called summer snowdrops.

There are a few clumps near the lake at Beale Park, also the old Saunders Springfield works site at Withymead have a wonderful display.



The Consuta Social

The Trust social a week late February at the Beetle and Wedge Boathouse restaurant was great; it's such a lovely location overlooking the river and the weather although cold was sunny on the day.



The photo above on the left shows some of our group at the meal; the room is L shaped and most of the tables looked out onto the Thames. The photo on the right is now a private dwelling, but some 15 years ago this was the Beetle and Wedge Inn which I remember as having some very good boat moorings.

Spring Work Parties

Each year there always seem to be many small maintenance tasks needed to get the boat ready for the summer. This year was no exception, the spring job list showed the following work required. Replumb the Windermere kettle drain, cure the engine throttle leakage, repair the smokebox boiler mud door, check one of the ratchet wheels on the engine lubricator (it unscrewed itself during a last summer outing – the engine complained about the lack of oil), clean and touch up the backhead paintwork (it

always goes rusty over winter), fit new O rings to the injector check valves, retighten loose rivets on the valve gear straps, plus many other tasks.

This year we needed to renew our boat safety certification (something that is required every four years); this time we had to replace the two fire extinguishers. Now I'm not really convinced that this scheme is appropriate for an open launch like Consuta with no gas, electric or oil installations. For Consuta the safety scheme inspector checks the fire extinguishers and checks that we have a current boiler inspection certificate – that is all. Then of course we have to arrange the annual examination of the boiler – first a cold examination then a steam test.

Our first boat maintenance work party was well attended, so the brass work is looking pretty good now. A minor scrape on the bow paintwork that occurred last year has been touched up and minor maintenance work is being carried out on various engine parts some have had to be removed to the workshop. During the work party day the steam blower pipe fell off – oops! I think this is the third time that this has suffered some mishap – however it is fitted in a very hostile environment in the smoke box just above the engine blast nozzle so maybe a rethink of the arrangement here for next time the boiler is removed, but in the meantime it has been repaired.

Operational programme for 2015

To date our operational events that have been confirmed are the Beale Park Boat Show, the Henley Women's Regatta and the Reading Town Regatta. It is almost certain that we will be attending the Trad Boat Rally and the Goring and Streatley Regatta but no bookings have been arranged yet. The calendar page on the Trust website indicates the current event status, please keep an eye on this for latest details

About Thames History

If you like visiting museums, call in at the Reading Museum and have a look at the Huntley and Palmer section. I was interested to see that Huntley & Palmer (the famous Reading biscuit makers) were keen to encourage their staff to take part in various sports, one of these was rowing. The museum display two rowing trophies won by Huntley and Palmer crews. The Huntley & Palmer biscuit company first started in 1856 finally closing down in 1970.



Of interest to Thames boating historians is of course that Mr A.

Palmer owned the lovely steam launch Lodona built in 1894, this launch was later to be owned by the Thames Conservancy as their VIP inspection launch which had been renamed Donola, she was kept in Conservancy service until 1969 then donated to the National Maritime Museum for display at Greenwich; however she is now held in storage so is a potential exhibit for the new Museum at BP.

During the 19th century the Reading Town regatta was known as the working man's rowing regatta. However nowadays crews come to this regatta from all over the UK and also a few from abroad. The course at 800 metres is quite short and is very fast, I've been told it's an ideal trial event prior to the Henley Royal Regatta.

Thames Boat Museum



The photo above (you may have seen it already) is taken from a 3D computer model sketch showing how the museum will be laid out. There is a short video walk around this model which is linked from the Tamesis Trust website.

The details of the project HLF grant application were finalised at the beginning of the year and our application was submitted by the Consuta Trust in February. The application is in two parts, the first is a request for a development grant, and if successful we will be able to develop the project to determine the final detailed build costs, then submit these for the second stage of the HLF grant process.

We won't know the results of our first round application until June.

The grant officers were very helpful with some pre application advice but did warn us that although our proposals looked very good, there is intense competition for funding grants – so it's a case of fingers crossed.

An estimate of the timescales assuming that we get all funding would be that the museum could be opened in 2018.

A charitable company the Tamesis Trust has been registered with the Charity Commission and this organisation will take over the responsibility to further the museum project if successful with a stage one HLF grant.

Several people have asked why the Consuta Trust is not going to manage the proposed museum itself? The objects of the Consuta Trust would have to be changed, also it is what is known as a non incorporated association so cannot hold legal title in its own name on any assets. We were advised that the best solution was for a separate Charitable Incorporated

Organisation to manage the museum. So if the Consuta Trust is granted a 1st stage lottery grant the Tamesis Trust will take over all further work on the museum project.

Boiler design update



David has now taken this proposed design a stage further by building a full scale half sectioned model in wood. The purpose was to see if there will be any problems for the boiler maker when assembling and making all the welds. Also the model will be extremely useful to see how the new boiler fits in Consuta; we should be able to try this at the end of the 2015 season when the boiler will be removed from Consuta for its biannual winter checkup.

Consuta Trust management

There have been a few changes to our trust management team. Tiki House who has been our treasurer for some three years now has resigned and Mark Smith has volunteered to take on the treasurer position.

David Eager has tendered his resignation as a Trustee but will be continuing to help skipper Consuta. David has been an major contributor to the ongoing success of Consuta since restoration and we hope he will continue to be one of our skippers for future ops.

Work ahead

We are planning to crane Consuta back into the water on Tuesday morning 12th May. Always interesting operation and its good to have people present to help out or just give encouraging support. Once launched Consuta has to be towed or paddled across the lake to the pontoons. Once afloat the next job will be to arrange the annual boiler inspection – date to be confirmed – she will probably be in steam on this day..

On Thursday 4th June the Consuta display pitch 10m x 3m will be set up for the boat show, so plenty of help needed. Work involved is the setting up the marquee and making sure that the pontoon is clean and presentable. I am hoping we can display part of an original Saunders stitched hull and also the half model of the proposed new boiler. By the way we have a new sturdy tent or should I call it a marquee.

Please keep an eye for operational updates on the calendar page of the trust website, also many thanks for helping to keep Consuta operational.

Brian Smith on behalf of the Trustees

23rd April 2015