



THE UNFIRE'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**

Website: www.consuta.org.uk

News Letter No. 43 — Autumn 2010



Scene taken during The IWA Festival at Beale Park

August was a fairly quiet month with two visits to the Henley River & Rowing Museum where Consuta provides short trips for museum visitors.

The 2010 IWA Festival was based at Beale Park during the August BH weekend and we had thought that there was a risk of having our lightly built Consuta join a large number of heavy steel plate narrow boats, so attendance here might not be a very good idea. However as the organisers were prepared to provide special moorings for Consuta and other historic boats, we changed our mind and joined the gathering. It turned out that the moorings provided were our own pontoons, however the IWA H&S team had decided that they were not safe so there could be no public access; this was modified at our request to public access by invitation. The historic boats afloat were the steam launch Sabrina, Dunkirk Little Ship L'Orage and a Shallop. The shallop had been built as a film prop for the 1966 film "A Man for All Seasons" with Robert Shaw as Henry VIII.

The Thames Boats Trust provided a shore display of their Thornycroft steam launch Cygnet. Alaska was here as well giving visitors short cruises on the river, and she moored on the lake during the night.



Consuta was moved up river to the IWA Festival on Saturday, the first day of the show. Historic boats were only expected to provide two parades on the lake each day but my daughter arranged for some additional Consuta steamings on the Monday; this was much appreciated by the organisers, onlookers and also by our guest passengers including the crew of the ten oared Shallop who were invited to have a ride.

Following a private party outing on the 7th September, Consuta was taken late afternoon down river to Charvil ready for a special fund raising event at Henley on Sunday the 12th. Sue Gourley provided a great photo of Consuta and four other umpire launches in V formation taken from



Henley Bridge; a similar photo of this was published in the Henley Standard. The launches were being used to take guest to Temple Island from Leander.

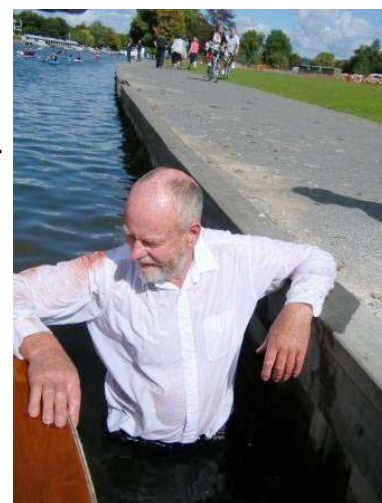
Unfortunately Consuta somehow managed to pick up one of the Henley Regatta landing stage mooring chains on her prop. This require drastic action from Consuta's crew member Nigel, who dived in and cropped the chain with some large bolt cutters (provided by Leander). When Nigel came up after this heroic effort he had red on his shirt and several onlookers thought he had hurt himself;

however this turned out to be red antifouling.

Consuta was then returned to Beale Park late afternoon following the Henley excursion in the morning to be ready for the Steam Boat Rally based here the next weekend.

SBA Rally at Beale Park

The weather for this Friday to Sunday event was excellent and there were 19 other steamboats taking part. Saturday was an up river trip, my daughter would be the skipper of Consuta on this



day and would stay in company with Arlette. We met up at the Swan (Streatley) for an early lunch then set off upriver to see the rest of the fleet who had steamed up earlier. This was a great photo opportunity for those on Arlette and Consuta especially as we were passing through the SBA fleet either moored up for lunch at various locations or returning down river. We turned round just below Benson Lock, a few other steamboats did go through to stop for lunch at the café by Benson marina.





On Sunday, Consuta, now skippered by Tony Cundick, travelled down river to Caversham with other SBA boats. Sadly one of our favourite waterholes the Riverside Inn had closed down earlier in the season.

Then two special outings. The first was for members of the Goring and Streatley Local History Society with a short cruise from Nuns Acre (community riverside gardens just above Goring Lock) to the site of the Saunders Springfield works. There were several trips and I'm told that everyone enjoyed the day, even though it was a bit cold. (Group photo above)

We then had another private outing in October, again rather cold weather, but the outing was thoroughly enjoyed by all who came along. We landed at Mapledurham House moorings and walk around the estate and church before returning upriver to Pangbourne for a light lunch at the Swan.

Engineering

Consuta has developed a few minor problems during the season. It seems that the boiler blowdown plug cock needs servicing because it leaks; the water in the boiler slowly drops away while in steam. Both injector steam valves have started to leak (again), this is a bit of a nuisance because there is enough steam to lift water slightly, depositing it into the ashpan or into the boat.

We were also alarmed and upset when one engineer reported that there was a hiss in the firebox, this fortunately turned out to be a leak from the fuseable plug; however it was not through the plug itself, but from the threads where screwed in. It proved impossible to removed the plug with hand tools with boiler in the boat because it is so awkward to reach through the firehole. Our efforts at removal however stopped the leak; now wasn't that lucky.

I don't like fuseable plugs, not necessary on Consuta.



Who is firing and making smoke?



The navigation cut from the river onto the lake at Beale Park.

Amazing how quickly nature takes over.

A private party outing sets off onto the river.



Above is a photo taken during the re-enactment photo shoot at Cleeve Mill. This is a very pretty location and was the home of Mr. Clutton the first owner of Consuta.

On the right a photo taken during the Steam Boat Association Rally in September



Late News

Consuta was lifted out of the water and tucked away into the security of the Cowshed for winter on 8th November. The cowshed now also houses the small steam launch Cygnet.

Below are some of the tasks that we will be covering during the winter season while Consuta is in the dry. If you would like to come along and help or just see what is being done please see the work party notices issued via email. I will try and arrange these for Saturday mornings.

If we haven't already got your email address please get in touch with brian.smith@consuta.org.uk or just telephone me (Brian) at 01488 658795.

Finally we are planning to arrange a **Winter Social Luncheon**, but this year it will be on a Saturday in February in the Goring/Streatley/Pangbourne area. Details will be provided shortly.

Maintenance Work required on Consuta during the Winter

Winter engineering Maintenance tasks

Both injector steam valves are leaking.

Bilge ejector steam valve leak.

Blowdown plug cock valve leak.

Main throttle valve seems to leak slightly (although not apparent on last two outings.)

Engine weigh shaft (forward end) requires rebushing.

Engine Xhead slippers need checking for wear.

Clean engine.

Clean up boiler fittings.

Paint boiler backhead

Reposition steam line to kettle to keep hot pipe away from storage space behind engine

Hull condition

Bilges need general clean out.

Floor boards need repainting.

Damage scrape on port side covering board varnish work.

A few minor scrapes on hull topsides.

Essential items required for next season

The summer boat cover needs to be replaced, the material has lost some of its strength and is subject to tearing so has been repaired in several places.

Consuta needs improved methods of carrying tools and other engineering items.

Recommended that this can be resolved by better stowage and a new tool box.

Improvements considered necessary for next operational season

The dirty spitting from the funnel at slow speeds is thought to be due to the steam blower. This could possibly be improved by modification to the blower.

Water and ash spills from the ashpan are a constant source of annoyance and could be resolved by simple modifications to the ashpan while in situ, to be considered during winter lay-up.

Other Engineering issues

Note that the fuseable plug was leaking during the early part of the operational season. It was found too tight to remove while the boiler is in the boat. However visual investigation showed that the plug had been leaking past the threads not through the plug itself. The leak disappeared after attempts at removal and no further trouble has occurred. The plug needs to be removed at the next boiler lift out for examination.

BWS 28th September 2010 (updated 4/11/11)



Work and it's rewards

The hull cleaning team working hard during Lift Out day 8th November. Port topside has already been done, the team now concentrate on the other side.

Moored at the Swan in Streatley during the Steam Boat Association Rally in September. Boats are being guarded by Woppit while crew take refreshments.

