



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

The Consuta Trust Newsletter No.8 (July 2001)

Welcome to all our supporters, the number is around 85.

So when is the launching day for Consuta?

No point beating around the bush we've missed the July Traditional Boat Rally which I find very annoying. So apologies to everyone. Several things conspired to work against us on this but there is no point looking back.

Most of the engineering work has been completed on Consuta now, thanks to Tony Cundick and the lads at the Kew Steam Museum. There are numerous minor detail engineering items still to be sorted, so this work is ongoing.

Consuta was moved back to Colin Henwood's boatyard on 1st July, and we've agreed the final work schedule to completion. The work involves some wood finish around the metal boiler casing, the building of the engine casing, fitting the cockpit mouldings and of course that very important painting and varnishing.

So when will it be done? – to save embarrassment all round let's just say probably late summer/autumn.

Funding

The SBA Nuneham charter, I think this must have been the coldest day in May for 100 years, anyway it was a great day out raising £400 for the Trust – thank you to Richard Havard, and the SBA for the idea, and the French brother's who provided this splendid steamer. Sadly we did not have enough people to warrant running Streatley as well, perhaps we can do this another time.

Monthly Standing Orders

The monthly standing order contributions are most welcome. Derek Brown (treasurer) tells us that this income is currently worth some £225 per month. We will also be claiming 28% tax back because most of these are gift aid donations. Thank you very much to all contributors.

After restoration, what about those running Costs?

You could be forgiven for asking "do we have sufficient funds?". To this I would have to say "yes we now have the funds to complete the restoration". However the cost of getting the launch operational and keeping it that way has been put at various figures of between £4,000 and £6,000 each year. These are on-going annual costs to cover regular maintenance, boat licence, insurance, mooring, and fuel costs. Eventually we expect to be able to raise sufficient income to cover these annual expenses by using and displaying Consuta. The key to future success will be to have the continuing help of our supporters. For example we will always be dependant on volunteers to help run and keep Consuta in a presentable condition.

Restoration progress

The boiler and engine are now installed in the hull. Virtually all the major pipework has been completed. The steering and associated cabling still needs work, and there are seemingly myriad's of minor task to be done.

The cost of overhauling the engine has been covered by one of our Trustees. Two other Trustees are providing a new propeller (£700!) at no charge to the Trust. The major part of the remaining work is moulding trims round the cockpits, engine casing and lots of painting and varnishing.

We will be needing volunteers this final work effort. Some of the paint and varnish preparation can be done by volunteers and will save us money – in fact we've put down some £2,500 worth of volunteer work in the HLF application as our part of the partnership funding. I will be ringing round you keen types who have been

complaining that there haven't been any work parties recently. The work groups will probably be at the weekends, Colin says "because we are too much of a distraction for his lads during work days".

There are numerous items needed for any operational boat, so I've attached a list of all those items we still need. You may wish to contribute something tangible and identifiable to the restoration effort. ie boat hook, oil can, flue brush, fenders etc., etc., anyway look at the list and let me know if you can help with any of these.

So where is Consuta to be based?

We have still not come to a conclusion about the home for Consuta. Child Beale Park is still an option – but I cannot say more at the moment. This year we have been offered several waterside locations at discounted rates, but nothing has been decided yet by the Trustees. My own preference for the remainder of this year is to have her based somewhere on the Caversham/Henley area, possibly at a boatyard for those first few critical days of trials, where we may need shore based facilities.

I cannot promise anything on time schedules, but there is a Steam Boat Association rally based at Penton Hook marina in the middle of September.

We will shortly be contacting everyone who said that they were interested in being volunteer crew on Consuta. Derek Brown has shown us a typical operation schedule which all Consuta engineers and skippers will need to fully understand, so better start brushing up on your river navigation rules for a start. For those who are not energetic but would like an opportunity of experiencing Consuta in operation, I am hoping that we can carry passengers during some of the training sessions. A ride on a powerful steam launch is quite an experience.

What else is going on.

Consuta "lapel badges" to all supporters. I need to get moving with this, there have been some distractions.

Consuta website is:- www.consuta.org.uk I will try to put any important information here, so keep looking. If you have any ideas or comments please let me know either by email or ordinary mail or telephone.

Email:- brianws@ukonline.co.uk or Brian Smith, 19 Mill Bank, Kintbury, Hungerford, Berks., RG17 9UW

Telephone 01488 658795



Supported by the
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Technical discussions about the work schedule for Consuta – photo taken by Mark Smith on 5th July 2001



Items required for Consuta

- Firing irons:- Rake, and slicer (bent poker), hand shovel
- Boiler cleaning rod and steel tube brushes, 1¼ inch size.
- Metal buckets – two minimum
- Oil cans – thumb pump action. – at least two.
- Suitable tools for an onboard toolkit. For anyone who fancies there is an opportunity to make a nice wooden tool chest to fit on Consuta. If you have visited the Steamboat Museum at Windermere, you may remember that the SL Otto has a lovely wooden tool case. Now this really would be something special.
- Tins of Brass polish.
- Cleaning and polishing rags.
- Mops
- A mechanical driven oil pump for the steam supply to the engine.
- Boat hooks. Probably two a short one and a long one.
- A brass megaphone for coaching duties (I jest!)
- Fenders We think the best size would be say 7 inches diameter, tubular type with rope eyes at each end, 6 to 8 off needed, and 4 off of bottle fenders diameter about 9 inches.
- Mooring Lines.
- Anchor and chain – folding fisherman or folding Thames type – say 20 to 30 lb.

This list is not a definitive list, if you think I've missed anything off let me know. For example I've not included consumables such as kindling, coal, lub oils, packing material etc. If you think you can help with any of these items, please let me know:- Brian Smith 01488 658795.