



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

News Letter No. 30 — Spring 2007

Hello everyone, Spring arrived early, and Consuta has just been re-launched to be ready for the “*Go with the Flow*” event in Oxford. Here is a brief review of Trust activities through the winter months.

Winter Social

Our annual social held this February at the Wargrave Village Hall was arranged by Tony Barker and attended by over thirty supporters; tasty food from the Indian restaurant just next door, supplemented by some delicious gateau's provided by Lyn Smith.

Winter maintenance work

Winter maintenance work started in earnest by the end of February with fairly regular Wednesday morning gatherings at the Beale Park cow shed; these were usually followed up with a lunch and chat in the local pub. The weather was so good on one of the days that we stayed on for the afternoon and moved the pontoons back into the lake ready for mooring Consuta. The pontoons had been left high and dry after the river levels rose in January.

So what is all the work that we have been tackling:-

- The fore and aft cockpit floors were removed for a repaint by David, all have been painted and refitted now. This had exposed all the dirt in the bilges, so Chris set about cleaning this, and the results are truly superb, pity it won't be seen though now the floorboards have been replaced. Some members were seen gingerly walking on the new floorboards in their stocking feet only.
- The propeller needed to be checked because one blade had a small dent and we wondered if it has suffered blade distortion. Removal was a bit difficult, even the puller suffered damage. However heat treatment and a blow with the hammer soon had it off. The minor dent in the blade has been sorted out by Tony; there was nothing else wrong.



- The blower was a bit intermittent last year, thought due to some crud in the pipe (it sometimes stopped working). Unfortunately the pipe

sheared off on removal. This was due to corrosion on the steel which may have been the source of the crud. This part of the assembly has been replaced with stainless; so hopefully no more problems here.

- An injector steam valve was removed and refurbished to cure an annoying steam leak; it had been like this for a couple of years but getting worse.
- One of the engine eccentric rods was working loose on the eccentric strap (assembled with rivets), has now been tightened up.
- The funnel was repainted by Geoff, actually a powder-coat finish; so it will be interesting to see how easy this is to keep clean.
- I think a new tool box is being made.
- Damage to the stem required some professional treatment, and a bit of work on the brass capping, but it all looks immaculate now.
- Lots of brass polishing – a never ending task.
- The job of anti fouling was completed by Lyn, Paul and Tim all ready for the relaunch.

There have been many other jobs completed through the winter months, thanks to all who have helped out. One feature of the work parties has been the light refreshments provided by Lyn, and on the fine days we sat out at the front of the shed with the doors opened up.

Consuta's Floating Boathouse

Progress is going well if a little slow. The steel framework of the design has been drawn up and we are currently looking at construction estimates and the delivery problems. Most steel fabrication firms do not have easy access to the Thames so our boathouse imposes severe challenges for road transporting to the river as a complete unit unless we can have use of something capable of lifting 18 tons, any ideas? anybody with access to a chinook helicopter? The overall dimensions have come out as 75 ft long by 16 ft wide and about 10 ft head room to the upper covered deck. The boathouse is to be finished to look like a college barge and should look most attractive. Initial discussions with the local planning authority have been quite positive and the Beale Park Trust are looking at our proposed agreement to allow us a long term mooring on the park lake. We do have another site in mind located on the Henley reach which could have some advantages over the Pangbourne



site, so it is all looking very promising. Once we have agreements with the Park Trust, we will then be faced with raising the additional funding for the cost for this splendid home base for Consuta.

Talking of costs; the EA boat licence charges have increased by 12% this year with more annual increases to come. This is due to a major financial blunder in DEFRA resulting in navigation budgets cuts. There have

been nation wide protest rallies throughout the winter plus early day motions submitted to Parliament, no results as yet. Our licence costs for Consuta have risen to over £440 this year. We have contacted the EA about concessionary rates for boats registered on the National Historic Boats Register and are managed by charitable organisations for public benefit. It seems that nothing can be done until the licence fee structure is reviewed in 2009. (BW give concessions for historic boats, but the EA only give concessions for electric boats!).

The Boating Season

I've included the provisional operational calendar for this year. The first event is the "Go with the Flow" which involves Consuta heading a boat procession at Oxford. We will have use of a secure mooring at the EA yard by Osney Lock however there is no convenient car parking. It should be possible to make the up river trip in a day from Pangbourne, and supporters can join in on a first come basis. We will however need help with the fuel costs so a donation of £5 per person would be much appreciated. The return down river trip will be on the same basis. If the weather is fine we may arrange a river cruise above Oxford during the weekend, again we would like donations towards the fuel costs. I've already had some interest in these trips so if you wish to come along please let me know ASAP for more details. The upriver day, dependant on weather, is to be Friday 4th May; the public show by Folly Bridge is on the 7th May, then the return to Pangbourne will be shortly after the BH weekend. The outing upstream from Oxford – could be Saturday, Sunday, or Tuesday.

During the season there are to be two crew training trips, one on the Henley Reach from Charvil and one from Beale Park late summer. If you would like to join these outings please let me know for more details; we are always looking for additional hands to help operate Consuta.

So far Consuta is only being used on one day of the Henley Royal Regatta, so if you are interested in having her in steam during the event please contact me ASAP, and we will see what is possible; of course The Trust will expect a suitable donation to funds. Consuta may be on demonstration umpiring duty at the Reading Town Regatta, presently under consideration.

There are the usual cruising options for supporters when we have to make a re-positional cruise between Pangbourne and Charvil.

I rely on providing information by email. If you do have an email but don't get the frequent emails we send out please let me know if you want to be included. If you don't have use of the internet but are interested in the operational side please give me a phone call. I notice that some members who were on email have changed their email, so I need an update when you change.

Once again thank you for your continuing support. wishing you all the very best for the summer season.

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This was a 75 ton crane – very impressive – it's usually only 35 tons

Consuta Calendar for 2007

19th	April	Re-launch Consuta
??		Boiler inspection date(s)?
4th	May	Re-positional Pangbourne to Oxford (provisional date)
7th	May	Folly Bridge Oxford "Go with the Flow"
??	May	Re-positional Oxford to Pangbourne.
8-9-10th	June	Beale Park Boat Show – Friday to Sunday
??	June	Re-positional – Pangbourne to Charvil
17th	June	Norman Clarke Rotary club at Willow Island
24th	June	Provisional – Reading Town Regatta
??		Private party outing from Charvil
7th	July	Henley Royal Regatta booking for the Saturday This event will have Consuta plus a few other small steamers
14th	July	Fireworks at the Henley Festival
??	July	Re-positional – Charvil to Goring
21st	July	Goring and Streatley Regatta
6-7th	September	SBA event, location to be arranged.
19th	October	Talk to the Newbury Transport Group

There are to be at least two special outings during the year for Consuta Supporters. One trip will be from our base at Charvil, probably travelling down river to Henley and return. The other trip will be from our base at Beale Park. These events are intended as a social outing as a thank you to our supporters. The trips will also provide an opportunity to provide training for operating the steam machinery, and learn some basics of boat handling, for those who wish to further their knowledge and experience.

Tim came to the launching party in his Tiger Moth so Lyn Smith did a bit of posing

