



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

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The Transport Trust
The Steam Boat Association
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Consuta raising steam with some support from the crew of San Toy – Photo by Lyn Smith

Autumn is here again – goodness another boating season is nearly over. Has it been a success for Consuta? - of course. The log records 29 steamings this year.

Our summer base down river from Sonning has turned out to be excellent, we have been invited back again next year. The Trust is very grateful to our landlord who makes no charges for the mooring, we have also been provided with a small garden shed to keep all our bits and pieces. Other news on the mooring situation is that we have also been offered free mooring at the Thames and Kennet Marina with the possibility of a covered wet dock in future years. The Trustees have decided to keep Consuta at the Marina through the winter, probably in a polytunnel on her trailer.

This help with moorings is most welcome and very much appreciated. It is important to remember that our long term aim is to be able to put Consuta on public display even when

not in steam, this is not possible at either of these moorings, however we still have high hopes of a Boat Heritage Centre at Beale Park.

Machinery

Paul Smith, with a little help from me, has worked on the engine through the summer and this has succeeded in identifying most of those knocks and rattles, even curing many of them.

As a result the task of working in the engine department is very much quieter and nicer now. I am confident that after further work during the winter we will have the engine running as sweetly as the very best of them.

Phil Brown has fitted up an engine drive connection to the mechanical lubricator and this has now stopped all piston ring groaning noises from the engine.

Boiler

The boiler even with its limitations has performed reasonably well. It just has to be blown down at frequent intervals to reduce foaming which results in water carryover.

Steamings

So what outings have we made since July? Looking at the boat log I see that most of the trips have been to Henley or to Hurley, nothing really adventurous. Consuta attended the Steam Boat Association rally based at Fawley meadow in mid September.

Crew training has progressed quite slowly, but we now have four skippers and several additional 'passed engineers' some of whom are totally new to steam. If you haven't already joined this invaluable group but fancy getting involved please let me know, I can assure you that there is great pleasure in learning and using these skills and we do need more than we already have.

The right sort of coal has been a problem, Derek even had some smoky stuff which looked like house coal to me. You could see Consuta coming under a black cloud – don't think we will be using that again then. We had some brilliant stuff from a Welsh mine (open cast actually) it was almost too small, but our firemen seemed to like it.

Looking ahead to 2004

Did you know that next year is the 150th anniversary of the Varsity Boat Race? and a re-enactment is being planned with some period replica boats crewed by Old Blades. Not sure what a period replica means except that someone has told me that the seats will be fixed – not sliding. An enquiry has been made to find out whether The Trust will make Consuta available as the umpire launch in late March. Well Consuta is really a youngster at only 100 plus years old, but yes it would be a great privilege to participate in these celebrations. I am also told that there will be a similar run at the Henley Royal Regatta

With apologies to SBA members



David Eager says:- a covertly taken photo of "Chief Engine Investigator" getting his fingers caught in a cross head?

Chief Engine Investigator says: No! however I think I have got hold of the knock but it seems to be stuck to the engine.

during July

Just recently I had an email from a gentleman who said that he had picked up one of our leaflets at the Windermere Steamboat Museum, and he said that he had the old Gray six cylinder Marine engine removed from Consuta in 1975 – it's a bit of a big lump but would we like it for our Museum. Tony Cundick tells me that he still has the old engine casing – the sort with that attractive curved glass top, absolutely ideal for a museum exhibit. So all we need now is the Museum!

We have over 130 people listed on our supporters database. Some are more active than others, however I would like to thank everyone for your continuing support which is essential for the continuing operation of Consuta. If you have an email and would like to receive the frequent news snippets that I send out, please let me know and I will include you on this emailing list.

We already have a few events planned for next year plus some tentative enquiries. Please remember that as a supporter you can come long on any of our training or re-positional cruises. If you have a special event; birthday or wedding Consuta is available for such occasions.

The Trustees would like some assistance from anyone who can help with our publicity. If you have any queries on any Trust business please contact Derek Brown or myself.

Derek Brown Tel: 0118 972 3895

Brian Smith Tel: 01488 658795

Late News – Winter Social

Several members have asked if we can have a Social gathering/meal similar to last years. The answer is we are looking into this, however because of the time scales the social will have to be late January or early February next year. Details will be in the next Newsletter when I have them.

BWS 20th October 2003

Consuta waiting for Shiplake Lock during the SBA Rally in September – Photo by Miles Mallinson

