



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

Newsletter No.12

(July 2002)

Consuta on umpiring duty at the Henley Royal Regatta – Saturday 6th July 2002

Supported by:-



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Photo provided by David Eager

Consuta in action

Commissioning and umpiring trials 28th May

Richard Goddard, Secretary of the Henley Royal Regatta had arranged for Consuta to be checked out for an exemption certificate from the EA, so that she could umpire races at the Regatta. The Trust combined this day with a publicity commissioning ceremony officiated by Tony Hobbs. Tony had already allowed the EA registered name of Consuta to be returned to our original Sam Saunder's Consuta, his tripping boat is now Consuta II. The Leander Club let us hold our morning ceremony on their pontoon landing stage and also the use of their bar during the morning. Our grateful thanks to all involved.

On the day the weather was rather dull with rain on the wind, but a good number of supporters came along for the occasion, plus photographers from the press as well.

Consuta website is:- www.consuta.org.uk

Trustees: Derek Brown Tony Cundick Graham Lindsay Geoff Newton Brian Smith

Registered charity No. 1076505

Consuta was checked for wash at three speeds by the EA using a radar gun. The runs took place on a very short stretch of the river down behind Temple Island. Speeds measured were 13, 16 and 21 kilom/hr. On the last run we were up to about 24 k/h on a GPS reading and still accelerating, but the EA asked us to cut the speed—pity, I wonder what she would have done. The acceleration and stopping performance were deemed to be satisfactory by Mike Sweeney of the HRR. Most who witnessed the event were greatly impressed. I have a short video clip of the runs, and it really was very impressive, Consuta sounds like a steam locomotive when running hard.

The end result was that the EA granted a speed exemption for up to 18 kilom/h, restricted to the Henley Course only.

Henley Women's Regatta appearance (29th June).

We had been invited to make an appearance at the Henley Women's Regatta, this event takes place two weeks before the Henley Royal Regatta but over a shorter course. Manned by the Smith family, Consuta ran upstream between the booms during the tea interval at an arranged time. Now Consuta had proved that she could accelerate, run fast, and stop OK, but she had not been checked for stamina. Could she run for 1 mile without running out of steam, we had an untested launch and unknown quality coal? we just didn't know. So the run up the course was taken well over the speed limit. This upset the EA, however after explanations they could understand our dilemma, but unfortunately could not offer any solutions. Our exemption states that Consuta can only travel at these speeds when actually umpiring a race.

We concluded that the coal we had been using was not up to the task so made hasty arrangements to use some coal reported to be better quality, which turned out to be very good. We've now obtained a good quantity of this coal for the rest of the year, I should mention that supplies of reliable steam coal are difficult to get these days.

The Henley Royal Regatta (5th & 6th July).

Derek Brown was skipper, with Ian Rutter on the engine, and Richard Albanese on the boiler. Consuta was due to umpire one race on the Friday afternoon and one on the Saturday afternoon, sculls only. She performed this duty without any problems giving a good account of herself, and delighting everyone with this little piece of historical re-enactment.

Beale Park the opening of the navigation cut opening (July 13th)

Consuta had been invited to the opening of the new cut onto the park lake, and this was to coincide with an Electric Boat Association event. This was a good excuse to give supporters a boat trip, Saturday out and Sunday return, and also have a look at our first choice of a permanent base for Consuta. The weather was brilliant, and on the journey up river, we had 10 on board, but we only had 5 on the Sunday return, so why didn't you come along then? A diversion on the return trip was to stop at David Eager's lovely riverside property and run a couple of trips full of guests for his birthday treat. This was thoroughly enjoyed by all and The Trust benefited with a donation to funds as well.

I suppose it had to happen, cruising at a very slow speed there was a rattle at the back end and the engine stopped dead. Even the barring rod would not budge it. It was at this point we thought "if only we had a weedhatch" though on reflection it probably wouldn't have helped much. Anyway a short tow to David's moorings, who then volunteered to take to the water and see what was up in the tunnel. With David on the prop and me on the barring rod, we dislodged that cleverly shaped piece of tree trunk designed to jam the prop in our tunnel stern. No harm done, but must make a close inspection of the tunnel at next haul-out. That piece of wood won't cause any more trouble—we burnt it!

Henley Traditional Boat Rally (20th – 21st July)

Consuta was on show at this classic event on the Thames. The SBA put their tent at the disposal of The Trust. So Lyn and daughter Lucy set up a light refreshment stall for SBA members and our own supporters.

Consuta was entered for:-

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| The Horsham Cleat | – Awarded for structural restoration |
| The Reade Propeller | – Restoration or maintenance of steam plant. |

We were delighted to be declared winners of the Reade Propeller trophy and were also runners up for the Horsham Cleat and the Sheila Bourne award. Splendid. (To the great delight of my wife Lyn; my own family also won a prize for traditional dress).

Performance and problems

Consuta doesn't turn as well as the modern umpire launches, this was put down to the position of the rudder, which on the newer launches is directly behind the propeller, whereas on Consuta the rudder sticks out from behind the stern. With power 'on' Consuta tends to go straight (both ahead and astern), however as soon as the engine is stopped, the steering becomes much more effective. It has been suggested we can improve the turning with a bit of experiment and practice.

Robin Wallace Sims very kindly agreed to measure the engine horse power using his computer driven indicator set. A maximum of 38 HP was measured at 510 rpm with about 60 psi steam on the engine. The engine is capable of much more, probably 80/100HP but this is impossible on the mid Thames navigation.

One problem which is still causing concern is the amount of water carry over with the steam. The present boiler will always have a difficulties with this because of it's design, however the situation seemed worse than when we first ran Consuta earlier in the year. Possible solutions are being investigated. Water carry over is very bad for the engine, Robin measured some peak cylinder pressures which were over 250 psi, if allowed to persist this will cause engine damage.

Consuta is a fast boat and can easily run at speeds greater than the speed limit without creating significant wash. So care has to be taken at all time to keep speed under control.

The ashpan needs to be modified. If too much water gets into the ashpan, this can spill out into the bilges bringing with it the ashy contents. This spillage can also occurs when ashing out if there is too much water. Some modifications on this are under consideration.

The engine is still noisy, some play can now be felt in the aft little end bearing. These bearings are very difficult to keep properly lubricated and they are also taking the brunt of the extra pressures cause by the water hammer.

Crew training and river trip opportunities

Several Trust supporters have taken advantage of the training and cruising opportunities to date, and have very much enjoyed the experience, but we still want more to join in. We are always going need plenty of volunteers who can help operate Consuta. To date, Consuta always has had a Trustee on board when operational, in future years this will not always have to be the case.

As has already been said, successful operation in future will depend on having plenty of volunteers who have the experience of handling Consuta, and are prepared to give some of their time to maintain/run Consuta. It is important that the operation of Consuta should not depend on just a few people.

If you have received this newsletter by post it means I don't have an email address for you, so let me have this, then you too will then be included on our frequent emailing postings.

Currently The Trust have 127 supporters. We are very grateful for your support and enthusiasm, either on the work parties, or with contributions, or just for your continuing interest.

Publicity

The Trust have done very well for publicity, some snippets that I know of:-

- Meridian TV showed a short clip of Consuta during the Royal Regatta.
- The Henley Standard and The Times, carried pieces on the commissioning.
- Classic Boat (August) has a feature on Consuta.
- Colin Henwood has some splendid photos of Consuta in his magazine advertisements.
- Water Craft will also carry a feature on Consuta with more photos from Kathy Mansfield.

Base for Consuta

To date and almost certainly for the rest of the cruising season we will be keeping Consuta at Bushnell's boatyard in Wargrave. They are nice people, the facilities are excellent, and it is a lovely part of the river. It is no secret that our ultimate aim is to have Consuta on display at a Boat Heritage Centre in Beale Park, but progress on this is rather slow at the moment.

2002 Calendar

Boatyard outing	August	Hambledon	<i>Henwood and Dean</i>
Supporters outings	4th August (Sunday)	Wargrave	<i>Also crew training</i>
Supporters outings	23rd August (Friday)	Wargrave	<i>Also crew training</i>
Supporters outings	24th August (Saturday)	Wargrave	<i>Also crew training</i>
SBA Rally	30th Aug – 1st Sept	Cookham	
Great River Race	September	Tidal Thames	<i>More details needed.</i>
Private function	29th September	Runnymede	

Note:- Consuta will have to make positional cruises to some of the above events and these are all open to supporters. If you are interested in joining the positional cruises or any of the other supporters outings in August please contact Brian Smith at an early date on 01488 658795 for more details. Or email:- brianws@ukonline.co.uk.



Consuta at Beale Park