



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**

Website: www.consuta.org.uk

News Letter No. 41 — Spring 2010

A brief resume of related steam boating news

The start of the new year may have seen some unusually cold weather with snow on the ground lasting longer than recent winters, but it has also seen some interesting activity in the steamboating world.

Last November we were shocked to see the flooding throughout lakeland. Not so well publicised was that one of the last operational classic steam launches of Windermere a 45ft long launch called Shamrock had suffered serious crushing cabin damage while tucked up in it's boathouse due to unprecedented rises in lake water levels.

Then the Power Boat Museum at Basildon closed at the end of December with the dispersement of a fascinating collection of small boats, one of which was a very early small steam launch called Cygnet.



Cygnet 1970



In January we heard there were further problems on Windermere, it seemed that the National Trust were wanting to convert one of the last early Victorian stoen wetdock boathouses owned by them into hotel accommodation, and this would jeopardise its future use for any steam launches. The 104 year old Shamrock is based here.

Does beg the question is nobody interested in our boating heritage.

Right Now it is time for some better news

The Consuta Trust were asked if they would help support the Thames Boats Trust to look after the 1873 Victorian steam launch Cygnet if the Thames Boats trust could managed to purchase Cygnet at an internet auction being conducted on behalf of Turks the owner; they were clearing out all their film prop collection held at Chatham. We said yes and would ask our supporters to provide physical help with the public display of Cygnet at Beale Park. Cygnet was one of the exhibits displaced after closure of the Power Boat Museum and Turks had decided that this small launch needed to be sold off rather than move to another museum. The problem is there a suitable public museum that could look after it? probably not!

The Thames Boats Trust did manage the purchase of this attractive launch with funds raised by private donations, some loans and a substantial grant from the Museum & Libraries Archives, plus the funding arm PRISM - Fund for the **P**reservation of **I**ndustrial and **S**cientific **M**aterial.

The Trust however still need additional financial contributions, to pay off loans, and also to provide a public display feature at Beale Park. If you would like to help support this project please contact myself first. Cygnet is rather unique because it has not suffered any major alteration or modification during its 137 year lifetime, so the first task for the TBT will be to assess its present condition and produce an appropriate Conservation Plan. The historical integrity of Cygnet will permit historians to learn much of the techniques used in the mid Victorian era so rash immediate restoration would not be a good idea.

The Consuta Trust have offered to help to put Cygnet on public display, and it seems the Beale Park Boat Show will be the first event. Fortunately Cygnet has its own road trailer and can be moved quite easily with a large car. There will be more on this in future and if anyone wants to have a look at Cygnet then please come along to our Consuta work parties at Beale Park.

Now for some Consuta Trust business

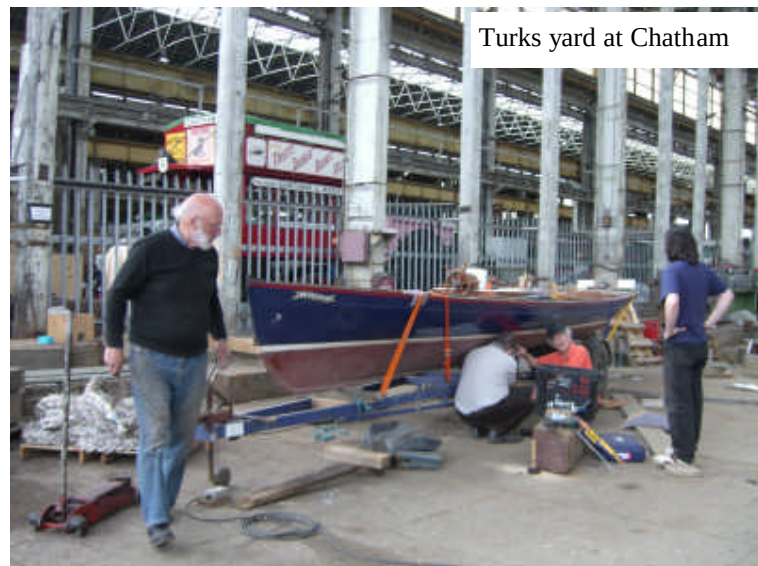
The Trustee had set an ambitious winter work programme which is in two parts:-

Engineering: This has involved:- Boiler tube replacement, ashpan repair and lowering the fire bars in the grate, and some minor repairs to the engine. The fitting of the new rev counter and engine pressure gauge.

The tube replacement is now complete. All backhead boiler fittings were removed checked out and cleaned. The tubeplate holes in the firebox were found to be oval, we thought caused by heat distortion during the welding of the stay tubes when first built and this probably was the major cause of the annoying tubes leaks. The firebox holes were cleaned up and reamed truly round before the new tubes were fitted. The boiler has been de-rusted and repainted and is now just awaiting the hydraulic and steam tests.

Bilge cleaning and revarnishing work: Consuta is in the Beale Park cowshed where some fire damage to the aft compartment varnish work has been repaired, we've also revarnish the fore and aft cockpits. The canvas covered boiler side boards are being repainted, the bilges under the boiler and firing position have been cleaned out.

Some of the volunteers at the last work party went through polishing all those brass valve handles and copper pipes and they are cleaner now than they have been for quite a long time.





The tools used for fitting the replacement tubes. On the left is the reamer to make the tubes round and clean. On the right is the expander, the mandrel is rotated clockwise in its cage fitted in the tube end which slowly



On the left the first part of the expanding operation can be done with an electric drill but the final expanding drive is manual using a torque lever because of the high torques needed and to get the right amount of tube expansion. The torque setting for these tubes was 50 ftlbs.



Scene at Tony's workshop. Some experts advising the person doing the work how it should be done.

Note stack of new tubes ready for fitting.



New firebar



Repaired woodwork

Publicity

I hope you obtained a copy of the May edition of Old Glory which had a nice four page feature about Consuta.

We are proposing to run engineering proficiency courses for managing the steam machinery of Consuta, an Engineering hand book will be part of this course. This is nearly complete just needs a few diagrams and a proof read before publication. Copies of this will be available to anyone at a small fee. We are hoping that these more formal one day courses will provide a more in-depth appreciation of the engineering requirements of running a large steam launch.

Lyn Smith had arranged a limited publication of a large A4 calendar with one page per month plus a large photo of Consuta activities on each page. These were all sold out and seemed very popular, the proceeds provided a donation of £100 to the Trust.

Consuta's Event Calendar for 2010

Our first event of the year was the Consuta Social held at the Shiplake College in February. We were treated to a roaring wood fire in the college dining room because the college staff thought the weather might be rather cold. Very homely, although in the end the weather turned out to be alright and two of our supporters even came by boat. The trustees have decided after three years visiting the college to look at other locations for the 2011 social, so any suggestions or ideas?

Consuta will be craned back into the water late May and the overhauled boiler put back in at the same time. Then comes the task of connecting all the pipes to get Consuta ready for the season.

The first public event this year is the Beale Park Boat show 4-5-6th June. This will be followed the next Saturday with a special Consuta steaming for the Kew Museum volunteer group which is combined with a visit to David Amblers lovely rose gardens at the nearby at Hook End Lane Farm. David has a splendid collection of vintage farm machinery, I think much of it will be running.

Consuta then moves down river for some active work at the Henley Women's Regatta. Following this we have Henley Royal Regatta and also the Henley Festival. If you would like a special outing on Consuta during this period we will probably be able to help out. Contact one of the Trustees listed on page 6 with your query.

That Elusive base for Consuta

I hear you ask will we never find a home or is she to be condemned



Shiplake College

forever to a nomadic existence? Well currently there are two possibilities. The floating base at Goring and Streatley, is progressing but oh so very slowly, however there may be new possibilities at Beale Park, especially as it is planned to have Cygnet on display at the park. We do need to have a good conclusion on this issue. The recent winter work shows that we desperately need engineering facilities adjacent to Consuta, because the amount of car travel and time spent (wasted) on transporting the simplest engineering task to a workshop is very annoying.

Operational Crews

I've included a copy of the 2010 Calendar and we will need volunteers to help run Consuta for all of these outings. If you are able to help please let me know, old hands and new recruits all are welcome.

Special outings for supporters.

We do have a few of these events each year, there are no hire rates but we do expect a donation to Trust funds to cover the running costs, contact a trustee if you have a suggestion or wishes.

Website

Our website although giving quite a lot of information had become quite stale looking. So the home page has been given a bit of a face lift. There is still much to improve here but we now have a news page which is updated following each work party (if someone remembers to take any photos).

Register with our supporters club.

We rely on financial contributions to keep Consuta operational, if you would like to make regular payments please get a form from me or download from the website. You can even make a donation using your credit card, it's marked boathouse fund but it will also work for any other type of donation; give it a try no paperwork involved. website is:- www.consuta.org.uk, just click boathouse fund link. The joining form is on the link "about our club" from the consuta home page.



Consuta Calendar for 2010

Date	Event	Trustee
May	Re-launch Consuta	
4th-6th June	Beale Park Boat Show	TC
12th June	Kew volunteers visit David Ambler with trips on Consuta	TC
----	Repositional	
18th-19th June	Henley Women's Regatta	DE
4th (Sat) July	Henley Royal Regatta – Henley Business School	DE
8th – 12th July	Henley Festival (details later)	
14th (Wed) July	Private party (to visit Henley from Charvil)	BS
----	Repositional	
17th (Sat) July	Goring and Streatley Regatta	BS
18th (Sun) July	Crofton branch of the K&A trust outing	TC
24th (Sat) July	Wedding anniversary at the Swan Streatley	DE
24th July	Possible supporter cruise after lunch (Repositional?)	
11th (Wed) August	Wednesday combined event with RRM	TC/DE
19th (Thurs) August	Thursday combined event with RRM	TC/DE
Possible September	SBA rally venue currently unknown	

Trustee in charge of the events as shown

Note that the Trustee is responsible for selecting the skipper and crew for the event as shown:-

TC	Tony Cundick	01672 810611	tony@nettlecaravan.wanadoo.co.uk
BS	Brian Smith	01488 658795	brian.smith@consuta.org.uk
DE	David Eager	01189 692453	d.eager@btinternet.com

If you would like to offer your services as crew for any of the days please either contact me (Brian Smith) or the Trustee who is shown as managing the operation. Any general queries about the calendar please contact me. Supporters are carried on any of the repositional events shown above and are open on a first come basis, contact me.

Consuta is available for private party outings if the Trustees believe that the steaming fulfills our Trust objects. If you want more information please contact a Trustee.

The Trust intend to provide “in depth engineering training course” for managing the machinery of Consuta. These courses are expected to last about four hours involving lighting up, machinery handling underway, and shutting down procedures for a period and at the end of an operation. An engineering instruction handbook will be provided with each course, (extra copies are available). Friends family can be carried during the course (up to a maximum of 9) and arrangements can be made for lunch stop time.

If you want to know more contact Brian Smith 01488 658795 or brian.smith@consuta.org.uk