



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. 27 — Summer 2006

### Review of the steamings since Easter

The hull painting and varnish work was completed by Colin Henwood, Richard McGuinness and many others on the work party team – many thanks to all. After lifting off the chocks and placing back on the trailer we were ready to re-launch by late May. This was done as usual by crane, first lifting the boat onto the water then lifting the boiler into the hull. The piping up which follows takes several hours. When we put the pipework back there were a few things missing, some flange bolts and the top part of the whistle; finding alternate bolts was no problem but the missing whistle, now that was annoying.



The first calendar event was the Beale Park Boat Show which was also the first official steaming of Consuta since winter. The boiler inspector was there to witness the steam test – passed with no problem, but what could we do about that missing whistle. Mike Bell who is one of our supporters had his new steam launch Annabelle on show, and lent us a spare whistle. Steam enthusiasts often have interesting goodies in their spares boxes – thank goodness. This whistle works fine (thanks Mike) but a bit high pitched for Consuta.

The engine seemed to have a small knock, and son Paul said “It’s play in that crosshead slipper again” – I suppose we should have white metallised this during last winter. I was persuaded on Saturday morning of the show to redo the temporary fix made in 2003. This meant taking the aft crosshead and slide bar off the engine and away to the workshop to renew the ‘temporary’ pads



*Paul Smith and myself on a spot of maintenance work*

fitted previously. With a bit of workshop effort Consuta was in steam by the Saturday afternoon but it was too windy for tripping especially as there were several sail boats racing about on the lake, much too risky. We did make one late outing onto the river and all seemed fine. Just for good measure we did some remedial work on the other crosshead the same evening.

Consuta then had to move down

river to Charvil late on the Sunday of the show. During the afternoon the wind had eased off so after refitting the 2nd crosshead and slidebar we were able to make a few trips around the lake before setting off down river. Several supporters including two of our Trustees came along for an enjoyable evening cruise!

Consuta was looking absolutely superb after the winter paint job. Alan Douglas also managed to clean off some of the caked on oil from the engine bright work using meths.

### **Henley Royal Regatta week**

*From a report provided by Derek Brown "Three days of steaming".*

David Eager moved some 20 bags of coal to the Henley Management College. Consuta had been steamed here a few days earlier. During the Regatta period consumption seemed fairly constant at an average of 33lbs (15 kg) per hour.

**Wednesday** – In the afternoon, Tony Cundick and his crew made three trips from Leander Club's pontoon for delighted and appreciative supporters and friends. Several were ex rowers who were very enthusiastic about the boat. Access to the pontoon had to be between launching and recovery of the club racing boats, necessitating tactful and frequent liaison with the pontoon and security staff!

**Saturday** – Three trips were provided for the HMC's Alumni (old students) but the highlight was the 'Rowpast' with London Rowing Club during the middle of the afternoon. The LRC were celebrating their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and requested CONSUTA to escort them along the course behind their twelve oared boat - this was a racing eight with a four oared section inserted in the middle! Crew member, Dick Bradford, was detailed to display their large club flag during the run which he duly fastened to a boat hook held aloft, much to the delight of LRC top brass!

The boat was 'paddled' for the first half of the three quarter mile run and then the rate was upped to rowing speed for the remainder requiring CONSUTA to run at 480 rpm. (14½ mph) Whilst there was some scepticism initially about the boat's speed abilities, this was dispelled at the end, with congratulations all round from senior club members on board for the trip.

A running commentary was made for spectators during the Rowpast with a brief piece about CONSUTA's history and restoration. A couple of pictures can be found on the HRR.co.uk web site, go to Photographs 2006 - Day 4.

**Sunday** – We had been invited to transport the President of the International Olympic Committee, Jacques Rogge, from the River & Rowing Museum to Leander Club before lunch.

Colin Henwood and his crew carried out this duty and then took another small party of senior people from HMC for a trip, as a thank you for providing CONSUTA a mooring during the Regatta.

In the afternoon, we were asked to make a trip for the British Olympic Association, their chairman, Lord Moynihan (Colin Moynihan), members and friends after their lunch at Leander Club.

Several trips were made in the very hot temperatures, evidently to the great satisfaction of all on board.

During the afternoon, on the balcony at

*Consuta at the R&RM pontoon*



Leander I was engaged in conversation by a B.O.A. member, unknown to me, who remarked 'that he had just enjoyed probably the best trip on the river he ever had in his life'. He then proceeded to eulogise about this amazing steam boat, its history and restoration! At this point, I confessed an interest and was able to enlarge on some more details. I felt that his obvious delight, totally un-solicited, made everyone's hardwork and preparation worthwhile!

Many thanks to all who helped crew Consuta during the regatta.

### **Goring and Streatley Regatta and the Thames Traditional Boat Rally**

The next event was a private wedding function at the Beetle and Wedge Boathouse Moulsoford some 20 miles up river from Henley, the inn itself is now a private house.

**Saturday 15th July.** A week later Consuta appeared at the Goring and Streatley Regatta on Saturday. Such a delightful event, I think we made 5 public trips before setting off down river late afternoon for the TTBR at Fawley meadow, arriving just before 9pm.

*The Goring Gap Boat Club organise this annual regatta. It dates back to the 1880's but ceased at the outbreak of WW1. The regatta started again in 1990 and is a delightful family orientated fun day by the river with much water activities with amateur rowing races.*

*The club has managed to locate many of the old trophies and had them on display also with a collection of historic photos of the Regatta.*

*This photo is of the steam launch Hibernia built by DesVignes for umpiring duty in 1892.*



**Sunday 16th July.** Consuta was to provide trips for the public – so we put two donation boxes on board. Consuta needed to use the mooring allocated to Windsor Belle, this put

*The Windsor Belle mooring at the Thames Trad Boat Rally*



pressure on Consuta to keep going all day. Fortunately we had two crews, David Eager looking after the morning turn and myself the afternoon. This arrangement worked reasonably well, but it was hard work. We managed to make 9 trips — up to Henley bridge then down past Temple island and return — must have carried about 100 people during the day, covering a distance I suppose at least 18 river miles. Over £210 had been

put in our donation boxes by the end of the day and large numbers of leaflets were taken as well. It is always so very nice when people make a point of thanking you for the ride and telling you just how wonderful the boat is. Many thanks to our hard working crews.

Turning a 51ft launch by Henley bridge with a great deal of river traffic is never easy so I tried out the powered turn manoeuvre. This is quite impressive for those on board especially for passengers sitting in the stern who are told to hang on; but more to the point Consuta turns exceedingly well, at slow speed and with a bit of a rooster tail of water from the stern as the engine exhaust barks sharply up the funnel.



*Consuta setting off – Windsor Belle waiting to come in*

### **So what about that missing whistle**

I put out a email request to our friends for a suitable piece of brass tubing to make a replacement voice box for the whistle. Richard Havard responded by donating a three foot length of 2 inch OD brass tube which was exactly right, and Dick Bradford gave me the dimensions of his whistle on Surabaya – Tony C had been seen casting covetous eyes on Surabaya's whistle at the Beale Park Boat Show. So as I write we have a replacement – it works OK on compressed air I wonder if it will be alright on Consuta's steam?

### **Thanks to all our Supporters**

The Trustees would like to record a Thank You to Trust supporters for helping to keep this historic launch operational. There are so many appreciative comments from the public, it makes one realise that it is so much better to have Consuta running rather than just ending up as another static exhibit in a museum, something which could so easily have happened.

**Photos** provided by David Creasey and Mark Smith

*Turning just below Henley Bridge*



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