

The Consuta Trust

Consuta News update – Winter 2007

Consuta Social

Our Consuta social has been arranged for Saturday 9th February 2008 at the Shiplake College, known at Shiplake Court in Victorian times. Please see the booking form which includes some interesting history about Mr Stuart Turner who worked at the college in the late 1890's.

The Consuta Trust are inviting members of the SBA to join us so your early booking is advised. I understand that Shiplake College can accommodate up to 100 persons for the meal if the take up is high.

End of Season News

Consuta is now safely out of the water and on it's trailer tucked up in the cowshed at Beale Park. The hull exterior was cleaned off very thoroughly while hanging from the crane, so we only need to clean out the bilges. There is a list of minor winter tasks some of which have already been started; however there won't be any work parties until the new year. The boiler is presently on a trailer parked outside and sheeted up, again no work is planned on the boiler until the new year. You will be pleased to know that there are no major maintenance tasks required for Consuta during the winter season.

The floating Boathouse

We were shocked and disappointed to learn that our application for putting Consuta on the lake at Beale Park was rejected by the West Berkshire planning authority. This despite all the positive indications prior to our application and as there were no objections from the public nor from the statutory consultees; in fact we were delighted to have the support of the local parish council. Fortunately we have some good friends who are providing valuable help and support in an attempt to resolve the issue in our favour. At the moment we are still in discussion with the local planning authority, but our planning appeal is almost ready should this be needed; and we believe we have an excellent case.

Funding for the floating boathouse

The total cost of the work, including launching and moving the boathouse to Beale Park will be around £80,000, however rising steel prices could push the costs higher. Present plans are to have the basic steel work made by a local fabricator, then launch the boathouse structure onto the river and move it to Beale Park by water for completion. The finishing work, which involves fitting the windows and side cladding, can be completed by using our own volunteer effort. We will shortly be making approaches for funding to various bodies and organisations who might be prepared to help with this, the Heritage Lottery Fund of course being one of these. The HLF however is now providing substantial grants toward the cost of the Olympic games, so competition for remaining HLF monies will be fierce. If you have any ideas or suggestions about raising funds for our boathouse please do let us know. The Consuta Trust will be able to provide partnership funding from our own reserves.

Brian Smith, December 2007