



The Consuta Trust

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The Consuta Trust Newsletter No.4

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Long over due, I hear you say — Sorry.

We need a Consuta supporters club.

At the moment we have a list of supporters who are asked to volunteer as and when the Trustees need some help with the work schedule. The Trustees believe that the time has come to have this on a more formal basis, and our thoughts are based on what happens with other communal projects such as ours. The title of these groups is usually goes under a bland title of “Friends of XYZ”. I don’t know how these groups are organised. So the Trust are looking for ideas on this, and more to the point, we would like you to help get it going.

It would be best if people who are not Trustees take on the task of forming a supporters group, but hopefully in consultation with the Trust. So far I have floated this idea to a few of our volunteers, Adrian Birtles has prepared a first thoughts list of “why’s and wherefore’s”. I will try to start the ball rolling at the SBA AGM and ask you to put you name on a supporters list. The role, objects and privileges of members will need to be defined.

I can tell you what the Trust would like from such a group. Help to run and maintain Consuta. Consuta can be used as much as we like provided we get the support and funds to do this. The Trust would be responsible for providing all the facilities such as storage, mooring, and fuel. The Supporters club would provide the man power to help run and display Consuta, and throughout the winter months help, with maintenance tasks, The supporters club can be instrumental in raising funds by the use of Consuta.

The winter base this year is almost certain to be in an enclosed Cowshed (110 ft by 32 ft) at Child Beale Park. This could would be an ideal base for the supporters club. If the navigation cut is provided, then Child Beale would be the summer operational base for Consuta.

So what of CONSUTA – work Schedule update

The seats, covering boards, front and rear decks have now all been completed. The framework for the side decking is also ready for the engine compartment decking. Consuta really does look quite impressive now.

Boatyard woodwork has come to a halt, partly because we need to fit the machinery, and partly to suite the boatyard work schedule. Anyway Consuta is presently outside in a waterproof green tent.

Geoff Newton and myself are progressing well with the engine and propshaft installation, with help from Ian Cross. After several fittings of the wooden mock-up engine, we have designed an engine bedplate including the thrust block mounting. This has been welded up and galvanised (I hope it fits). A 13ft SS prop shaft is being made by Alan Howarth at cost. The intermediate coupling shaft, about 2ft long is to be in steel, this will accommodate the thrust block (thrust at full speed is estimated at 1,500lbs – now that is some push power). Ian Cross has volunteered to make this up.

The engine has already had a basic overhaul at Kew. Paul Smith has checked and shimmed all bearings where necessary so that the engine turns reasonably well, but without any slackness. The valve gear probably needs some work, but nothing serious so is being left for the moment. I am looking into the oiling arrangements for the engine. Perusal of all the information we have on these

seem to indicate that they were rather rudimentary, the valve gear is more or less left to the occasional squirt from an oil can. All conrod and main bearings will be worsted oilers from a central box mounted on the engine block. (standard DesVignes practice). Anyone got a good ratchet lubricator for the steam side?

I think everyone was surprised just how high the engine sticks out above the decking, but it is a powerful launch and old photos confirm that this is correct. It's just possible that this engine is the original one from Consuta. Apparently James Taylor remembers his grandfather (who had a family boatyard business on the Thames) saying that they removed the steam plant from Consuta in 1923. This could have been the engine which was sold on to Tom Taylors yard where it was used to drive some bending rolls for hull plate shaping. It was bought by Graham Lindsay in 1970 from Tom Taylor, and is presently on loan to the Trust. Lloyd's register however states that Consuta's engine was 7 inch stroke not the 6½ inch stroke of the one we have, however Lloyds could easily have made a mistake. The owner of Maritana's engine in Canada puts a high price on his engine, so the Trust are not pursuing this at the moment. He also has the engine from Hibernia as well.

Roger Mallinson has agreed to do the main steam and exhaust pipework. These pipes are to be copper, the steam pipe will be 1½" ID 3 mm wall, and the exhaust will be 3" dia 16 swg wall. Now that will take some bending.

The fittings on the boiler are very fundamental, two steam injectors, one blower, and a bilge ejector. Also there will be two blowdowns, two safety valves and one whistle, and that is it. Anyone got a ½" or ¾" Penberthy injector? we have one but we need another.

Tony Cundick has prepared the rudder and the steering arrangements, we have two steering wheels but have not yet decided how they will be supported. One at the back of the front cockpit and one at the front of the rear compartment.

The boiler is a bit overweight at 3000 lbs, the original was probably half this figure. Anyway it is new and we have it, so it is being prepared for installation, complete with smokebox and wet ashpan. Graham Lindsay and Tony Cundick are looking after this part of the project.

The remaining boatyard tasks are the engine compartment decking, coal bunkers, engine casing and boiler casing, and floorboards, plus painting and varnishing. Most of these tasks will be completed by the boatyard.

Anybody got a 27 inch diameter by 36/40 inch pitch propeller? Needs to be right handed. The one we have is a bit small at 25" by 32". Another need is firebars, we like the idea of these in stainless, but this may turn out to be too expensive, any ideas or offers?

Funds

Well we've had a jolly good go at fund raising, this is very hard work and we are still well short of the total funds needed to complete. However there is a promise of a long term loan without strings, which should permit most if not all of the work to be done, but it will have to be repaid.

The Trust have had some excellent publicity:-

A Xmas fund raising party was organised by the Lucie Henwood at the boatyard in December. Some of the rich and famous of Henley come along, it was quite surprising all the interest shown, however offers of financial help did not come up to expectations unfortunately.

We have had some excellent press coverage including photos in:-

Henley Standard. Classic Boat. Water Craft and Thames Guardian

6500 leaflets went out to all member of the Henley Regatta.

There is certainly plenty of enthusiasm and interest in the project but a bit lacking in donations.

Thank you all very much those who have made a contribution of time, effort and/or money. Your interest and help with the project has kept things going and the end is in sight.

Brian Smith

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