



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. 26 — Spring 2006

Winter Work

Consuta is undergoing a major revarnish and repaint, grateful thanks to Colin Henwood, Richard Macguiness and our support team. I was aware that there were a few scratches and blemishes, some hot cinder burns on the back deck due to hard running with less than perfect coal, but generally the varnish looked good five years on. However Colin pointed out that when viewed close up with the light reflected off the varnish one could see some slight crazing of the surface, apparently if this was left untreated major work would be required.

So in December we lifted Consuta off the road trailer in the shed, and slid the trailer out from underneath, Consuta was then lowered back down and chocked up ready for this work. This was needed to provide clear access to the hull sides. Volunteers then lightly sanded down the paint and varnish surfaces, using a mix of powered and hand rubbing down. The next task was to clean the boat and the surrounding area, and then enclose the boat in a polythene tent to keep the dust out. The first of two coats of paint and varnish were applied and then rubbed down again (even though it looked so good), and Consuta should by now have it's new sparkling finish.

The boiler has already had a cold inspection, and now only requires a steam inspection before replacing in the boat and piping everything up.

Where do we go from here — secure accommodation!

I've made no secret that our last major duty to secure the future of Consuta is a permanent home, hopefully based with a riverside museum. It seems that Beale Park Trust aren't very keen to have a museum on their site. What a shame, however the Thames Boats Trust who are endeavouring to set up the museum, have a few more options, but in the mean time perhaps The Consuta Trust should make its own (short term) arrangements. Tony Cundick has designed a floating covered dock for Consuta, so should we proceed with this at some point? An interesting decision for the Trustees during the next few months.

Paul showing how to lift Consuta? who is he kidding!

New boiler!

I've managed a bit more work on a new boiler design through the winter months. Why do we want this? Quite simply the weight of the present boiler is too great and the boat floats about 2 inches lower in the water than when built. The boiler weighs just over 1.5 tons, this is when empty, so with some 70 gallons of water the weight is getting on towards 2 tons.



The new design will have a slightly larger diameter barrel but about one foot shorter. The boiler plate will be 8 mm for a maximum working pressure of 180 psi rather than 12.5 mm of the present design intended for 216 psi. We know from our historical archives that another umpire launch Hibernia had a boiler working pressure of 195 psi and this boiler used a plate thickness of 5/16 inch; Consuta would have been similar — 5/16 is about 8mm.



Consuta in the Cowshed but the trailer has been pulled out

Using a spreadsheet for the calculations, the weight of the new boiler including grate would be about 0.8 tons and would hold about 55 gallons of water giving a total weight of about 1.15 tons. If we can achieve this, Consuta would float 1.5 inches higher in the water and need less power. There are several other improvements I hope that can be incorporated to improve the steaming, so such a change could be well worth the effort and expense.

Consuta Steaming during 2006

The Calendar is included but is still provisional. One interesting request has been to take part on Dorney lake for the opening of the World Rowing Championships in August. However this will involve a major expense to lift and transport Consuta onto the lake, and then return the boat back to the Thames, this is presently being costed by the organisers.

Consuta had a very busy season last year even though we don't make any attempt to "sell the use of the boat", private tripping would not be appropriate for our Trust. Also too many



Some serious attention being paid to the boiler while in the barn. I don't know what or why!

outings would put a strain on the present pool of crew volunteers. We try to have Consuta operational at as many public displays as possible, it is unfortunate that some of these events clash. One new public outing is to take part in the IWA rally at the end of August on the river by Beale Park. This is a massive event mainly dominated by narrow boats, so we need to be sure that our event mooring is suitable for our historic launch.

If you have any suggestions about regattas or rallies that Consuta should be on show, please let us know. If you would like to be involved with the operation of Consuta as crew, please do get in touch, full training is provided up to skipper grade; and we always need more crew.

Consuta was awarded the SBA Thames Trophy for 2005. Three trustees (Geoff, Derek and self) were presented with the award at the SBA AGM (March 2006) by Sir Neil Cossons who is president of the SBA. It's a nice little cup which we hold for the year, I think this will be on display at Henwood and Dean during the summer months.

Publicity

Consuta has excellent coverage on the internet; a search on Google produces a lot of interesting related information. I've also provided an update to our website. The National Historic Ships committee maintains the historic ships database also accessible on the internet. Consuta has been graded as a designated vessel ever since the database was established, though I personally think Consuta should be included in the core collection (ie Grade 1) the information held has been updated. The work of this committee has been transferred to the government funded National Historic Ships Unit headed by Martyn Heighton. The new unit will continue the work of the Historic Ships Committee and coordinate support for historic ships preservation work.

Trust Activities during the winter months:-

The Consuta Social was held at the Plowden Arms near Shiplake on 28th January; a very pleasant occasion attended by about 30 members.



An illustrated talk was given to members of the public at the Henley River & Rowing Museum by one of our Trustees during early February. This has resulted in several enquiries for trips on CONSUTA during the coming months, helping to keep up her profile. The Trust now have this talk/presentation on PowerPoint,

Consuta hanging from the skyhooks in the Cow Shed



containing over 100 images, and is available for future talks about Consuta.

There have been several work parties during the winter months, usually followed by a pub lunch; very sociable.

How does the Trust function?

The Consuta Trust is a registered charity regulated by the Charity Commission and Consuta is owned by the Trust. The Trust Deed is the equivalent of articles of association of a company, and is the document which states Trust Objects and governs activities of the Trust. Currently there are six Trustees and they meet as required, the next meeting is 16th May; all meetings are minuted. Much of the Trust work is conducted via telephone or email with a small amount of written mail. Trustees receive no payment for their time, cannot financially benefit from the Trust and are required to manage the Trust within the limits of the Trust Deed. The Treasurer is Derek Brown, I am the Chairman and also the Secretary, and Geoff Newton looks after all the gift aid applications with IR.

The Trust currently looks after the supporters group; it probably would be better if this group was a separate entity from the Trust with it's own name such as "Friends of Consuta" and with it's own constitution. This has never materialised but is a common method deployed to support Charitable Trusts.

If you have any queries about the Trust please do ask. If there is anything which you think we should be doing (or perhaps should not be doing) please do let us know.

Thank you to everyone for your continuing support, so essential to help keep Consuta operational.

MacAlpine Railway Museum visit

A reminder for those with tickets that this is on 25th May starting at 2:00pm. I will be coordinator for our party of thirty five.

Calendar 2006 (enclosed)

The calendar is still provisional. The sections marked in grey are the re-positional trips when we have room to carry our own supporters – very sociable. The first event is the Beale Park Boat Show 9th, 10th and 11th June, well worth a visit — you can even help us if you wish.

Consuta at the Goring and Streatley Regatta last year; David Suchet waves to his fans —photo Brian Shaw



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