



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

Newsletter No.19 July 2004

*Photo: A racy start during the Easter Event
at Beale Park*

Supported by:-

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The Steam Boat Association
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Consuta Steaming (news up to the first week in July)

The Consuta operational calendar has seen a very busy period since the last newsletter. A wedding; a memorial; several private cruises; some PR outings, including promotion for the River and Rowing Museum “*Wind in the Willows*” exhibition; an evening with the Henley Sea Scouts; a few Public displays including Henley Royal Regatta; some umpiring work plus of course those numerous positional placings.

The weather for the Easter Show at Beale Park was cold, probably too early in the year! Turnout of boats was poor, three steaming on the water and one on its trailer and not many modelers at all. However Trust supporters had a good time and we managed to get sufficient donations to cover Consuta’s costs. The positional cruises between Sonning and Pangbourne are always delightful, mainly because we pick a day with good weather. Let me know if you want to come along on any of these! During one of these trips we took the opportunity to make some measurements on the engine power using a Computerised engine indicator built by Robin Wallace Sims.



*Beale Park Boat Show – three steam launches, front to back:- **Pierette Firefly Consuta***

The Beale Park Boat Show in early June was blessed with excellent weather and lots of visitors. Nice to see Bill Rose's classic steam launch *Pierrette* attending the show.

The highlight for me was the Reading Town Regatta; and I was only watching from the river bank, very exciting. David Eager was skipper, fireman Mark Smith, engineman Stuart Clark. During the afternoon *Consuta* was umpire launch for five races, some corporate runs, and a test on Caversham Lakes with a few of the umpires just to check that *Consuta* can accelerate and stop safely. Mark said one comment from the officials after the test was WOW! Powerful steamboats usually have very impressive acceleration given their head, and *Consuta* is no exception. It's all to do with prop size, and *Consuta* has a very large prop.

Our crew at the Reading Regatta developed a starting technique which certainly looked awesome from the river bank, they were encouraged to slightly delay the start of the chase boat following the race. The result was that on opening the throttle there was a great cloud of steam and a purposeful roar from the Funnel, the fireman then opened the fire damper (Mark says he struggled against the drafting vacuum), and all the smoke and steam from the funnel vanished. I should explain that the damper shuts air off from the fire box and is the basic method of limiting steam generation when stopped or running very slow. When the damper is shut, steam is seen coming from the funnel (not the safety escape pipe – so now you know).

The umpire launches (chase boats) on duty were *Majestic*, *Arethusa*, and *Panache*, these are all a bit shorter than *Consuta*; and when carrying a full compliment of passengers looked quite crowded in comparison.

Technical Problems

Nothing much; the propshaft knocking that has plagued us since last year turned out to be a slightly loose coupling flange on the inboard end of the propshaft; and is now cured. We had a troublesome rattling rudder for several weeks (worse than normal) turned out to be a tightly bound piece of rope and other rubbish on the prop. No weed hatch so Paul Smith stripped off and removed it from underneath – many thanks. There have been a few other minor problems but nothing serious.

Decisions required for over wintering Consuta at the end of the season

The Trust are faced with a difficult decision of how and when to give *Consuta* a major make over. We probably have enough Trust funds to do this the end of this season. However I



A quiet moment during the lunch break.

Consuta at 51 feet is the longest launch. Panache is the next in size at 48ft with Majestic only 40 ft long.

Majestic, originally named Magnolia when built by Saunders in 1902 has the same stitched hull construction as Consuta. However she is one of the forty footers and looks a bit crowded with 11 onboard

Below Consuta following a womans' coxed four.



personally hanker after a lighter boiler which would of course not only involve the cost of a new boiler, but also would need alterations to the boiler housing and pipework. The reasons for a replacement lighter boiler are: (a) Consuta is presently about 2 inches deeper in the water than when built; (b) the boiler casing is about 2-3 inches higher than original because of the present boiler; (c) the steam take off from boiler is not good.

Henley Royal Regatta Week

Derek Brown has provided this initial first report, photos in the next newsletter. See also photos on the hrr.co.uk web site (go to 2004 Regatta, Photographs, Day 4).

Wednesday and Thursday were private trips for Supporters and friends cruising the Henley pound, mainly alongside the Regatta course to take in the atmosphere! Showery weather did occasionally dampen things! However the highlight for CONSUTA was ‘umpiring’ the Gig race re-enactment during the tea-break on Saturday afternoon in almost perfect weather. This was a competitive row-past over a short course to the finish, which Oxford won.

The HRR Chairman Mike Sweeney, umpired the race dressed in top hat and frock coat of the period. The race attracted most people’s attention before they went to tea, including Press coverage.

After this race we returned to the Henley Management College, who were our hosts for the Regatta. Originally it was agreed that we should give rides to their staff as recompense for the mooring, but they had an even better idea during the week. The College were holding their annual re-union for old students, on the lawns in front of the college (800+ people) a raffle was run, the prize being a steam up the course and through the town on CONSUTA, for seven winners and two staff, with the proceeds going to the CONSUTA Trust. All nine participants expressed delight after the trip and great admiration for the boat and its condition. This was echoed by many other bystanders in the Stewards Enclosure whilst we were waiting to umpire the race.

Thanks to all who helped make this such a memorable week.

Remaining Calendar for the year

As I write, Consuta is to umpire at the Henley Seniors Regatta during the Saturday 10th July followed by a Henwood and Dean evening outing on the Sunday. The following weekend Consuta will be on display at the Streatley and Goring Regatta on Saturday 17th July, and on Sunday, weather permitting, will move down river in company with steam launch Arlette to run past the site of the Henley Trad Boat Rally.

Keep an eye on the Trust website for the most up-to-date news.

Did someone say “we are running out of coal” – yes that really good 3 ton pile of Welsh Steam Coal is just about all used up, so the search for more of the right stuff is on – have we really burnt so much this year – 3 tons is 150 individual bags of coal!

Later on we are hoping to provide a DVD video of Consuta steamings during 2004. Gordon Chesterman had already produced a DVD of the Ely Diamond 44 celebrations, but is thinking of updating this with additional material. More on this later.

Thanks to everyone for your continuing support, and also to all brass polishers, boat cleaners, engineering crews and skippers who help keep Consuta operational. We are always looking for supporters who want to join in with this work so if this appeals to you, don’t hold back, just give me a call 01488 658795.

Brian Smith