



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

Newsletter No.11

(May 2002)

*Consuta upriver from Shiplake Lock on Saturday
11th May 2002 – first steaming of 2002*

Supported by:-



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

The Transport Trust
The Steam Boat Association
International Paints
The Amber Trust
Many others



Photo by Lyn Smith

Consuta is back on the water

Winter work

There has been a lot of volunteer work going on throughout the winter months. Consuta was cosseted in a Poly Tunnel at Bushnell's yard during this time. Everyone who has visited or worked on Consuta was favourably impressed with the luxurious accommodation it provided. Once the ground dried out, we were able to leave the boat cover off. Mind you we did worry that it might blow away during the height of the gales.

The engine had been removed for some minor refurbishment on various worn items mainly the valve gear, so hopefully there should be less rattles now. Bill Hall has made some very nice main bearing oil boxes. The engine drains have been routed to the ashpan, this will reduce the frequent need to keep emptying the engine drip tray.

Consuta website is:- www.consuta.org.uk

Trustees: Derek Brown Tony Cundick Graham Lindsay Geoff Newton Brian Smith

Registered charity No. 1076505

The boiler has been fitted with an improved steam pickup this should greatly reduce or even eliminate water lifting with the steam. Many of the brass screws holding the brass rubbing strip had sheared off. It turned out these were rather poorly formed screws, so we have taken the opportunity to renew them all with silicon bronze (over 200 screws – hurray for electric screwdrivers).

Water had managed to get in under many of the deck fittings and was starting to damage the varnish by the screw holes. David Eager tackled this by removing each fitting, re-varnished the damaged area and then replace the fittings, he even managed to polish them as well.

Extra flooring has now been fitted on the port side engine compartment by Alan Douglas, coal spill trays have been fitted to the coal bunkers by Derek. The singing propeller has been tweaked (with the grinder) so may no longer sing, but apparently no guarantees (Tony said he rather liked the singing propeller).

We decided to raise the waterline. This is necessary because Consuta is a little overweight and the previous position if the waterline was too low. Colin Henwood got us off to a good start on this task by setting the new line and preparing the area for the antifouling. The hull has now been given two coats of antifoul. Mark Smith who went underneath wearing a blue hat came out with a red one (it fell into the paint tray he said).

The Trust gained some twelve bags of coal from Adrian Birtles (he's moved to the Isle of Wight). Its jolly good stuff too!.

We have had a goodly number of visitors who have come along to have a look and pass favourable comments. The regular work parties seemed to work OK, but I think we could have done with a few more hands. However several of our helpers have been working on their own on various winter tasks. Many thanks to everyone who has given time and effort for this winter work.

Winter Social luncheon

Our February gathering arranged by Derek was attended by some 30 plus supporters, and it was a super do with plenty of chat, photos to study and even some video of Consuta in operation to see.

Remaining tasks

Consuta has been surveyed and valued by John King at no cost to the Trust. Dave Washer provided the boat Safety Cert again at no charge to the Trust. Many thanks to you both. The cost of our new insurance policy cause the treasurer to take a sharp intake of breath. The new insurance policy was arranged by Hayes Parson Marine of Bristol who specialise in classic boats and have got us a pretty good deal.

We have obtained our River Thames boat licence, note that even as a private vessel this has cost over £300, unfortunately no concessions for historic craft. However one of our trustees has made a donation which will cover the insurance and the boat license – so at least we are not in the red on this count.

Consuta is now back in the water, the boiler filled, and the final steam test inspection successfully concluded, so come along and get involved.

That Summer base for Consuta

Beale Park have completed their navigation cut onto the estate lake, sadly we cannot use Beale Park as a base for Consuta just yet because some planning concerns have not been resolved. The covered wet-dock accommodation near Marlow unfortunately was not to be.

This problem of a Spring/Summer base has given us much concern and at this point in time we could be considered homeless. Any thoughts or suggestions?

Programme for 2002 (actually it is more a list of suitable events for Consuta)

Commissioning and umpiring trials of Consuta <i>By arrangement with Henley Royal Regatta and the Leander Club.</i>	28th May	Henley Royal Regatta course
Beale Park Navigation opening ceremony <i>Formal opening ceremony possibly by Baroness Young as guest.</i>	late June	Pangbourne
Henley Royal Regatta <i>Dependant on water performance of Consuta.</i>	3rd – 7th July	Henley
Traditional Boat Rally <i>SBA also on site.</i>	20th – 21st July	Henley
SBA Rally	20th Aug – 1st Sept	Cookham
Great River Race September <i>More details needed before commitment.</i>	Tidal Thames to Greenwich	

We have been invited to several other events, some unfortunately do clash. For example the Goring and Streatley Regatta is on the same weekend as The Traditional Boat Rally at Henley.

The commissioning of Consuta on the Henley reach has been suggested as a way of getting some good publicity and showing off to our many supporters at Leander and the HRRC. We will also have to prove that Consuta can safely run at race speed, we are intending this test to be combined with the commissioning as a bit of a PR exercise. This is an important event for the Consuta Trust so please come along and give your support.

Beale Park are hoping for a grand opening of their navigation cut, the provisional date is over weekend 22nd-23rd June still to be confirmed. Consuta has been invited to take part.

Crew training and river trip opportunities

Much of the steaming runs this year will be used to promote crew training. Successful operation in future years will depend on having plenty of volunteers who are experienced with the handling of Consuta, and are prepared to give some of their time. There is a simple questionnaire which I would be grateful if you can complete and return to me (only do this if you are prepared to actively help maintain/run Consuta. It is important that the operation of Consuta should not have to depend on just a few people. During these training sessions we should be able to accommodate a few passengers as well who would like the opportunity of a ride.

Contacting supporters at short notice has always been difficult in the past, I found that telephoning consumed so much of my time. The use of emails has proved most effective (except it is less efficient at applying any arm twisting). The trustees decided that everyone who is one of our supporters should get these emails regardless whether you were prepared to be an active volunteer or not, this will keep everyone up to date with what is going on. Several of you have already said “yes please keep these emails going”. If you have received this newsletter by post it means I don’t have an email address for you, so let me have this, then you too will then be included on our emailing posting.

Currently we have about 120 people listed as supporters. We are very grateful for your support and enthusiasm either on the work parties, or with contributions or just for your continuing interest.

More on the History

Carole Havord who is one of our members, lent us a vintage photo of Consuta taken – we think – some time in the 1910 decade. Carole, I should mention, is related through her late mother's marriage to the Hewitt's who owned Consuta while still a steamer. The photo clearly shows changes to Consuta made after the Taunt photos taken in 1898. It also shows more detail of the starboard side boiler casing. (seems we haven't quite got this right in the restoration).

A snippet from the past came from researches by Tony Cundick:-

from the Surrey Herald, September 3rd, 1920.

Swamped the Punt.

Excessive Speed in Walton Reach.

Summoned at the instance of the Thames Conservancy, Mr. Arthur Howett of Lansdowne-place, Hove, was fined £5 at Kingston County bench yesterday for navigating the steam launch Consuta without special care and caution when passing a punt on the Walton reach of the Thames.

The Consuta, a speedy launch, has for the past eight years carried the umpires for the Varsity boat race.

A Richmond man who was in a punt with friends said they were moored at the bank, when the launch came along at excessive speed, and the wash swamped the punt, drenching the occupants.

Defendant who said he had 39 years experience of the river, said he was in the engine room on this occasion. His son was at the wheel. The steering gear went wrong. The speed was not excessive, and the launch made very little wash.

The Bench thought sufficient care was not exercised.

Latest News.

Consuta has been steamed twice over this last weekend with great success. The engine is still a bit noisy but valve events are nice and even now. The boiler steams infinitely better with the new internal steam take off pipe, however because the steam is dry, the engine now tells us it would like some internal oiling (squeal and groan) – at the moment we haven't yet fitted a lubricator.

Tuesday 28th May commissioning and trials.

I'm sorry that we cannot give you the full details, these are still being arranged and are dependant on numbers. If you are coming along it would be helpful if you could contact either me or Derek by email or phone as soon as possible:-

Brian Smith	01488 658795	brianws@ukonline.co.uk
Derek Brown	01189 872 3895	dcbrown@btclick.com

Consuta active Volunteer questionnaire

The successful operation of Consuta will depend on having sufficient volunteers:- skippers, engineers and deck hands. Training will be given, so don't worry if you have no experience. We will also need support volunteers, to help with many other tasks.

I would like to help crew the operation of Consuta Yes ☐ No ☐

My preference would be Any/Skipper/engineer/deck hand

Do you have any experience of boat handling or steam machinery..... Yes ☐ No ☐

I don't want to crew but would be willing to help in other ways..... Yes ☐ No ☐

Please print name and initials:

Send your response by email if you like to:- brianws@ukonline.co.uk

or by post to:- B.W.Smith, 19 Mill Bank, Kintbury, Hungerford, Berks., RG17 9UW