

Consuta Trust Newsletter - Autumn 2015

Dear All,

Another summer season has come to a close, and Consuta will be craned out for the Winter.

This year the boiler will be removed before lifting Consuta. We take the boiler out every two years for several reasons, this time there will be an opportunity to investigate ways of curing the annoying tube leakage which after a few years now starts when the boiler is pressed hard.

There was no need to buy any more coal this year, however at the end of the steaming all our coal reserves have been used up, this equates to about two tons used every year. I don't know current prices but it will probably cost about £1200 next year for a delivery of 4 tons, which should last for a couple of years.



Following the main public summer steaming activities, the remainder of the operating seasonal events were quite low key, but still interesting.

There were two private outings in August followed by the Steam Boat Association Thames event which was based at the Henley Sea Cadets.

Consuta joined the small SBA fleet at Caversham lakes (the Thames and Kennet Marina) on Saturday for lunch at the marina café before returning to Beale Park.

SBA Boat at the Thames and Kennet Marina

A private party outing to Wallingford

In September there was a special upriver trip to Wallingford for the Fawley museum volunteers, coincidentally Wallingford were having their Bunk Festival (a music, dance and beer festival).

We moored Consuta at the terraces of the Boat House pub where its says “no mooring” – but they liked Consuta and said yes we could moor here. After lunch some of our party made an exploratory walkabout into the town.

The main road through Wallingford had been taken over by a variety of interesting stalls, various traditional bands, Morris dancers, lots of food and drink stands, and in the square there were some scale steam traction engines. Conclusion – Wallingford is a lovely place without road traffic.

After this trip Consuta’s crew were invited to attend the special steaming at the Fawley Museum the next day – what a treat.



Photos on the left show mooring just above Wallingford bridge – photos on the right were taken in the town square

In late September we moved Consuta down river to Charvil to be available to lead a small boat wedding flotilla a few days later, this parade was from Remenham Church through Marsh Lock to the Shiplake reach. There are many more photos of various Consuta outings



on the Consuta Trust facebook page. Note that you do not have to be a registered Facebook user to see these, just click on the link from the Consuta Trust website (it's at the bottom of the home page menu, and you don't have to login to see the public area – very simple.

Consuta's last trip of the year was then to move her back to Beale Park. During this trip we made a diversion into the river Kennet as far as the tail mooring of Blakes Lock.

Unfortunately there was no time to go through the lock although we tried out the mechanical lock paddle gear which is similar to locks on the upper reaches above Oxford. From memory this type of lock gear was in use at all Thames locks in the 1950's and 60's.

Once back at Beale Park the fire was raked out for the last time and the boiler emptied while still hot and in steam – ie blow down empty.



Blakes Lock on the River Kennet – photo on the right is the mooring below the lock

A Steam Fair

Because the boiler is going to be lifted out, the boiler pipe work and some other prep work needed to be undone before this can be done. Now the Englefield steam fair was on for the weekend of 18/19 October so Paul, Lyn and self decided to visit the steam fair in the morning then go over to Beale Park for the boiler removal prep work in the afternoon we were joined by Steve and David. I understand that other Consuta supporters went to the fair on the Sunday.

The Englefield Steam Fair is always a friendly event and is based at the estate workshops. Lots to see, the Lancashire boiler was steamed up using wood firing and the horizontal steam engine was driving the line shafting which was common in the early 1900's before electric motors were fitted to individual workshop machines.



The estate has some very impressive saw equipment. Some of these I understand are still used. There were many other steam engines, traction engines and classic cars operational and on display. The tea room was doing grand trade in the old blacksmiths workshop with home made tea and cakes – lovely and warm here, almost as comfortable as the boiler room.

Removing boiler pipework

When we eventually arrived at Beale Park in the afternoon by car we found that there was a Salvage Fair in progress.

The dismantling prep work took about two hours. The only pipe connection which couldn't be undone on the day was the blowdown pipe which has a nut larger than any of our spanners to hand.

We have had only minor engineering issues with Consuta during the season, generally she has performed very well throughout the year. The Welsh coal was excellent stuff and provides enough steam under all circumstances.



The Museum Project

During the summer I was interested to hear all about the fund raising progress for the Goring Gap boat club's new premises. The club had an interesting scale model of their proposed new building on display at the Goring & Streatley regatta and it looked most impressive. I was told that the clubhouse was going to cost over £1½m and the club was still short of funds needed to complete the project, although some of the site prep work had already started.

Many people have asked us how we were getting on with the Thames Heritage Boat Museum project – which is very encouraging it is great to have such positive interest from so many in the local and river communities.

As to progress, The Consuta Trust and Beale Park have agreed that the (new) Tamesis Trust will take the museum project forward, and we have revised the method of managing the museum which is to have its own ticketed entry, this was needed for the new HLF grant application. The current Tamesis Trust trustees are all trustees of The Consuta Trust, so regarding co-ordination/co-operation basis there should be no problems.

Our HLF grant application has had to be revised based on suggestions from the HLF officers and was submitted in September so we should know the result by mid January. Over the year we have received several large donations from individuals and also from another grant trust – many thanks for this.

The Trust need your continued help and support in many ways to further the conservation of Consuta and the future Museum project. This help can vary from monetary donations, bequests in your will, future donations of historic objects for the proposed museum, stories about the Thames from the past. We also need physical help to maintain and steam Consuta each year.

Winter Social

As yet, nothing has been decided about our Consuta Trust social, except we will be arranging something February/March next year. There are some ideas of possible locations but if you have any thoughts please do let me know ASAP.

Many thanks to everyone for helping to keep Consuta in steam each year with your donations and/or by providing unpaid help.

Brian Smith - October 2015



Mooring at the River Spice near Caversham bridge during a repositional.

These trips are always made in good weather why don't you join us at one of these next year?