



THE URTHIE'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

News Letter No. 34 — Spring 2008



Dear Supporter,

The February Social at Shiplake College

This event was a resounding success, many thanks to the College staff and to Derek and Sandra Brown for making the arrangements. The weather was perfect, the food was great; several supporters said we should have come by boat; pity the river was in flood. Everyone asked can we come here again; the Trustees have noted this request, so I look forward in anticipation.

Consuta Winter Work

A few of us have been secretively doing some work on Consuta before the official work parties started. Paul Smith removed the rudder so we repaired several loose bits here and rebushed the top bearing so there should be no more rudder rattle. The leaking injector steam valves have been reground in. The engine aft crosshead assembly has been white metalled, and we've adjusted the little and big ends to take out a bit of play (only a thou or two but enough to make a tapping noise).

In March we were telephoned by Beale Park who told us that the boiler had fallen off the trailer. Now a 1½ ton boiler doesn't just fall off. We discovered that the trailer had been moved by hand





The rudder after work. The touched up patches are where rust had started to attack the steel. Note that it is semi balanced job, the area in front of the rudder stock is meant to reduce the effort needed to turn when at speed. However those who have been on the helm will have noticed that the faster Consuta goes the helm becomes just too light, so Mr Saunders didn't quite get this right.



Two boiler pictures were taken during the cold inspection. The row of firebars is laid out on the ground. They are in good order, but are exceedingly heavy at about 20 lb each; and 16 of them. On the bottom left, the steam test is in progress to check boiler seals are all OK.



without permission by the catering staff. Now moving a two wheel trailer weighing about 3 tons by hand is a stupid thing to do. Fortunately nobody was hurt and lessons have been learnt – we hope. There was only minor damage to the boiler and the trailer.

This winter the boiler has had to be kept outside sheeted up against the elements, so anyone around could fiddle with it.

The outside of the boiler has been de-rusted using an air powered needle gun then painted black. We've removed two buckets of red coloured mud from inside; representing two years collection of river mud that didn't exit via the blow down.

Steaming in 2008

Our calendar for this year is included here. We are planning an ambitious trip to Twickenham for their regatta on 25th May. The repositional steaming for this will be a splendid opportunity for a lovely river trip for anyone interested; early application is advised. We also have a special event in Henley to carry a VIP royal a few days earlier.

Now in the past I have usually made comment about coal, but at long last we seem to have some good news. A new open cast seam of Welsh steam coal is coming on stream very soon. We already have some samples of this coal, but as yet, untried. Initial reports suggest that the coal is going to be pretty good steaming stuff, it certainly has all the right chemical makeup. This new coal seam is reported to be good for a life of at least 10 years.

Ian Rutter has kindly donated 40 bags of some good stuff which he does not require now that he is selling his steamboat. This is ideally located for our down river adventure; so thank you very much Ian.

Floating Boathouse at Beale Park.

What can I say, I've never been someone who expects human society to be particularly efficient, but the bureaucratic nature of our planning authorities has left me speechless at the sheer incompetence of the whole system. Perhaps our application was an exception to the norm. After all this, I now know more about how planning works, but sadly following this episode I will have less trust of these public servants who are entrusted to manage affairs for public benefit.

Unfortunately it is The Consuta Trust who have suffered. Following the planning refusal we tried to correspond with the council, but they weren't interested at all, didn't even want to meet us just saying "go to appeal". We applied for an appeal on 21st December, and this was eventually registered on the 4th of February. We were then given a deadline for all paperwork to be submitted by 7th April, but even this date slipped. Reasons given: - several support letters were lost by the inspectorate so were not sent to the Council in time, who then complained.

Thank you to everyone who sent a supporting letter. We've had 47 of these and they gave great comfort to me while coping with the appeal. All letters are highly valued but so many were absolutely superb. I'll be most interested to see if and how West Berkshire Council answer all points raised, I've been informed they may just choose to ignore them. The council's appeal statement is a bland uninspiring document with many repetitive statements, it's on our website as is our appeal statement. The council submitted additional evidence for their rejection, this section of planning policy states "Land outside settlements will be safeguarded for its own sake as a non renewable natural resource". This looks a difficult one to discount; however it always pays to read the small print, so reading the policy in full soon revealed that this policy actually supports our application. It states that such land should only be used to: "provide the population with easily accessible opportunities for informal recreation" – thank you West Berkshire, but this is what our proposal was intended to do.

So when will we get a decision? The hearing and site visit have been set for 15th July followed by say one month before the decision is out. We have a great case, but then again it is a decision made by one person only who might just agree that the council were right.

The appeal hearing is open to the public; if you want to be kept informed please let me know.

The Trust's final comment is now published on our web site, the council it seems have decided not to submit any final comment.

Fund raising for the Boathouse

The Trust will be looking at ways to raise the funding needed for our floating boathouse. Several supporters have come up with some interesting ideas. The build cost unfortunately will have risen because the price of steel has increased on world markets. I suppose the overall fund needed will be around the £80,000 figure; any help with this would be most welcome. An approach to the HLF cannot be made until the planning appeal has been positively resolved, however there are other sources which we are about to start investigating.

Brian Smith 26th April 2008

Consuta Calendar for 2008

Heavy type indicate known agreed requests, other entries for consideration

	May	Re-launch Consuta
	May	Repositional move to Charvil
20th	May	VIP task with the RRM Henley
	May	Repositional from Henley to Twickenham
25th	May	Twickenham Regatta one day event.
	May/June	Repositional from Twickenham to Beale Park
6th – 8th	June	Beale Park Boat Show
21st	June	Kew volunteers visit David Ambler with trips on Consuta
	June	repositional to Charvil/Henley
2nd – 6th	July	Henley Royal Regatta (details later)
9th – 13th	July	Fireworks at the Henley Festival (details later)
	July	Repositional to Beale Park or Goring rally site
15th	July	Planning Appeal Hearing; includes a site visit
19th	July	Goring and Streatley Regatta
19th – 20th	July	Thames Trad Boat Rally possible visit on the Sunday
21st	August	mid week combined event with RRM
	August	Repositional from Charvil to Beale park
6th – 7th	September	SBA rally at Beale Park

Other outings under consideration

Supporters visit to RRM – during August?

Supporters visit to Springfield works – after SBA event?

Supporters outing during the Henley Festival

26th April 2008