



The Consuta Trust

The advancement of education in the history of steam launches, by preservation, maintenance and exhibition of the steam launch **Consuta**

Registered Charity No. 1076505

Website: www.consuta.org.uk

News Letter No. 56 — Spring 2014

Dear All,

Spring has arrived at last with everything now in full bloom, I hope you've not been too troubled by the flood conditions which effected the South and the West of England. I've lived at Kintbury for nearly forty years now and remember that the last time there was flooding here was in 1977; the Kennet conditions this winter were similar but the recent floods did last much longer.

It was interesting to note that the flood measurements around Beale Park showed they were not very high. The EA provide data for flood levels at specific locations and these are then used to estimate the frequency of flooding – we used these for the planning application. They gave the water datum levels for 20%, 5%, and 1% flood risks. The level at Beale Park this year was equivalent to the 5% data which means there is a risk of this level of flooding once every 20 years. The floods of 1947 were higher and represented the 1% level (one in every hundred years).



Way out from the carpark at Beale Park

The Consuta Winter Social

There were problems at the Swan Inn Streatley, the public bar facing the river did flood. We were concerned that the car park might not be useable for our social; fortunately the river dropped a few days before our event so the car park here was OK.



60 plus guests came and had a jolly good time. Several videos were shown, Janet and Mike Hurst of The Goring and Streatley Local History Society displayed boards covering the history of Sam Saunders and David Eager gave a short illustrated talk about designing a new boiler for Consuta using 3D cad programme and a software tool called Finite Element Analyses; this software is used to demonstrate that the design stresses were within safe limits.

We are now obtaining estimates for the construction costs of a new boiler; though the design has not quite been finalised yet.

Details about the new boiler for Consuta during the Social Luncheon

The Museum planning appeal

Much time and effort has been spent by the team involved with work for the appeal. The team is Tony Cundick, Paul Smith and myself with help from other trustees.

I found it strange that the West Berkshire planning officers have fought this application at every stage – they are supposed to look for solutions. I gained the impression that they don't like Beale Park. One amusing part of this negative campaign was when the case officer asked the EA to beef up their original objection reasons for the appeal, only to be told that the issues had been resolved. The council's officer then complained to us that we hadn't let them know; which of course we had done at several stages. It seems that the planners don't bother to read much of the information that is sent to them when they've already decided to reject. Their original reasons for the rejection were considerably watered down for the appeal, presumably to make them seem more accurate when being considered by the inspector.

Some 30 plus people attended the hearing in support of the appeal, the inspector did not want to know any details of the council's mis-handling of application leading to the appeal; it seems that he looks at everything submitted as a new application.

One phrase that is used in the national and local planning policies is "Cultural Heritage" and it appears that this has importance as a planning policy consideration. So because it is not defined in any of the planning document glossaries; we offered the inspector a Wikipedia definition of this phrase which was graciously accepted – it describes exactly what our proposed museum is about.

The appeal site visit was also interesting because I don't think the inspector had realised just how large Beale Park is.

Now that the public hearing is over we have to wait a few weeks for the decision, June maybe?

Winter work on Consuta

Getting Consuta back together after a major re-varnish/paint job at Henwood and Dean should in theory require less work party contribution effort. Consuta is presently housed in the shed at Beale Park and to date there haven't been any notified work parties here, just a few informal visits.

This year we have kept the boiler under cover at Kintbury this makes it much easier to carry out some thorough maintenance work because we have my own workshop facilities handy, so it is receiving much better attention than normal. There is however only room for a small numbers of volunteer workers.

The boiler has been thoroughly cleaned of all mud around the foundation ring (bottom section round the firebox); two buckets of muck, mainly river mud and a bit of scale.



All steam valves have been serviced and packing replaced where required. The two boiler feed check valves have been removed and cleaned internally and externally now fitted with new O rings and packing. We painted the small pointers on the handles – these now clearly show when the valve is open or closed; this was requested by the boiler inspector.

A test rig was made to allow the pressure gauge to be checked against another one in good working order. Last year the





*Photos of work
on the boiler.*

*Needle gun
cleaning below.*



inspector was concerned that gauge was reading about 10% low, so this has now been adjusted to be about 1% low.

It's a psychological effect but if a gauge moves above the red line before the safeties start blowing people get concerned. However if the gauge is showing slightly under the red line when the safeties blow, nobody minds – it seems safer.

We now have use of an ultrasonic metal thickness tester. This works very well and measurements on various parts of the boiler show that there is very little plate wastage.

There have been other repairs, for example to the smokebox which required a bit of welding. The whole of the boiler and smokebox have been de rusted with needle guns and wire wheels and have now been painted with Smooth Hamerite black on the boiler shell, and a high temp matt black on the smokebox.

Currently we are looking at the state of the boiler lagging; the section around the smokebox might need replacing.

The cockpit floor boards and side deck covering boards have been repainted. Remaining tasks for a work party at the Beale Park shed will be paint the bilges under the boiler and paint the hull antifoul. The engine also needs to be thoroughly degreased and cleaned up to bring it back looking as it was when first installed.

Funds will soon be needed for the two projects we have in mind

The first is the museum base for Consuta. We have already had a few small donations towards the cost of the planning application. Assuming we get planning approval from the appeal inspectorate we will need to start fund raising from all possible sources including supporters. The HLF is a key fund provider and our initial approach to them last year was most encouraging, but even with an HLF grant we will need what is known as partnership funding.

We have had offers of help to prepare the HLF application and also professional help with the next stages of submitting a complete planning application. If you remember the current application/appeal was only for outline permissions.

The other project will be for a new lighter and more efficient boiler. We have had some initial quotes, and also promises of useful donations towards a new boiler; but more funds

will need to be raised. A new boiler will also require changes to the existing pipework, a new ashpan, a new smokebox, plus further work for the fitting stages of the new installation.

Operations 2014 Note some events have still to be confirmed this year.

We need people to skipper and engineer Consuta, and there is concern that the number of competent people we have presently is not as many we need; so don't hold back, please put your name forward – we can train you up. Also note it is not necessarily a male preserve either – we already have one competent lady skipper.

This year I am hoping we can arrange training sessions covering the operation and skippering of Consuta, perhaps combined with a few Consuta outings. Our Engineer's Handbook is available in print form from me for a small fee to cover costs, or as a free download file here:- www.consuta.org.uk/training/training_manual.pdf

Programme for steaming Consuta during 2014:-

May	Consuta work parties
6th - 8th June	Beale Park Boat Show & Classic Boat Auction - <i>Consuta in steam</i>
???	Mid June Reposition to Charvil
20th - 22nd Jun	Henley Women's Regatta - (<i>Consuta in operation on Saturday</i>)
2nd July - 6th	July Henley Royal Regatta – <i>Open to private party use</i>
9th July - 13th	July Henley Festival Mid July (<i>Consuta in steam</i>)
???	Reposition to Beale Park after the festival
19th July	Goring & Streatley Regatta (<i>Consuta in steam to be confirmed</i>)
20th July	Thames Traditional Boat Rally (<i>Consuta in steam Sunday to be confirmed</i>)
July August	"Supporters Training and River Trips"



Thank you for your continuing support, and best wishes for the 2014 boating season - 29th April 2014