



THE UNFIRE'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**

Website: www.consuta.org.uk

News Letter No. 48 — Spring 2012

Dear Supporter,

The Social at the River and Rowing Museum

This was a great event held in the Thames room of the Museum, with about 60 guests present. A tour of the museum was part of the social, and most of us will have made a point to inspect EVA.

One of our supporters has made a 1" to foot scale model of Consuta using a hull skin construction identical to Consuta except it was not stitched but held by glue. She was fitted with steam plant and looked great. Perhaps we will see some steam test with this lovely model later this year!

A bit early yet I know, but I think we have a splendid place for our next Social, more on this later.





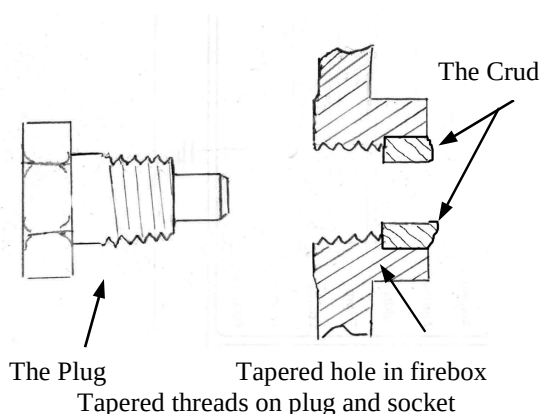
Winter work parties

There have been several this year. It's always surprising how much work is needed to keep a steamboat in operational order and also looking smart.

Work carried out so far:-

The funnel suffered a couple of dents during last winter and then in summer an exceptionally high volume release of steam from the safety valves caused the Funnel to suffer some discolouration. Very strange I know but we think this was due to a large quantity of superheated treated boiler water coming out of the safety valves as well. Why, perhaps a reminder of the problems inherent with our current boiler – which has severe water pick up when water level is up and when there is a high steam output. Normally when running this water goes through the engine which is not nice, but when the safeties let rip then whoosh steam plus superheated dirty boiler water; luckily no passengers were aboard.

Another task on the boiler was to remove the fuseable plug fitted in the top of the combustion chamber. This really was stubborn item to get out. The boiler had been lifted out for the winter so we were able to remove the ashpan allowing good access to the plug. It needed some heat treatment to release it, luckily it didn't shear off. After further investigation it seems that a pile of crud had built up above the plug in the upper space of the boss making it so difficult to remove. The idea of a tapered thread is that it fits into a tapered hole and the further it enters the tighter it gets. In our case it was impossible to tighten up any further because of this crud. Application of acid descaler and a thread tap were needed to get the boss back to a useable state, we really should check the plug on a regular basis. See below.





Spoilt for choice a replacement on the left or a repaired one on the right

Another problem that had happened during the year was a blockage in the shut off cock to the pressure gauge. The cock was a packed gland valve and was fitted with a plastic gland sleeve which somehow had become blocked giving false or zero pressure gauge readings. A 1/8" drill had made it usable for the rest of the season, but it needed to be serviced in the winter. When attempts were made to unscrew this cock from the boiler it sheared off – giving us yet another problem. This has now been resolved and a replacement cock has been fitted.

Other engineering reports from April work parties

Pressure is on at the work parties to get everything done in time, not the easiest task in cold weather. This winter we decided to check all valve packings and replace the packing where required. This normally should be a simple job but, the main steam stop valve a meaty 1½ inch steam fitting didn't play ball. It was thought to have been leaking a bit through the spindle gland last summer. When an attempt was made to remove the gland nuts, the first one sheared off with only minor effort on the spanner.– he said! Oops! so it was remove the whole valve bonnet and strip down to sort it out. See photos.



Clearly this had been leaking for a while and this had corroded the 3/8 inch diameter steel studs. Why use steel here? New stainless studs were made with new brass nuts, so with renewed packing hopefully all will be well for the season.

Boiler water level gauges have also had a major work over. New glasses new rubbers and a repaint of the black and white backplate which helps to show the boiler water level. The boiler inspector had complained that on test, one of the gauge glass through holes seemed very small, this was sorted out as well..

The injector check valve shut off cocks had been a bit tight at times throughout last season and sometimes had leaked. These have a combination of O rings and gasket packing. The O

rings have been replaced as the old ones looked a bit square in section and also rather hard and brittle.

These relatively simple tasks were made much harder because of the lack of any handy engineering machining facilities – oh I wish we had our own workshop by the boat.

The funnel outer has come in for some treatment; dents removed and a pristine repaint so is looking immaculate.

So what about a base for Consuta at Beale Park

Well after all the years talk on various options, we've now got a great bit of news which is that Beale Park have now agreed to allow a boathouse base at the park. Not just a boathouse for Consuta but an ambitious project which will be able to house several historic Thames vessels which will have a large wet dock style museum plus a workshop and an archive room for all the historic material that has been amassed over the years. – can hardly wait.

There are two hurdles:- the first will be to obtain planning approval for a substantial building, and the second will be to raise the substantial funding needed for construction.

This project will provide a public museum by the Thames housing several historic river vessels – operational and static – including our own Consuta and Cygnet owned by The Thames Boats Trust. On our wish list would be to have the loan of the delightful Thames Conservancy steam inspection launch Donola currently held in storage at Swindon and not even accessibly by the public.

More on this boat museum development later. If you can help or offer guidance in any way with fund raising please do contact us – we certainly need help with this. The history of Thames boating is surely worthy of a public display centre by the River; I can't understand why it hasn't happened before now; and what better place is there than Beale Park.

Publicity

A TV programme by the BBC about the Rowing gold medal winners of the 1948 Olympics. Consuta played the part of an umpire launch for the film – I know a steam umpire launch is not historically correct but – well we did it. I've been told that the programme runs about 90 minutes and tells the story of Bert Bushnell and Dickie Burnell who won gold in the double sculls. There have already been some promos with glimpses of Consuta. There has also been a recent preview at Leander and I'm told that you will need to be vigilant to see Consuta which was only on screen for a very short time. The programme is due to be screened some time in July on BBC1.

Consuta website

Most will know that we have a website which has a bit of a mix of styles. However there is a lot of interesting material here. The archive section has been extended and provides many old photos, plus a downloadable copy of an early Saunders catalogue plus lots more.

www.consuta.org.uk/Archives/Consuta%20archives.htm

We also have our news section which has photos arranged in chronological order, most recent at the top – through the winter these cover mainly work party activities.

Finally

Thank you for your continuing support, the help provided by donations and physical help with maintenance and crewing Consuta are essential. It costs about £5,000 each year to keep Consuta operational. We are also delighted that we have been granted a reduced Thames Licence fee which is because we are a charity with an historic craft.

Programme of events for 2012

Several people have asked us why isn't Consuta taking part in the Queens Jubilee River Pageant in London. We were invited, but Trustees decided that this event would be an extremely expensive operation for the trust with risk of damage to our historic vessel. Instead we are attending a local celebration event to mark the Queen's jubilee year which is being organised by the Streatley and Goring community for Monday 4th June. This outing will be our first public steaming for 2012. The boating part of the pageant is due to take place 11:00am downriver from Goring lock; so why not come along and see the fun.

The Beale Park Boatshow Consuta Trust with support from the Goring and Streatley Historical Society will have a stand at the Beale Park Boat Show to display the history and importance of Sam Saunders who had his works in the local area. Consuta will be in steam on the lake at the show as usual.

Later in the season we are planning to attend the Trad Boat Rally this year; on a mooring with public access and with some better weather than last year. Fortunately this event does not clash with the Goring and Streatley Rally, so we will be able to attend this delightful event as well on the following Saturday.

I've attached a copy of the 2012 calendar; please note that there are options open for your own private outings. Why not try contacting us with your request.

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Consuta steaming Calendar for 2012

Date	Event
Mid May?	Re-launch Consuta possibly followed by crew training
4th June - Mon	Jubilee Water Pageant at Goring
8th - 10th June	Beale Park Boat Show plus shore display of S.E. Saunders
16th June – Sat	Henley Women's Regatta - Consuta working as an umpire launch
23rd June - Saturday	Provisional - rehearsal for event on 25th
24th June - Sunday	Private Party at Henley
25th June - Monday	Time & the Thames event by the Henley Management College
4th - 8th July	Henley Festival
14th - 15th July	Thames Traditional Boat Rally - Fawley Meadow, Henley
21st July – Sat	Goring and Streatley Regatta
29th August – Wed	River & Rowing Museum Steam Day for children.
Dates & venue TBA	SBA rally - base and date unknown at present
8th September - Sat	Provisional - Private Function - Wedding Anniversary
9th September - Sun	Provisional - Private Function - Goring

Finally a couple of photos taking during the winter months during work party visits

Top:- A few of our support group taking a break, note some carried on working during this break.

Below: Time off to have a look at Cygnet's temporary home, that is until we get our Thames Museum

The number of helpers who come along giving support (and have a bit of a chat) is usually around 10 to 14. Without this help we would struggle to keep Consuta in such good condition, so thank you.

If you would like to join in why not give it a go and join in.

Brian Smith May 7th 2012

For more pictures and reports see www.consuta.org.uk then select "news" on the menu bar

