



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

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Consuta's 2004 operational programme is already in full swing.

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It really did snow at Ely – here is Consuta following one of the races in a short blizzard – taken by Alan Douglas

Consuta Trust Winter Social

The Trust social gathering at the Woodclyffe Village Hall in Wargrave in February had some 26 friends of Consuta. The Nepalese meal was excellent fare and David Eager provided a video projector which was put to good use showing videos of recent activities and a historical slide show. Many thanks to Tony Barker for making the arrangements. We were saddened to learn that Tony's wife died a few weeks later, our condolences to family and friends.

The Diamond44 celebrations at Ely. *The only Oxbridge Boat Race not on the Thames!*

Gordon Chesterman master minded a Consuta visit to the Diamond44 anniversary celebrations of an Oxford and Cambridge boat race which took place on the Great River Ouse during the war (1944). What a splendid event. The Trust support team were made very welcome by the

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

Anglians, and Consuta delighted us all by umpiring three races on race day Saturday 28th February, mind you one race was in a snow storm! More pictures on our website.

We burnt about $\frac{2}{3}$ ton of coal – several practice runs you know, speeds of 18 mph were mentioned, and not quite flat out yet! Consuta is now showing the performance expected of an umpire launch.

There were seven races, the last between veteran Oxford and Cambridge crews (ie fit men between 40 and 60), this was quite slow against a very strong headwind. Cambridge won in 1944, and they won again in the re-enactment race.

Gordon C. made a splendid DVD video of this event and is looking at the possibility of including some extra material to make this available for sale to Trust supporters, with sale profits to the Trust. I will let you know how this develops.

Consuta was safely returned to the Thames and Kennet Marina by road from Ely, then taken down river to Brentford ready for the Oxford and Cambridge boat race on Sunday 28th March, Consuta was to umpire the re-enactment race between replica boats.

Consuta shares Cookham Lock with Bosphorus.



The Berkshire crew travelled part of the way down river to Bell Weir Lock on the Saturday 20th in company with the Oxford launch Bosphorus; this was a wild and windy weekend, but the trip was great fun. I was stoker so kept lovely and warm. On the Sunday, Tony Cundick's crew then took Consuta on from here to Brentford, arriving at Teddington lock a bit too early for the tides so had time for a pub lunch. The lock keepers were very kind and had the locks ready for us, which certainly speeds up

progress, we even worked three locks with the boater's controls during the lunch break.

In case you wondered we were very good and kept our speed down to proper levels, the Thames after all is a very civilized river.

The 150th Oxford and Cambridge Boat race

Consuta with Tony Cundick's team was the umpire launch for the replica boat race, this preceded the Oxford and Cambridge boat race. The replica race was a splendid affair with the boat crews and Consuta crew in period dress. Speeds were quite fast considering that the replica boats were big hulls without swivels, or sliding seats, this race was won by Cambridge in about 22 minutes. Tony said that when he took Consuta down to Putney from Brentford he ran Consuta up to 500 rpm on the engine. The re-enactment race itself however only required 300 revs average with the start a bit faster at 360 rpm. Our revs to mph conversion chart works out roughly as about 3 mph for each 100 rpm.

Cambridge also won the 'Boat Race' fairly easily following a serious clashing of oars early in the start. The only comment I will make is that cox's really should obey commands from the umpire. As someone said cox's can't win a race but they certainly can lose it.

I personally was very disappointed with the BBC TV coverage, their live one and a half hour programme was a missed opportunity to review the 150 year boat race history.

The same replica boats are also having a contest at Henley during Regatta week, so Consuta may have a part in this as well, although Consuta is really too young by some 44 years.

Operational Crews

We now have several supporters who are competent as crew, but we always need more. Most of the present crew are retired from gainful employment, it would be great to have a few more energetic youngsters if we can get them. Call me if you can help, age immaterial.

We obtained some Welsh coal last year which at first glance seemed to be too small, but the firemen loved it. We took the opportunity to purchase the remaining 3 tons of this from our Chepstow coalman in February. This should see us through the summer, but we do wonder what quality of coal is going to be available next year.

Consuta is now a delight to handle, a combination of the winter improvements and some reasonable coal. The winter work on the machinery has improved things greatly, the engine is beginning to sound nice. At Ely we took the opportunity for some fairly hard running. The speed was taken up to 18 mph and at this speed the engine is running at 600 rpm, this equates to a shaft HP of about 84 HP. Since returning from Ely a pressure gauge has been fitted on the engine steam input, and at 10.5 mph when the engine turns at 350 rpm there is only 20/25 psi on the engine, the shaft HP is around 18 HP. Consuta doesn't have a superheater, these devices can usually improve engine efficiency by 30/40% (means less coal burnt). Fitting a superheater is a bit complicated but might be considered later, a simpler solution is increase the boiler working pressure, which gives a small amount of superheat to the steam at the engine when the throttle is only open a small amount. The boiler inspector has permitted us to raise the boiler pressure to a maximum of 170 from the previous 140 psi, however we do not intend to put this pressure on the engine, one good reason to have a pressure gauge on the engine.

Programme for 2004

As I write Consuta has returned up river and is presently moored at Temple Lock following a full day's run from Brentford. Details on the website shortly.

I've included the Consuta Calendar page from the website. This shows a very busy programme up to July, some items are still provisional. However after July there is nothing planned so far! can we relax and put our feet up?



Entering Mosely Lock on the upriver return

The next event in the immediate future is the Beale Park Easter model boat show, steamboats invited. Entry to this event is free, so if you have time please do come along, you can even help looking after Consuta, which should be in steam on the lake.

Keep an eye on those email circulars, or contact Brian Smith on 01488 658795 for more details or if you would like to be involved with our operational programme.