



The Consuta Trust

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

Consuta Trust Newsletter - Spring 2020

Dear All,

I hope you are all keeping well and holding up in these trying times.

Consuta Winter Social Luncheon

The Trust social was held at the Swan in Streatley on 29th February and was attended by 26 supporters, at the time the only minor concern was that the Thames river level was rather high.

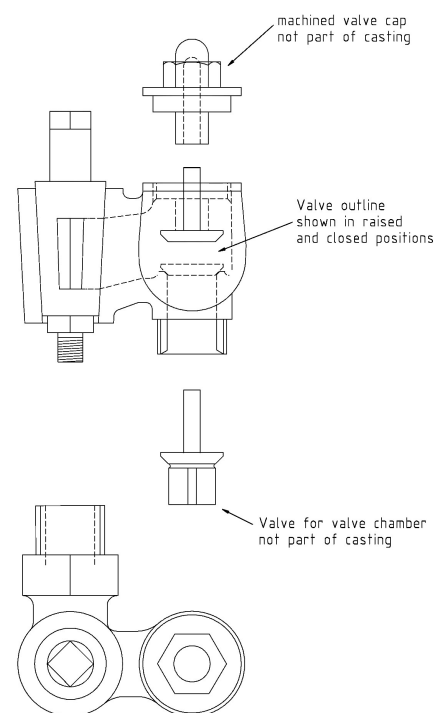
Consuta project work

This work was nearing completion until the virus pandemic entered the scene, so everything at Beale Park has now stopped since early March. We had planned to have the refurbished Consuta running by late spring and had been booked for three important Thames annual events however all but one have been cancelled, and with EA current boat restrictions any Consuta operation this year is becoming unlikely.

As there is now lots of time at home, I've started making some improvements on the current boiler injector's pipe work by using purpose made joints with copper pipe instead of 'off the shelf' screwed fittings; this will look much better. I was hoping to check these arrangements would work out ok first before making the changes because injectors can be a bit fussy about pipe work. The copper pipe being used is $\frac{3}{4}$ " bore with $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wall thickness which bends remarkably well using appropriate techniques.

I've also taken the opportunity to design in 2D CAD a suitable historic style gunmetal check and shut off cock for the injectors, these proposed fittings will be very neat and would be similar to those fitted to Donola whose machinery was made by DesVignes. This type of combined check and shut off cock used to be available from suppliers in the past, as seen from old steam fitting catalogues, but not now. Currently just need patterns to be made, get castings, then have them machined up – this part of the work is currently on hold at present, but I hope perhaps can be completed before too long.

The drawing on the right shows part of the new design fitting; there will be a right hand and a left hand fitting for each of the two injector feeds.



*Sketch of a new injector boiler feed valve for Consuta
Two will be needed, one left hand and one right hand*

Thames Steamboat Archives

During the lockdown I've been looking at the Steam Boat Association and Tamesis Trust archives, and thought that some Thames/Consuta related material might be of interest to you in these times of confinement.

The Tamesis Trust has recently obtained an article about Thornycroft boat building from a 1897 Cassier magazine written by John I Thornycroft entitled "*Steamers for Shallow Rivers*" – note the Thames is classed as a shallow river. There is an interesting section in the article about tunnel stern launches which I'm reproducing here in part. This involved some tests using a 65ft Thames tunnel stern steamer named Aurora. Here is the 1897 story about Aurora:-

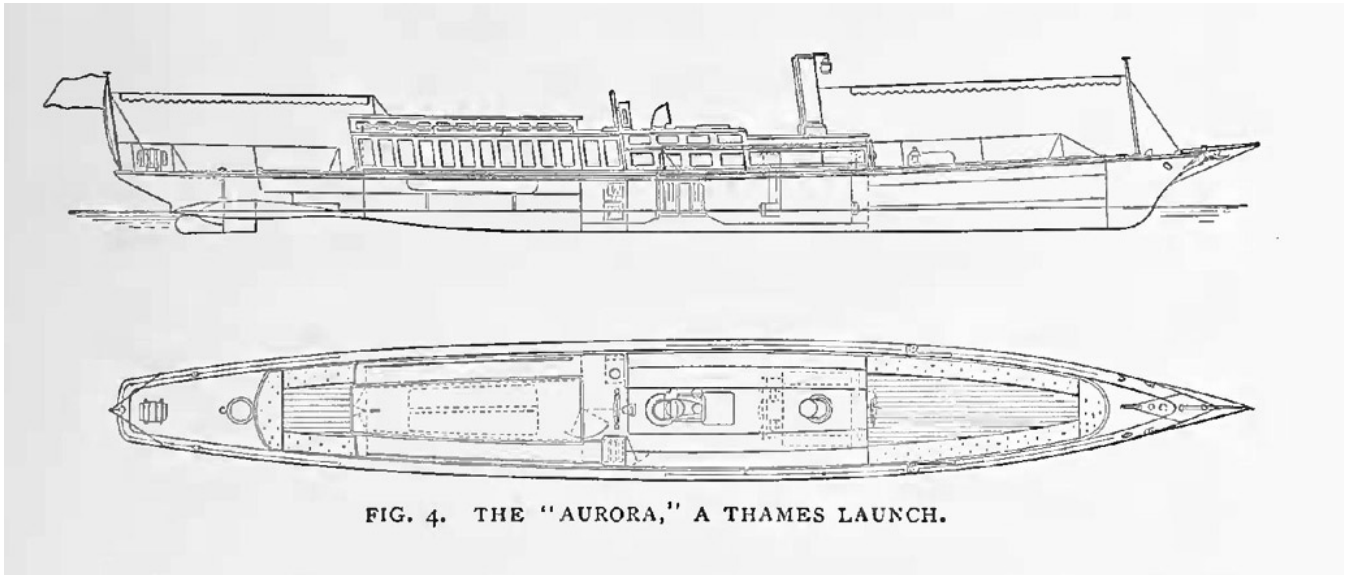


FIG. 4. THE "AURORA," A THAMES LAUNCH.

Fig. 4 represents the Aurora, a launch of shallow draught, built for use on the Thames. It is fitted with one turbine propeller only, has compound condensing engines and a water-tube boiler, and has attained a speed of 15 miles. Experiments were made with this vessel by putting heavy weights in the extreme bow, so as to raise the stern much above its intended position. By this means the draught of water at the propeller was reduced to about ten inches, and the back of the tunnel was so lifted as to be quite clear of the water. Notwithstanding this unfavourable position, the propeller, when turned very rapidly, drove out all the air and propelled the boat at a high rate of speed. The speed of the engines could then be reduced until the boat was moving only slowly, without breaking the column of water from the propeller.

This experiment is interesting as showing how large a part of the propeller may be above water so long as air cannot mingle with the stream of water going to the propeller, and has led to building some vessels for towing with single turbine propellers, their axes nearly at the water line. An incidental advantage of this construction is that it gives great facilities for inspecting the propeller. A door situated over the propeller, when opened, allows the water to fall to the level of its external surface and exposes to view half the propeller above water.

Consuta is of course a tunnel stern launch and many will know that the tunnel remains full of water once initially primed by the prop, and at crane out it causes a few concerns about the level of the lift out until the water drops away. I believe that some of the Yarrow tunnel stern launches had a flap plate which was adjusted dependant on the hull loading.

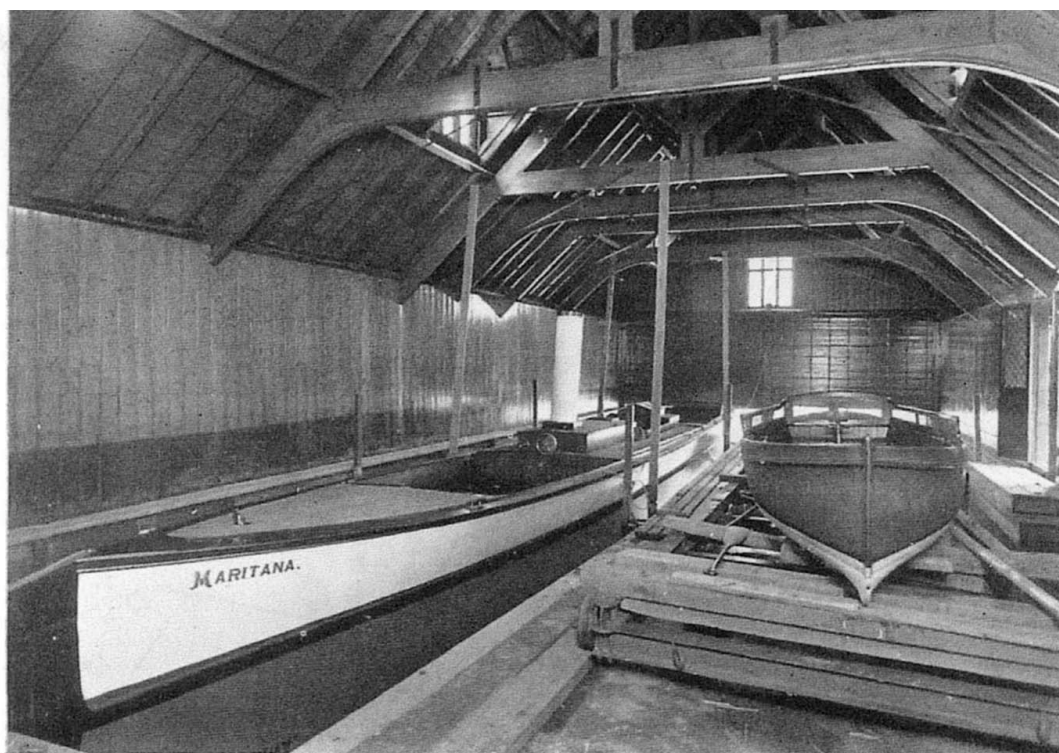
The Tamesis Trust museum project had been offered a nice Thornycroft compound steam engine for display by Lyn Smith. This had been purchased via Ebay from the Thornycroft Society and

came from the steam launch Aurora (referred to in the article). It had been thought that this steamer was sold abroad but apparently not so; great to find some new information.

This is a photo taken at the 2016 Beale Park Boat Show showing the engine being lowered in the exhibition tent. This Thornycroft compound engine built 1897 has cylinders 5½" + 9" x 7" with a geared boiler feed pump and a direct driven air pump delivering 46 HP. It seems that the steam plant was probably condensing, and steam was provided by a WT boiler.

Maritana

You may remember a few years ago we were interested in the old boathouse next to Nun's Acre site at Goring thinking it might have been owned by F. C. Strick for the steam umpire launch Maritana (Consuta's sister). However a friend of ours in Canada, Jacques Valiquette, has provided some interesting information about a sale in 1929 of Mr. Strick's property "Grange Bank" at Goring. The photo on next page shows the layout of property for sale.



THE LARGE BOAT HOUSE (LOT 3).

Included in the sale publicity was a photo of Maritana in the boathouse, which is shown located on the plan as plot 3 overlooking Goring Lock and not, as previously thought, to be next to Nun's Acre.

I remember that this boathouse was used by John Ashton in the 1970's to house a fine ex Windermere steamer Banshee. The boathouse had since been converted to a private house and is next to another thatched building which burnt out a couple of years ago.

THAMES BANK

GORING

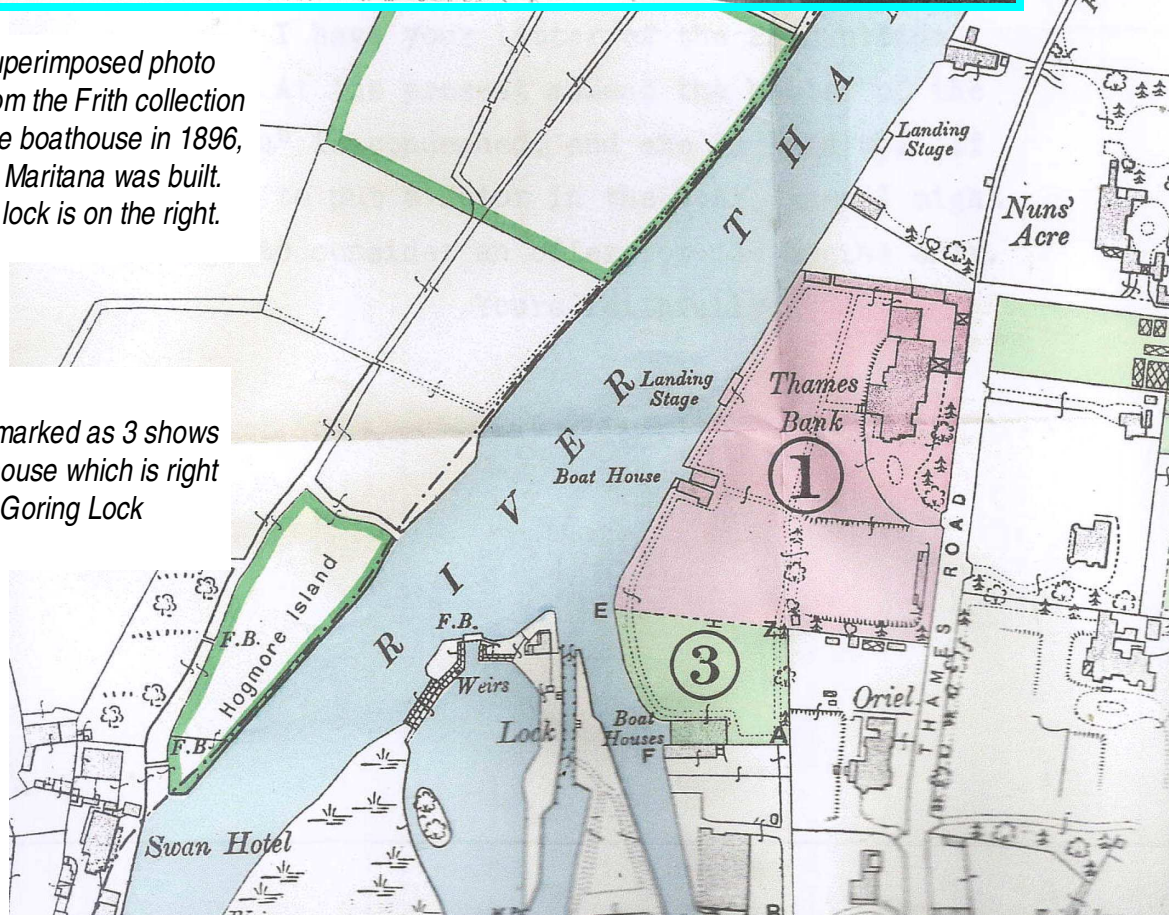
OXFORDSHIRE

For Sale by Auction by
MESSRS. KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY
— 1929 —



The superimposed photo above from the Frith collection shows the boathouse in 1896, before Maritana was built. Goring lock is on the right.

The plot marked as 3 shows the boathouse which is right by Goring Lock



Pierrette



On the left is a scan of an old negative from a box containing photos stated Tom Taylors boatyard; so we think this could be Pierrette taken in the 1950's when owned by J. B. Hickey.

The photo shows the basic hull, which was known to have been replated just after WW2 at the yard, also with a new boiler alongside built by Mr. Hickey.

Note the offset funnel spigot to allow the boiler to be set over for more space for side firing.

Pierrette is a riveted steel hull built in 1894 by Desvignes with a twin cylinder steam engine, a replica was built 1950's by Mr. Hickey; Pierrette is currently owned by Bill Rose.

Photo on the right shows Pierrette after the restoration by Mr Hickey



More about Thames boating Archives

While talking about archives we've also been given some photos of a Tom Taylor's boatyard catalogue of 1912. A PDF download copy of this is available to the public for £1.50 at the Heritage Steamboat Trust website. <http://www.steamboattrust.org.uk/>. Click the green shop button on the right of the page and then select PDF download section – the Tom Taylor catalogue is on the 2nd page. The shop direct hyperlink is:- <http://www.steamboattrust.org.uk/cart/store/?pID=42>

Project activities programme

We had intended to arrange a few more HLF sponsored visits to marine museums this year, however this is not possible for the time being.

Consuta engineering

Now the enforced pause in our work has allowed some extra investigations about various Consuta related matters, and also much intense activity in my own workshop.

The propeller was a bit dirty so thought it would be well worth a good clean and polish up. This revealed some later day blade edge work – thought to have been to stop propeller singing, it was also apparent from the profile of each blade, that the prop had probably been re-pitched for a shorter pitch. The prop size is marked as 30" diam by 40" pitch, so may have been cut down from a longer pitch, and larger diameter propeller specifically for Consuta's requirements. There was an interesting number on the side of the boss marked 02 8560 34 53, which left us



Our Consuta Social gathered at the Swan in Streatley during February this year



Two photos of Consuta's Propeller above – note the apparent change of pitch, all blades show this same bend in the blade form.

wondering if the original size of the prop had been 34" dia by 53" pitch. Am I reading too much into this? Must try measuring the pitch near the blade root to check.

Paul had always been concerned that Consuta's engine didn't have a proper DesVignes style reversing gear locking nut; also the one fitted was less than ideal. So have built up the following part in the spare time.

Best wishes to all,

The Consuta Trustees

April 2020

