



THE EMPIRE'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 Royal

Consuta Trust Newsletter - Spring 2017

Dear All,

Wonderful News – we have been awarded an HLF grant of £99,500

The Consuta Project is a grant application submitted to the HLF for a new boiler for Consuta, the total cost was budgeted at £119,500 of which the Consuta Trust will be contributing £20,000 from our own cash reserves.

This Project will last for about 18 months from late Spring 2017 to December 2018. The purpose is to build the boiler to be ready for fitting by the autumn 2017, then followed by an extensive fitting out period from autumn of 2017 to have Consuta ready by May 2018; this means no loss of Consuta operations this or next year.

The grant is in three parts. The first and most important is to replace the boiler with an improved design, this work includes the pressure vessel, all the boiler fittings, replacement smoke box, funnel, silencer, grate bars, ashpan, lagging and new pipework. The second part is for the consequential changes which needs a complete redesign and replacement of the boiler casing, including changes to the woodwork around the engine. The third part of the grant is for an important feature of HLF grants intended to promote public activities relevant to the project. For our project this involves providing an exhibition display at Beale Park all about Consuta and the development of steamboats, and will be used to provide various project activities for visitors. This exhibition will be staffed by two part time staff who will be recruited for the 18 month programme, plus additional support from volunteers who would like to help. Costs for the two staff are included in the project grant.

The exhibition will be a wonderful opportunity to recruit “younger” people to join our group looking after Consuta. If you would like to be actively involved either as a volunteer or as part time paid staff please do get in touch. There are job descriptions for the two part time staff required on our website. If you like meeting the public and have some spare time please do consider helping out.

We will also need volunteers to help with the specific work on Consuta as well.



This is a photo of the exhibition unit purchased for the project, this will now need to be fitted out for our use.

Now some rather sad news

Richard Howard was Chairman of the Child Beale Trust and some of you will know that he had successfully managed this popular wildlife park near Pangbourne for over 60 years. The Child Beale Trust is a registered charity and the park first opened in 1956.

Richard was a keen ornithologist, following in the footsteps of his great Uncle Gilbert Beale, and has been the main driving force to keep the park viable to the present day; this was quite a challenge with all the modern options that vie for the attentions of young families.

During a 2013 radio interview with his friend Sir John Madejski, Richard explained that he had been thrilled when in the 1950's his great uncle Gilbert Beale had decided to give him the Park's 350 acre estate as a lifetime job to manage for the benefit of the people of Reading. Richard continued that his uncle unfortunately did not leave him with any funds to do this. This radio interview can be accessed on the internet. Charity law also changed so that trustees could not have any benefit from property owned by a trust, which meant that Richard was not even able to live in any of the trust's own property; despite this restriction he continued to attend the park on a daily basis with a very hands on approach.



*18th May 1936 to 18th March 2017
Richard Percival Howard
Chairman of The park Trustees*

Richard's other main hobby was model boats; he had amassed a collection estimated at over 2000 model boats, many quite large scale; the Tirpitz is probably 20ft long, some of the smaller models are on display in the park pavilion. I've known Richard for a long time having first met him in the early 1990's when he was involved with ideas about establishing a full size boat and model boat exhibition at the park.

Richard was a very helpful supporter of the Consuta Trust providing moorings on the lake and covered storage space during the winter. The Greenwich Wooden Boat show was moved to Beale Park due to some very active lobbying by Richard, and this annual Beale Park Boat Show has proved very popular with the public and members of many boat clubs

Richard was a man with a great many ideas – some were really quite brilliant and many of which were brought to fruition.

He was a true gentleman, a good friend of the Consuta Trust and a generous personal friend. Our condolences to his wife Sally Howard, his children and many grand children. A private funeral was held on Wednesday 29th March for the family.

The Thames Heritage Museum

This important museum project which is being managed by Thye Tamesis Trust is still ongoing and we will shortly be submitting a reserved matters application to West Berkshire Council planners. The Tamesis Trust application for the reserved matters needs to be submitted by early June. Once the plans have been presented we will ask you to write to the

planners either by letter or online giving your support.. The Consuta Trust does have a vested interest in this museum because we still don't have a secure all weather home for Consuta which would be so helpful with operations, maintenance and generating more future volunteer support.

Full details of the museum design have been completed and we are now just waiting for the final proposals for the landscaping scheme. Sorry this is so slow. This has been mainly due to the negative attitude of the West Berkshire planners making everything as complicated as possible.

Of course we will then have to raise the substantial funds to build the museum, but are quite optimistic about this, after all the museum really will represent an important and totally neglected part of our Maritime Heritage and deserves grant support. If you want to keep up-to-date on progress check the Tamesis Trust Museum facebook and website pages.

The Lottery funded Consuta Project exhibition at Beale Park will not only help promote the future operations of Consuta but can also be used to promote the Thames Heritage Boat Museum project and probably help other organisations such as the Steam Boat Association as well. The objects of the Consuta Trust are quite wide ranging stating objects which are to *"promote the advancement of education in the history of steam launches, by the preservation, maintenance and exhibition of the umpire's steam launch Consuta."*

Pre re-launching work parties

We've only had two so far this year due to a bit of a problem with access to Consuta, but this may have been resolved so we should be able to get everything ready for the summer season. Please keep a regular look at our "Recent News" section on our website, and also or our facebook pages for the very latest news.



Top left:- You are being watched!
Bottom left:- Do you think this paint is any good?:
Below:- Winners of the polishing competition





We cannot go through the season with the boiler painted like this!. It's really a sort of test to see which paint survives. Don't worry, we are planning to paint over with a more conventional Black paint.

Where are the chocolate biscuits – there'll be no more work until they are found!



These two pages are our initial press release. Note that the project has a requirement for two part time staff; for detail please look at the Consuta Trust website or just contact me.

The Consuta Trust wins National Lottery support

The Consuta Trust has been awarded £99,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for "The Consuta Project" based at Child Beale Wildlife Park near Pangbourne.



LOTTERY FUNDED

The Trust maintain and operate the Steam Launch Consuta with the help of its volunteer supporters. Consuta was built in 1898

by S. E. Saunders at Goring using a revolutionary new construction process which resulted in a very light-weight launch that was capable of 27 mph on the Thames, only producing minimal wash.

Made possible thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, "The Consuta Project" will undertake a series of works during the next 18 months to install an historically accurate steam boiler and new super-structure, returning Consuta to her original profile and specification, the work will also result in major improvements to her steaming performance and contribute to her long term survival.

The project also provides a unique opportunity to explain and demonstrate this marine heritage to the 150,000 young family visitors who already come to this popular outdoor park every year. To do this the Trust will be establishing a display exhibition with a variety of activities aimed at inspiring, educating and training visitors of all ages by explaining the development and use of these fast steam launches.

The Consuta Trust restored this historically important launch in 2001, which every year since has been displayed at numerous Thames events. Umpire launches are a very special class of boat, first used from 1870 to carry umpires for the popular Victorian river sport of rowing races, and at the time, these launches were some of the fastest small vessels in the world. The traditional style launches, now fitted with petrol engines, are still used at Thames regattas to carry umpires. Consuta, built nearly 120 years ago, is the only working example of a steam umpire launch. Her revolutionary method of hull construction is the basis for modern plywood and was patented by Saunders as "Consuta Plywood".

Commenting on the award, Brian Smith, Chairman of the Trust said: "We are absolutely thrilled to have received National Lottery support for "The Consuta Project", especially as it will be used to encourage younger generations to learn more about the history behind the development of these amazing river launches".

Local MP Richard Benyon says:- "Consuta is an important part of our Thames heritage locally and I am delighted that this grant will see her being given a new lease of life."

ENDS - more information for editors on next page

Notes to editors

About The Consuta Trust

The Consuta Trust is a registered charity established in 1998 to restore the Victorian steam launch to full working condition. Consuta still successfully carries umpires at several Thames rowing regattas, delivering the very same service she was designed to do nearly 120 years ago.

Consuta was built by Sam Saunders at Goring in 1898 using a strong waterproof plywood made up of four veneers of mahogany, stitched together with thin copper wire. This patented plywood system called "Consuta Plywood" was developed by Saunders and remained in production by Saunders Roe on the IoW for 50 years. However by the 1950's "Consuta Plywood" was superseded by newer technologies using waterproof resins and glass fibre (GRP).

Consuta is registered by National Historic Ships with "Fleet" status because of her great historical significance and is also listed in the "Guinness Book of Motorboating Facts & Feats" as being the first use of plywood to make lightweight boat hulls.

Because of its strength "Consuta Plywood" was a popular construction method used for building power boat racers and flying boats during the early decades of the 20th century. Sir Malcolm Campbell's hydroplane Blue Bird K3 built in 1937 achieved a world record speed of 130mph, using "Consuta Plywood" for her construction.

"Consuta Plywood" was the preferred Admiralty choice for service launches carried on battleships because of its resilience to damage caused by the concussion of the warship's big guns.

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #HLFsupported.

For further information, images and interviews, please contact

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