

Thames Heritage Boat Museum

Why at Beale Park and why now

- Wonderful opportunity to gather several surviving historic boats under one roof
- Our River Thames heritage is a very undervalued part of history
- Local boat Consuta cannot continue indefinitely without covered accommodation
- A new feature to help sustain Beale Park

Impact of museum on the area

- Non Commercial – public benefit - charity
- Discretely hidden behind trees in style of a Victorian boatshed
- Nothing to be seen from around the lake, and no change in activity on the lake

Historic Boats and boat building

- Consuta built Springfield works in 1898 – 1st plywood boat and process patented.
- Important Victorian boat builders Saunders, Thornycroft Yarrow and others
- Recognition by local council - Oxford Council award of Blue Plaque to Goring
- Cygnet is probably the oldest surviving mechanically powered boat (143 years old)
- Donola owned by NMM built for Mr Palmer later owned by Thames Conservancy
- All boats listed by Historic Ships - Marine equivalent of English Heritage

River History

- Conflict between navigation and millers on the river – flash and pound locks
- The Ferries displaced by road bridges Goring 1837, Whitchurch 1792
- Boat hire at most villages following the building of railways from London
- Introduction of the first mechanically propelled boats using steam
- Boat building developed during 19th century eg 2 boat builders at Pangbourne
- Thames Conservancy business:- weirs, locks, new cuts, and lock garden competition
- Salters steamer service started in 1888 Oxford to Kingston
- Saunders boatbuilding at Streatley, Goring, then the Springfield Works above Cleeve
- Development of high speed launches and umpire boats
- Development of the Naval torpedo boat
- Introduction of electric propulsion for boats – how and why – rechargeable batteries
- The early use of Internal combustion engines in boats
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Steam umpire launch Consuta



- Built by S.E. Saunders of Goring (Springfield Works) in 1898 as an experimental steam launch on a commission by Mr Clutton as a low wash umpire launch for the Henley Royal Regatta.
- The lightweight method of consuta was patented by Saunders as Consuta plywood a very strong plywood which remained in production until the 1950's.
- Steam plant removed in 1923 and replaced with a petrol engine.
- Used by the BBC in 1947 to provide the first outside broadcast coverage of the Oxford and Cambridge Boat race
- In use as an umpire launch until the 1960's
- 1970's bought privately for restoration.
- 1996 The Consuta Trust was formed and worked towards the restoration of Consuta using its original steam engine.
- 2001 restoration completed and used each year since then for public benefit at various river Thames events.
- Listed as one of Historic Ships National fleet

Thames Conservancy Inspection launch



- Built in 1894 by Kingdon Yacht and Launch Company (G.F.G DesVignes) at Teddington for Mr Palmer of the Reading biscuit company of Huntley and Palmer. Named Lodona
- 1923 purchased by the Thames Conservancy and used as their VIP inspection launch until 1969. Attended many important Conservancy functions. Name changed to Donola
- 1969 taken out of service and present to the National Maritime Museum. On display until about 1990's. Now held in store at Swindon – not accessible by the public.
- Listed as one of Historic Ships National fleet

Steam Launch Cygnet



- Built by J.I. Thornycroft in 1870 at Chiswick; the same year that The Cutty Sark made its maiden voyage. Thornycroft yard number 9.
- Considered by many to be the oldest surviving steam powered boat in the country, held in storage by Thornycroft from 1914 to 1960
- Now owned by The Thames Boats Trust and currently on temporary display at a sail and man powered boat museum
- Listed as one of Historic Ships National fleet