



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 - Autumn 2025

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter.

Consuta Maintenance work at Charvil

Some important engine maintenance work needed was completed. This was because a taper pin locking the valve fork rod to its die pin had dropped out at the end of the busy training practice day which had to be refitted correctly. So an opportunity was taken to do this and carry out other general boat maintenance.

Henley Women's Regatta

Mark decided to start early from Charvil on the Saturday morning, since there are only two locks upstream from the Henley rowing course. Interestingly Consuta needed a lot less coal with the new boiler than used in previous years with the old one. I had agreed to take some extra coal to Henley when it might be required,

Unfortunately there was a major 2½ hour hold up at Marsh Lock. The lock was on self service for the day but had tripped out, and then for some unknown reason even the manual operation was chained up, so Consuta didn't arrive at Henley until after 12:30am

Once on duty however she performed extremely well and there is some great video at the start of one very fast eight race taken by David Eager. Consuta is certainly steaming better than ever and produces much less wash at speed due to being lighter. Engine revs were reported as reaching over 640 rpm at one fast race start, this equates to about 21 mph. This is the link to the youtube video:-



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSbiWNAd0VA>

For those who have seen the video, the blast of black smoke is caused by the soot accumulation on the boiler tubes when slow running then being blasted out – looks impressive doesn't it and I suppose these dirty emissions will only be carbon not CO2?

Consuta remained on umpire duty until well after 1800 hrs because of the late start, so she finally arrived back at Charvil by sundown, making this a long day for the crew.



Some of the crew and helpers at the Henley Women's race day steaming



Top right:- finally getting through Marsh Lock

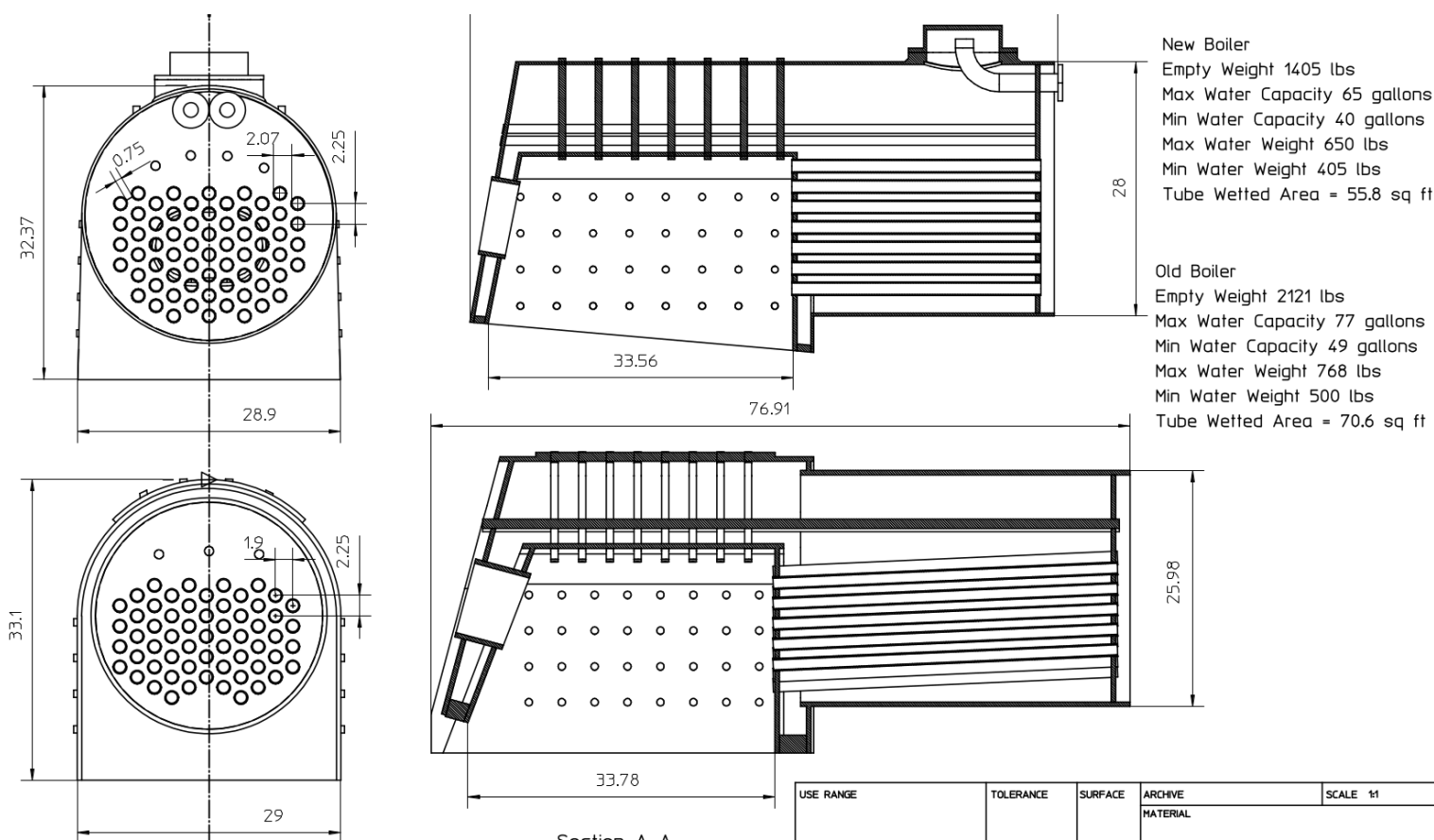
Bottom right:- Returning home after a very long day



Onboard Consuta following a race



Getting lined up for a race start



David E. provided this drawing comparison of Consuta's old boiler with the new one. Just look at the weight difference between them.

A Consuta work day before the Henley Trad Festival



Paul cleaning the port topside using Altrans Acid Cleaner.

During the Trad show I was talking to Steve and Dilly Bil about the waterline scum problem. It seems many have their own ideas about the best method to use for cleaning the topsides. The dirt is basically a chalky deposit combined with river dirt and needs to be cleaned off every year when hauled out. Consuta had been in the water now for three years without a shore based clean.

This is clearly a common problem so if you want the topsides to remain clean and bright, cleaning agents usually involve some type of chemical toilet cleaner.

We had managed to obtain a large container of the Debs product, and although rather awkward to apply while the boat is afloat, it really does a splendid job.

Setting up our display for the Henley Classic Boat Festival

Mark and Paul had decided that our trad display for this year would show the development of power boating on the Thames, using a small selection from the Tamesis Trust's historic collection of engines and these were laid out in historical order. The display would be made up from some of the lighter engines we have, although the Submersible's 2.5 Kw electric motor of 1919 weighing in at 380 lbs was quite an awkward and heavy item to move.

Paul provided the display racking shelves, these were assembled on site during the Thursday setting up day. We had some welcome help from our supporters during the day and I think everyone was well pleased with result of the final display. Mark had arranged that several exhibits would allow visitor manipulation, and as expected this proved most popular for the younger visitors during the show.

There was quite a bit of rain on some days, however our display marquee provided a dry meeting place to have a chat to many friends.



Richard tidying up the coal bunker



Marine Engines on display

Steam engine, Smith of Soho	1850
Twin compound steam engine	1890's
DesVignes single steam engine	1898/9
Submersible electric motor	1919
Saunders twin petrol engine	1927
Single cylinder Watemota	1930
Stuart Turner 5A steam engine	1956



Consuta steaming on parade



Empress Electra, a 40ft Saunders stitched hull

I had wondered if it would be possible to take along the figurehead from the Aurora which the Tamesis Trust had recently acquired also plus Aurora's steam engine. However both the engine and the bronze figurehead were just too heavy, so in the end we settled for a banner with some detailed info about Aurora plus photos. The solid bronze figurehead is attached to a section of Aurora's bow plate which appears to be made of about 1/16 inch thick steel.

Consuta is sometimes credited as being one of the first uses of a tunnel stern propeller. However Aurora was a 70ft experimental shallow draft steamer fitted with tunnel stern built by Thornycroft ten years before Consuta, and was also fitted with a Turbine propeller, this is a propeller shrouded in an outer casing.

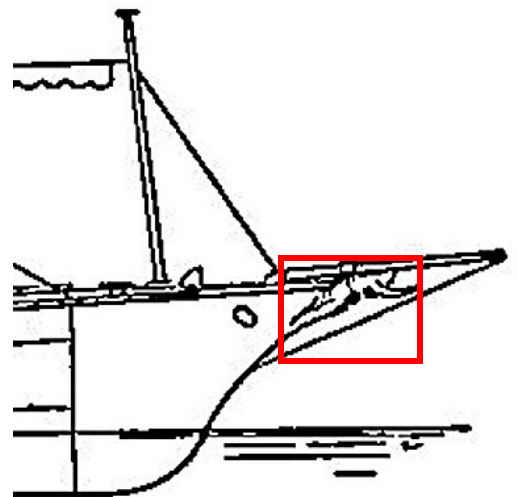
Best wishes,

Brian Smith and The Consuta Trustees, August 2025

The photos below give a good idea of the size of the bronze casting figurehead next to Lyn. Lyn spent some effort to cleanup the figurehead before gold painting. Mark used a 3D printer to make the "plug in" arms which had been lost some time in the past.

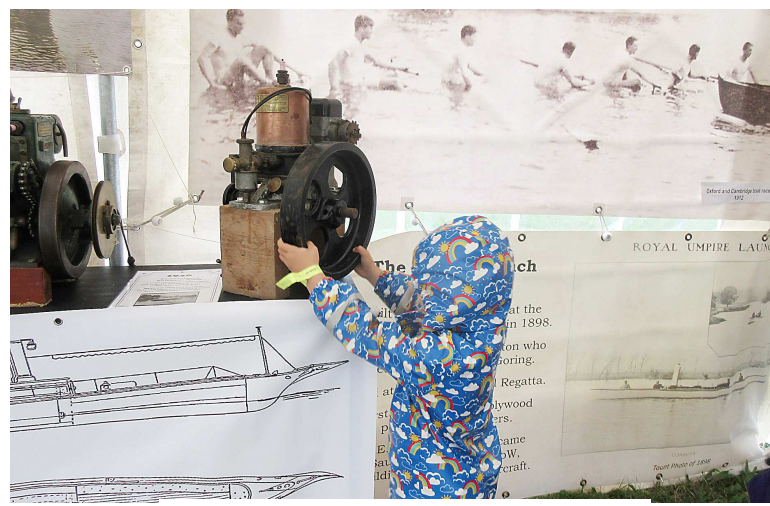
The red outline on the Aurora sketch indicates the section of hull saved.

The steam engine photo is the 45 HP compound from Aurora, taken a few years ago.





I made a smaller one of these



I can even turn this one



Looking over Consuta's old petrol engine casing



See what happens here



A view along the display



Now let me try turning it.

A visit to the Henley River Rowing Museum before closure

We are planning to arrange a Consuta visit to the Museum during Saturday of the final weekend before the museum closes, weather permitting. This is during Heritage Open Days Festival and the museum entry will be free. Why not visit by boat or by car, this is the last chance to see the steam launch Eva on display here.