



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**

Website: www.consuta.org.uk

News Letter No. 44 — Spring 2011

Dear Supporter, welcome to our first newsletter of 2011.



Scene taken during a recent April work party – it was such a nice day we pulled Consuta out of the Cowshed into the sunshine to check out the fit of the new cover.

I'm sorry to report that our good friend Robin Wallace Sims died suddenly of a heart attack at the beginning of February. Robin had been an active supporter of the Trust from the very beginning of the restoration, starting with those early work parties at Colin Henwoods yard. Robin was a useful crew member, and because of his interest in engine performance he took measurements of the engine HP using his computer indicator set. Robin also installed several very useful features on Consuta, notably the Windermere Kettle, and just recently, an analogue rev counter complete with engine valve chest pressure gauge, this is mounted on a board by the port coal bunker.

Sadly another of our long standing supporters Philip Brown has just died.

Our condolences to family and friends of both men.

Behind the scenes

Since the autumn there have been three trustee meetings and five work parties, so a lot going on. Some of the work parties were held in really cold weather I think the thermometer was showing minus even in the shed so it was a nice surprise that supporters turned out at all.

Some of the old Salters passenger steamers have recently been scrapped, first it was Mapledurham, then Marlow which had been languishing at Peter Freebody's yard at Hurley for so many years; now scrapped last year, and then just recently Clivedon. Clivedon was the last of the Salters tunnel stern steamers and was put up for sale by auction, but failed to sell. I had inspired visions of it being floated on the lake at Beale Park for use as a Consuta club room, but sadly wiser heads said no!

So you might ask:- when is our "permanent Consuta base" to be achieved? We do seriously need something that has workshop facilities, a crew rest room, and a public display area. As always there is promising news. Beale Park are presently carrying out a review of how the future of the park is to be managed; and a base for Consuta and Cygnet plus maybe other historic craft is included in this brief. Also there are a couple of other locations still under investigation. Just recently we had a most interesting approach about a proposal for a base near Henley, this would be wonderful if it happened, but I suspect will fall foul of the bureaucratic planning system.

We will be having our new cover for the summer season, this is in light beige instead of green colour, on the initial fitting out trial it looked very good.

Consuta operations planned for 2011

The first event of the year was our annual social luncheon in February. This year Derek Brown arranged to have our meal at the Beale Centre serviced by the park caterers.



When built, this building won an architectural prize because of its interesting design. It certainly provided a wonderful venue for our social with 44 persons attending. Before the meal visitors were given the opportunity to have a look over Consuta and Cygnet, both are snugly buttoned up in the old cowshed. *(Cygnet shown in the photo on the left)*

Following the meal several members then had a look around the park which in addition to the animals, includes rides on a steam train, and an impressive model boat display. One of our supporters said that they thought the park was lovely and they would definitely come again and bring the whole family in warmer weather.



The 2011 calendar of events

Now in print, a copy is attached. Please note that the detail will be subject to change.

One extra feature is that we are intending to have at least two crew training/refresher outings before the Beale Park Boat Show. The Trustees believe this is necessary because we need to encourage more support crew who have the proficiency for handling Consuta. So if you have been holding back, why not come along and see what is required and also if you can help supplement our crew this year.

The winter maintenance involves the usual cleaning and repainting, but this year we have also carried out work on the engine to remedy some play in the works. It is very important to ensure that the engine is properly oiled up for use and it has been noticed that sometimes the oiling of the engine has been neglected.

There was some two to three thou inch play in some of the key engine components, this has now been reduced to 1 thou or less – parts serviced are the crosshead slipper, little and big ends. The method of holding the slide valves in position on the valve rods, although common practice, is not good engineering. There was some 1/16 inch slack on one valve now reduced. This slack would make a metallic clicking sound while running.

Our new Engineers Manual is now available – bit a of a grand title – but it does have a lot of useful information in the 24 pages of an A5 booklet; copies available for a £2 donation. Alan Douglas has also produced a Consuta Procedures and Reference manual which includes everything that all skippers should know about managing Consuta on the river.

The first main event this year is the Beale Park Boat Show. This is a great event and as always we need volunteers to man our shore stand which will have Cygnet as a static exhibit and also help steam Consuta. The show is immediately followed on the Monday by the U3A (University of the third Age). The U3A will be providing a variety of talks in the morning then several boats including Consuta providing short trips in the afternoon for visitors.

We are going to have a significant presence at the Henley Festival during July, more later.

This year the Goring and Streatley Regatta doesn't clash with the Thames Trad Boat Rally, so we now have the opportunity to attend both events. The TTBR details still need to be confirmed. If you would like to help at either event, please let me know (we will need help).

Publicity

Our website is a fairly simple presentation and still needs upgrading on some sections, but the website does provide a lot of useful information. We've now added a section with recent photos and comment, updated on a regular basis. There is also an interesting section providing access to some of the archives we have, eg early 1904 Saunders catalogue can be downloaded, many archive photos of the early 1900's also there are lots of photos from past years of Consuta after restoration and much more. Not on the website but some great video clips which have been taken during the last few years is accessible on "youtube". Try a search using keyword Consuta.

The Future

The Trust now have collected quite a lot of historical objects associated with Saunders and Consuta, we hope that these can be put on display soon. There have been murmurs about when are we going to get a better lighter boiler for Consuta. So I've pulled out some provisional designs for a new boiler and it is tempting to think that perhaps we should get on with it. The improvements would be:- lighter weight, a better water range, decent steam take



Above:- The hull being anti-fouled during the last work party. The waterline looks crinkly because the masking tape has not yet been removed..

Photo:- Below a before and after treatment of the bilges in the bow section provided by Alan Douglas. The paint is the original Danboline put on some 12 years ago and still looking perfect. This year floor boards had been removed for repainting and the accumulated dirt is from 3 years usage.

off, and a steam superheater (mild). This would allow Consuta to float about 1.5” higher and should create less wash; the boiler management would be easier and fuel consumption should be lower as well. That’s surely got to be worth the effort, what do you think?

The administration of the Consuta ops will, hopefully by next year, be placed on a more structured basis with named people assuming selected ops responsibilities. ■



Consuta operational Calendar 2011

- May** **Re-launch and Training Session** (*based at Beale Park*)
Launch Consuta in the morning and raise steam for the first of the training outings.
- May** **Training Session** (*based at Beale Park*)
Another Consuta training session will be arranged late May.
- 10th-12th June** **Beale Park Boat Show**
There is to be a PR day prior to the show which might be promoted as a Victorian Steamboat presence. Potential boats afloat are Consuta, Pierrette with Cygnet as a static shore exhibit. Other Victorian steamboats may also be invited
- 13th June** **U3A event at Beale Park**
There is a U3A event on the Monday involving presentations and talks during the morning followed by boat trips in the afternoon – including Consuta.
- 18th June** **Umpire duty at Henley Womens Regatta.**
This is the Saturday and we will need two crews for this busy day.
- 2nd July** **Henley Business School – members day cruises**
- 6th – 10th July** **Henley Festival**
Consuta will be based on site providing evening trips during the Festival.
- 7th July** **Outing during the Henley Festival**
Consuta booked for a private 4 hour trip on afternoon of Thursday 7th July
- 16th – 17th July** **Trad Boat Rally** (*under consideration*)
- 23rd July** **Goring and Streatley Regatta**
- 4th & 26th Aug** **Two days at the River and Rowing Museum**
Consuta will be at the Museum moorings providing trips from 12:00 to 16:00
- 2nd – 4th Sept** **SBA Thames Rally at Beale Park** (*more details later*)

There will also be repositional cruises between Charvil and Beale Park during the summer as required. Trust supporters are welcome to come along space permitting.

The Trust always needs crew and helpers for all these events. If you are able to give a hand or would like further details of the events please contact :-

Brian Smith – Tel:- 01488 658795 or email:- skipper@consuta.org.uk

BWS 20th April 2011

Final Thoughts

In addition to the events shown above, Consuta can also be available for special outings for your own friends or your club. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

If you receive this newsletter by post but have an email address why not opt for receiving the newsletter by email, the email version is in colour and you would be saving the Trust those postal costs. We also have a second email circulation sent to all those who want to be kept informed of Consuta activities as they arise, if you would like to be included just let me know; alternatively if you are getting these emails but would prefer not, then let me know.

Now Consuta costs about £4,000 pa to steam so we rely on your donations and your crewing help to keep her running. Remember if you are a tax payer then your donation can be a “gift aid” donation the Trust can then obtain an additional 25% back from the tax man. **Online donations** can be made using your credit card here:- <http://www.consuta.org.uk/Donation/Consuta%20Donation.htm>

Thank you for your continuing support.