



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 2022

The Covid pandemic has now officially over so we can return to normal life again and pick up where we left off.

Consuta

The Consuta Trust are planning to get Consuta ready for the coming season by arranging some work parties at Beale Park very shortly. If you would like to get involved please let me know ASAP so that we can update our contact details – email or telephone.

There are two potential public events on the Thames this year, The Thames Traditional Boat Festival, based at Fawley Meadow. 15th to 17th July and the SBA Thames Rally at Longridge Water Activity Centre, Marlow, just down river from Marlow, 10th to 11th September.

Coal supplies

Future supplies of the excellent Foss –Y– Fran steam coal is presently quite doubtful, but there may be some later in the year if they are able to get the coal screening and washing equipment back into service. For those that don't know this open cast mine was permitted to open early 2000 because it's output was to be used to supply the local Aberthaw power station which however closed in 2019. All the heritage railways and steam coal users were only a very small percentage of the coal produced here so many preserved lines are now looking at possibilities of obtaining alternative suitable foreign coal sources.

We currently have over 2 tons of this excellent coal in stock. While looking at other possible coal alternatives, I don't think any of the wood derivatives will be suitable for Consuta. I do remember during one of the Beale Park boat shows, we ran out of steam coal on the last day so in an emergency I went to the local garage near the park and bought a bag each of two types of solid fuels. We found that they both worked exceedingly well for light duty steaming, so perhaps in future we might just reserve our present stock of steam coal for special occasions.

Peter Green gave an interesting talk at the SBA AGM about the history of SL Alaska and about some experiments he has been conducting using these so called carbon neutral fuels. It seems these have widely varying properties and widely different requirements to reduce smoke. One fuel being tested required the damper to be kept shut but with a partly open fire door to help reduce smoke emissions. Tests are still ongoing but Alaska now has heated air intake onto the top air of the fire.

The Consuta Grant Project - Exhibition Unit

We decided to sell our lovely event display trailer which had been purchased for use during our HLF grant programme. This exhibition had worked quite well for the first year when set up at the Beale

Park entrance, but then had to be moved after a change of BP trustees who are now adopting more restrictive policies and sadly even Richard Howard's model boat club have been asked to move out? This event display unit had since then only been used once during 2020 at the Thames Traditional Boat Festival. For the 2021 Trad Boat event we used our marquee and this proved much more effective attracting large numbers of visitors.

The Rose/Toop classic Thames boat collection

Unfortunately the planning application for this interesting historic boat collection intended to be based at the old Hobbs yard on the Wargrave Road has been rejected by the Workingham Borough Council, despite overwhelming public support. This decision is difficult to understand and is very reminiscent of our Consuta Trust planning application problems at Beale Park. However we understand that further work will be continuing to convince the planners to give their support for the proposals.

Here is a list of Consuta work required before launching

- Check safety valve settings – it starts opening slightly early
- Some minor vacuum cleaning of the bilges, mainly sawdust.
- Some additional woodwork to be completed
- Various new parts to be painted/repainted, varnished or revarnished.
- Clean up most of the hull and polish the brasswork.
- Accurately renew the waterline – we will keep the old level but just have it a bit straighter.
- Then apply new antifoul in time for the relaunching.
- See about fitting in the Windermere kettle and the hand bilge pump. Sorry haven't yet fitted either.
- Make gauge glass back plates to improve water level sighting.

Launch Consuta

- Make all rangements for relaunching, order crane and prepare suitable jetty mooring.
- Once afloat carry out a pre-inspection steam test and check safety valve, engine and steering are OK
- Arrange a Boiler inspection.
- Arrange a Boat safety inspection.

Some other Consuta work (not essential for operations this year)

- Complete work on the pattern for casting the steam manifold then have this machined up, now we have confirmed the size of injector steam valves to be used. The present manifold is fabricated in DRZ brass but needs to be replaced with a bronze alloy casting such as LG2 which doesn't suffer dezincification (ie it doesn't go porous) this is an alloy used for most bronze style steam valves.
- Replace the current main engine steam screwed steel section pipe line (1½" ID bore) with thick walled custom shaped copper pipe sections. We might be able to do this ourselves using a brazing hearth; the copper pipe is 1½" bore with an ⅛" wall. This size of copper pipe does bend quite easily but needs serious heat treatment to get it to bend in the right places. We've had no problems bending thick wall ¾" bore pipe, so will just have to see.
- Finish the casting pattern work for the two period styled combined check and shutoff cocks for the two injectors, then have them cast and machined up.
- Stainless steel steam drier/superheat section for fitting in the smokebox.

Trustee changes

After our Trustees meeting earlier this year Colin Henwood has decided to step down as a Trustee. He is however staying involved with the trust and will do what he can to help whenever needed. Colin has

already sounded out potential alternative bases for Consuta both afloat and ashore.

We are most grateful for all Colin's help over the years.

New Trustees and Volunteers are urgently needed

I've been involved with Consuta since the mid 1990's, the charitable Trust was formed in 1998. I'm less active than I used to be in those early years because of age. We now need not only new Trustees but additional volunteers to help keep Consuta operational into the future. If you would like to take a more active role in the Trust or are able to help in any way please contact me.

Paul Smith also adds his thoughts.

I have also been involved with Consuta for the same numerous years as my father, in fact I think it was even me who first chatted with Graham Lindsay all those years ago about Consuta and expressed a wish to visit her, a wish which he was kind enough to grant.

As far as I recall this was the visit that cemented the idea that something had to be done to try and help Consuta recover from the sad state she found herself languishing in.

As a result of all the work undertaken since, Consuta is probably now in as good a condition as she ever has been, certainly at least since she was first built.

However she now faces other dangers of a different kind and I think perhaps many of our supporters may not be aware of the seriousness of the situation. Following the recent stepping down of Colin Henwood as trustee and the loss of Tony Cundick due to ill health we are currently operating with the lowest number of Trustees the Consuta Trust has ever had.

In the earlier days we had many active Trustees, in fact it seemed there was always someone to take on every element of the Trusts varied operations; some liked running the boat, others were happy just making things or contributing from afar; we didn't seem to be short of offers to take on whatever task was needed, those were happy times!

However in recent years it seems as if Consuta has become a more Smith family focused effort assisted with the help of just a few supporters however I feel it shouldn't be that way so this must be addressed as soon as possible.

We definitely need additional trustees to join the team ready to explore new ideas, so if you have any suggestions on this please do get in touch. The base at Beale Park has worked very well for the last 20 years, the trust accounts are very healthy, however with the demise of the museum planned at the park we should now be looking elsewhere for any potential alternatives to ensure a future operational base for Consuta.

Boat Race 2022

Finally don't forget this year's boat race which will be covered by the BBC Sunday afternoon 3rd April.

Spring Season Consuta work parties

I will be looking to arrange this early April probably on Saturdays.. Please let me know if you can come along and help out. I will in any case circulate dates via email as well.

Best wishes,

Brian Smith

On behalf of the trust

23rd March 2022

Photos taken this year



The top two photos show some repair work to the shed following those high winds in January. Fortunately only minor repairs needed. The end canvas had ripped a little to needed more securing screws and one of the plastic windows had become detached allowing rain to blow in.

Lower two show a section of the main steam line which is being removed for lagging. This pipe work will eventually be in carefully bent copper pipe replacing the present various screwed pipe section. It is quite a convoluted bit of pipework, the valve on the line is the main boiler steam stop valve.

