



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 - Summer 2023

Hello All,

Welcome to our Summer News letter.

There were several work party days prior to the launching date, also we needed to check how Consuta could be safely moored on the lake. Fortunately our old wooden jetty was still afloat, just disguised under some overgrown vegetation. However with a bit of gardening work this pontoon was soon pronounced fit to use if needed.

Consuta was launched by crane at Beale Park on Wednesday 31st May.

I had been slightly apprehensive at first because we had never moved Consuta across the field to the road with the propeller fitted, the prop sticks down quite a bit so could drag in the ground. The weather forecast for the day was dry and a bit cool, however it was lightly raining when we set off from home at about 7:30am; thankfully the rain didn't last long.



The grass in the field had not been cut and was waist high also now a little damp. There is a wooden bar at the base of the shed exit which needs some careful placement of ramp chocks on the approach for the trailer wheels. Cygnet was moved out first with no problems. Consuta however got stuck on this bar with front trailer wheels over it and back wheels behind. Our Disco needed extra help, so Tiki with her 4x4 ranger provided some extra pull power with a rope.

Thanks to all who came early, the moral support is so reassuring.

Roy and son Nick arrived with their crane just as we had moved Consuta to the lake; this was brilliant timing.

The lifting frame was quickly assembled, Consuta lifted and then held suspended allowing Paul to finish off the antifouling (these are the hull parts masked by the trailer pads when Consuta is on it). We

were now wondering about Consuta's total weight, Roy confirmed this as 3.2 tons. This means that Consuta is now about 0.5 tons lighter with the new boiler. She will of course weigh a little more when her boiler is filled with some 40/50 gallons of water, however even the water content will be less than that needed for the old boiler.

In 2000 Andrew Wolstenhome and Colin Henwood had found an original water line marking! this suggested that Consuta's original weight might have only been 3 tons, if so this would be an extremely low weight for a 51ft boat built in 1898.

Once the antifouling was completed Consuta was carefully lowered into the water and checked for leaks, guess what? Oops sorry - none of the injector water pipe connections had been re-sealed after our 2022 boiler inspection, this despite the job being listed as a key task to complete before launch day. Consuta's boiler inspection had been carried out on its trailer

so the water feed pipes needed to be connected to a temporary water tank to demonstrate that the injectors worked OK. Finely all was well with a bit of tightening up and much muttering. I suppose this was a bit like launching a boat without replacing the drain bungs.

It was suggested that instead of using our old wooden pontoons it might be better to moor Consuta on the TVBC pontoons on the lake which would place Consuta out of sight of the main car park, perhaps giving some better security. Several members then had fun paddling Consuta against a rather stiff breeze to this mooring. Tiki steering said "slow astern", a crew said "we can only go

slow". Watching from the shore, it didn't always seem that everyone was paddling the same way.

Two further visits were made to Consuta by Paul and self, to install various things before the first steam test .

The first steam test afloat was on Saturday 3rd June. Checking injectors after raising steam however revealed that one of them worked fine but the other had a major leak on the pipe between boiler feed valve and injector. At first this leak was thought to be a badly fitting joint, but investigation showed a damaged pipe fitting – probably frost damage? so a new component needed to be made.

The engine was warmed up and gingerly tried out, it



was apparent that the engine steam valve events required some adjustment, also there seemed to be some strange pipework whistling noise – but where? also a bit of an engine knock – further investigative work clearly needed.

After adjustment of engine valve settings and refitting the repaired pipe, a supporters steaming was arranged for 17th June. The engine was now running much better and both injectors were working. This whistling seemed to be from the main steam/exhaust pipework between silencer and the blast pipe.

Later checks showed that the holes in the connection gaskets were slightly smaller than the pipe internal diameter so perhaps were the cause. Trimming the gasket seemed to improve this but further work is still needed. Photo below shows gasket trimmings.



During one of the steam runs out onto the river the reverser end-stop pin became loose causing alarming noises. This noise was due to increased valve travel in reverse causing the valve rod fork to hit the valve packing gland retainer. A taper pin holding the limit stop had fallen out, so the reverse end stop limit wasn't working, fortunately no damage was done, and the stop limit ring is now refixed

The Trust had applied for a Thames Boat Registration late May however it seems there had been a revision of boat requirements in 2021; these caused major problems to register Consuta. Pity we had not been included on this EA

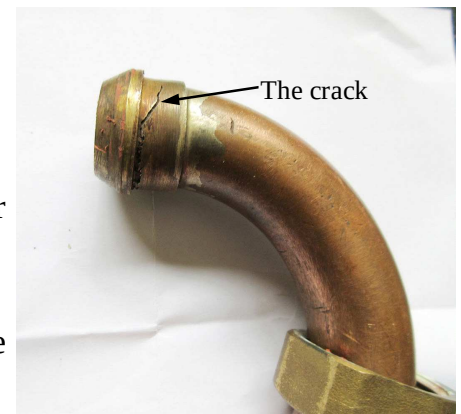
consultation paperwork, so now for some reason Consuta could only be classed as a charity/ not for profit “business boat“ what ever that means. We were asked to fill out a “supplementary business form”, but this only had one tick box for a not for profit organisation, and having sent this off we were then told that this was not the correct box to tick – what’s going on? All other entries on the form were for commercial operations, and these require more stringent safety requirements.

The EA finally accepted by late July that they would have to specially register Consuta, as she did not fit into their new registration form; it also seems that we would now require a “non private” Boat Safety Scheme Certification before we could get a licence? Despite only having just obtained a new “private” boat SSC as previously required. Sadly we were never informed of these changes involving more costs, I wonder why not?

Because of this we had also applied too late to obtain a mooring at the Thames Traditional Boat Festival, so were now left wondering whether we could use a Thames visitor boat licence for Consuta, while the EA were still deciding how to register Consuta or not.

The weather forecast had predicted rather gloomy wet and windy days for the event, and bringing an open boat on the long trip would not have been very pleasant, so we decided not to try, sorry about this. (I’m getting too old for these pleasures now).

The Consuta Trust did nevertheless provide a great shore display at the Traditional Boat Festival using our marquée. Our display was very popular with visitors, despite the continuous rains on the Friday and the gale force winds on the Saturday.





Consuta back on the water showing off her new boiler casing profile

I attended on the Wednesday setup day but dropped out for the wet Friday. Many thanks to all who came along to help out during the event.

Due to other commitments and some unfavourable weather forecasts we have decided to delay the trip up the K&A canal until we've renewed Consuta's boiler inspection.

Here are some photos below taken during the show. Most boat parades were cancelled because of high winds on Saturday. The SBA steamboats however are hardy people so most steamers paraded every day, even on the Saturday with white horses seen on the Henley reach.

Children and older young at heart loved playing with the steering wheels and turning the small steam engine, all set up by Mark Smith. The bottom right photo shows the wheel and the large engine casing from Consuta's Gray Marine petrol engine installation of the 1960's.





Above a brave French crew were readying their skiff.

These photos here are only a small sample of the event activities, for more photos please look at Consuta's facebook pages.

*The steam Launch **Duet** owned by John Puddy had steamed down river from Lechlade.*

Other steamboats on show:-

Alaska, Alytra, Annajane, Garlandstone, Olive, Pendlebury, SL Aurelia, Sunbeam.



New to the Boat show on Sunday were two traction engines which came onto site in steam. One on the right was a fine example of the type of steam engines used to pull ploughs.

I was interested to see a Penberthy type steam injector on one engine similar to the small one we use on Consuta



The Steamboat area during a sunny period on the Sunday



The marquée display was thanks to the work of Mark, Paul, and Lyn Smith
 Best wishes from the Consuta trustees,
 Brian Smith

24th July 2023