



The Consuta Trust

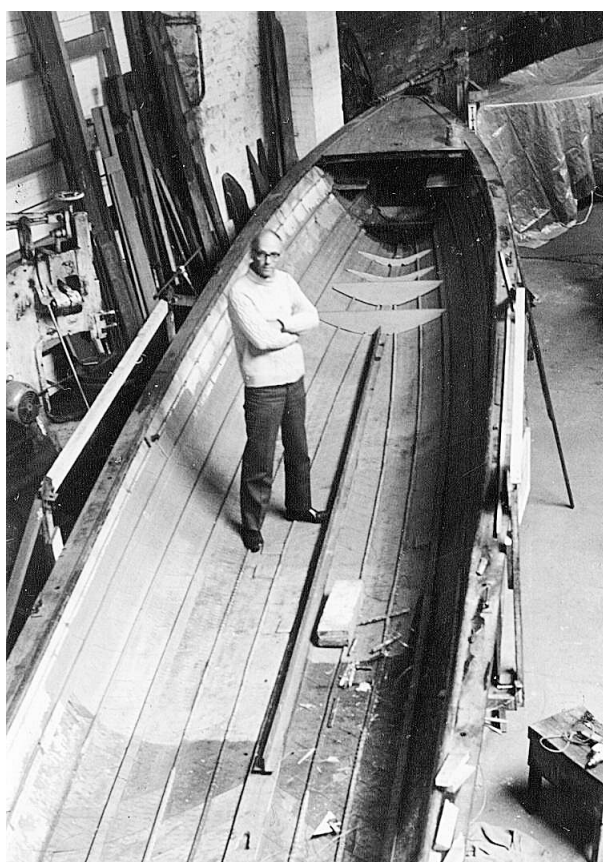
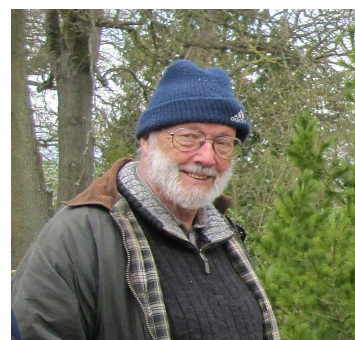
The advancement of education in the history of steam launches, by preservation, maintenance and exhibition of the steam launch **Consuta**

Consuta Trust Newsletter - Autumn 2022

Dear All,

This autumn edition of the newsletter brings with it the sad news of the passing of one of the Consuta Trust's founding Trustees on 12th August aged 83. Tony Cundick was a familiar figure for many of us, one who happily engaged in all aspects of the of the Trust's activities over the years and his presence will be missed.

The funeral was held at North Wiltshire Crematorium near Wootton Bassett on 26th August attended by large number of family and friends with a follow up gathering at The Pelican Inn.



Tony starting the restoration of Consuta in the 1980's

Tony and his late wife Roz Cundick had three children. Tony was a quiet person with a very keen interest in historic steam machinery, and after leaving an early teaching career in Australia he became involved with a great many steam conservation projects in the UK, also including work on several steam launches and their machinery. Tony's practical skills could always be relied on to find solutions for most engineering restoration problems.

I first met Tony in the late 1970's when the SBA held early AGM's at the Kew Steam Museum. Tony was the General Manager of this new historic Museum from the late 1970's until his retirement around 2006. The museum is located at a decommissioned Thames Victorian waterworks in Kew, and houses the original impressive Cornish beam pumping engines which are still in working order and on public display.

Tony with his older brother Lew and others had

also been involved with the restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal steam pumping station at Crofton which had been transferred to the K& A Canal Trust by BW in the 1960's for just £1. The SBA were invited to hold a rally here in 1981 to join the restoration festivities arranged by Tony and the Crofton team, this event was appropriately named "Crofton Unlocked". The event was enjoyed by a wide selection of SBA boaters with members from around the country. Steamboats cruised from Newbury to Crofton with an overnight stop at Kintbury, aiming to use a newly restored section of the canal leading to Crofton. This event took place several years before the full restoration of the K&A canal in 1990.

Tony was interested in all types of steam including boats and helped many SBA members to fulfil their ambitions of owning a working steamboat. Tony himself owned or shared the use of several historic boats:- Sabrina, Eva and Consuta. As a skilled woodworker Tony built the wooden steamboat Netta and fitted out a new 30ft steam launch Grace for his own use. While general manager at Kew, Tony established the Historic Steam Ltd company at the Kew museum making a wide variety of steam launch boilers as well as other varied engineering construction works.



A photo of Eva shortly after restoration steaming on the Thames with Tony on the helm

Tony provided much help and encouragement to the late Graham Lindsay who had several historic steam launch conservation projects. The most successful of these was the restoration of the 1898 steam umpire launch Consuta, this work led to the formation of The Consuta Trust in 1998, Tony was one of the five founder trustees and helped secure a substantial grant from the newly formed Heritage Lottery Fund toward the complete restoration of Consuta by 2001. He was also involved in the Tamesis Trust with aims of establishing a Thames Heritage Boat museum; a project that is still ongoing.

Tony should be remembered as one of the giants of the post 1960's steam conservationist movement, and he leaves behind a legacy of preservation that reaches far beyond the Steam Boating scene.

The Consuta Trust offers condolences to Family and friends for the loss of this remarkably industrious and helpful man.

*Brian Smith
Trustee and Chairman of The Consuta Trust*

Anthony A. Cundick

Died 12th August 2022 aged 84

Consuta volunteers at Beale Park storage facilities during a work party tea break.

Tony is second from the right.



Tony putting some finishing touches to the original decking on Cygnet. At a Beale Park Boat Show

Tony was awarded the SBA Steam Heritage Trophy for conservation work on Cygnet.

A report of this research can be seen on the Heritage Steamboat Trust website:-

<http://www.steamboattrust.org.uk/Conservation.htm>

Tony on the helm of Consuta during an SBA upper Thames rally.

Tony's daughter and grandson are in the front compartment with another grandson at his side.

The two crew are Consuta supporters.



Other news update

A lack of active supporter interest has resulted in Consuta being laid up for another year so not much has been done regarding Consuta operations this year, we have of course been looking at various possibilities for a future Consuta base on the Thames. There are several potential options, but there would be restrictions or limitations which have to be factored into any decision taken.

As mentioned in the previous newsletter it has been suggested that we might look at the possibility of moving Consuta onto the K&A canal next year to over winter (2023/24) in the water at Kintbury. The K&A is a wide canal with a many locks, and this would allow an opportunity to train new operational crews, have secure moorings and be able to visit interesting new places along the canal such as Crofton Beam Engines. One advantage is that the eastern part of the canal does have excellent train services with many stations all within easy walking distance from the canal so avoiding those complicated crew relocation car trips. Consuta of course has ventured onto the canal in the past during the trust ownership with a day visit to the Cuning Man pub at Calcot (West Reading/Theale). Another attempt had been made to visit the Cuning Man but had to be aborted when we found a lock was put out of action with a sunken Narrow boat, so we found alternative eating arrangements in Reading instead on that occasion.

Who knows if there were suitable support maybe Consuta could even head out as far as the River Avon at Bath and on to Bristol, this though is perhaps a little optimistic given the current lack of active supporters, but anything is possible.

Consuta after a stay on the Canal would of course return to the Thames in due course, which is her true home water.

We now also have two potential future Consuta trustees which is great news. Our finances are healthy and we still have a good quantity of Welsh steam coal so all we need now is the right base on the Thames for a secure future.

Also if you want to help keep Consuta running we still desperately need more active supporters and crew, without whom there is a danger that Consuta might well end up as a yet another static exhibit from the steam era.

The K&A canal has seen many steam launches pass through from Bristol to the Thames during historic times, therefore having a steam launch like Consuta on the canal would be nothing new. A few years ago the Kew museum were provided with some historic slides of the Steam launch Eva showing her during a cruise on the K&A canal system probably taken in the 1890's. These were reproduced in the Journal for British Industrial and Transport History Archive magazine issue 27. See the lovely period photo below taken at Kintbury lock.

Brian Smith



This photo from the article shows Eva going downstream through Kintbury lock, the Great Western railway line and Kintbury sidings can be seen just past the haystack