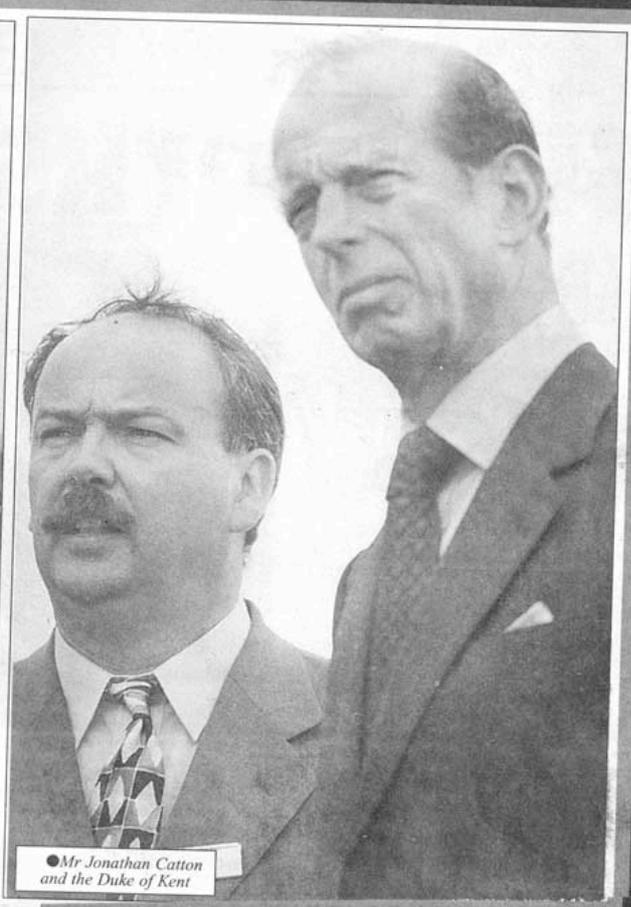




● Mr Jonathan Catton (left) explains the fort's importance to the Duke, Thurrock Mayor, Cllr Merlyn Jones, Thurrock Council leader Cllr Andy Smith and Mr David Riddle, chief executive of Cory Environmental



● Mr Jonathan Catton and the Duke of Kent

FORT WINS ROYAL APPROVAL

Duke visits victorian monument

THE DUKE of Kent visited Coalhouse Fort on Thursday and received a personal tour of the historic fort from Mr Johnathan Catton, assistant curator of Thurrock Museum.

The Duke, a commissioner of the War Graves Commission, and the Lord Lieutenant of Essex were given a presentation on the fort's history and possible future by Mr Catton,

who is also a member of the Coalhouse Fort Project.

During the tour Mr Catton explained the workings of the fort's 19th century gun batteries as well as its later history in the First and Second World Wars.

The party also went to the roof and shown the importance of a fortification of the River Thames at this point.

The Duke was also able to see spectacular views where, on a clear day — Southend and Coalhouse's two sister forts in Kent can be

spotted.

Built between 1861 and 1874, Coalhouse Fort is one of the best surviving examples of a Victorian casemate fortress. It was one of a system of more than 100 forts created to protect Britain from the threat of invasion by Napoleon III.

Guns were housed in large armour-plated rooms connected by a series of underground tunnels.

On arrival, the Duke was presented to Thurrock Mayor and Mayoress, Cllrs Merlyn and Margaret Jones, Thurrock Council leader Cllr Andy Smith, Mr David Riddle, managing director of Cory Environmental and Essex South MEP Mr Richard Howitt.

Other guests included the curator of the Royal Armouries artillery division, senior Army representatives, board members of Cory Environmental and Coalhouse Fort Project volunteers.

OPEN DAY

COALHOUSE Fort is open to the public on the last Sunday of every month as well as during special events. The next open day is set for Sunday, July 27.



● Mayor of Thurrock, Cllr Merlyn Jones, greets HRH The Duke of Kent and the Lord Lieutenant of Essex to Coalhouse Fort

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