

CASH PLAN COULD TURN VICTORIAN FORT INTO A MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTION

# Lottery bid to save Coalhouse Fort

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**MILLIONS of pounds in lottery cash could go into turning Coalhouse Fort in East Tilbury into a major tourist attraction.**

A bid for money from the National Lottery heritage fund is being drawn up as volunteers strive to complete the restoration of the Victorian fort - work started 20 years ago.

**By DAVID HYMAN**

Since then, a small band of workers under the direction of the Coalhouse Fort Project, a registered charity, has done what it can to restore the fort to its former glory.

However, it seems only a massive injection of lottery money can help them achieve their aim.

Thurrock Museum assistant

curator Jonathan Catton, also on the project committee, said: "Historically, this is a very important site.

"Although the project is a registered charity, it is run by volunteers from the community, and there is only so much they can do.

"We are working together with Thurrock Council to formulate a bid for a grant from the lottery, which will run into millions of pounds.

"In the 1960s, Coalhouse was described as the best example of a casement fort still surviving, but we need to get the building totally restored," Mr Catton added.

"We are all working in partnership towards this bid. It is the last surviving fort of its type, but surviving is the word - much of it is in ruins."

The fort was opened in 1874, and has played a vital role in the defence of the country -

and London - during both world wars.

"The defences were upgraded during both wars and the fort played a key role in the defence of the realm because of its strategic position on the River Thames.

"We are hoping the Duke's visit will give us fresh impetus and much needed publicity."

The Duke of Kent is due to visit Coalhouse Fort on Thursday.

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