

My name is Susan Yates and I am chair of Thurrock Local History Society and have been for 15 years. The aim of the Society is to protect and raise awareness of our local history. With this in mind as a Society we attend Horndon Feast and Fayre and the Orsett Show amongst others every year. We have obtained a number of Lottery Grants to promote awareness of the likes of Alfred Russel Wallace and The Dell as well as other figures of local historical importance such as Kate Luard who was awarded the Royal Red Cross Medal and Bar in WW I.

I was invited to replace the late Jonathan Catton as a director of the Tilbury on Thames Trust Limited and I did my homework and researched the Port of Tilbury's owners Forth Ports as I must be careful with whom I associate the Society with. I was pleased to find that they had been involved in the local community and local heritage at the other 7 ports they operate.

Heritage can take many forms we have great military heritage in Tilbury Fort and Coalhouse Fort with whom the Trust is involved. The Trust is also involved as is the Port of Tilbury with the Tilbury Riverside Project, a local community based project. Most important of all is the Tilbury Riverside Station building. This is a Grade II* listed building and whenever it is open to the public via the Cruise Terminal it generates great local interest. It is iconic and has what I like to call the Nostalgia Quotient. Port of Tilbury/Tilbury on Thames Trust Limited are as we speak making this iconic old building weather proof. The asbestos used in the original roofing has been removed and new secure roofing is being put in place. I have actually been on the roof to see this first hand. It is the intention ultimately of the Trust and Port of Tilbury to bring this historic building back in to use. Firstly as a training centre for ex-army veterans to retrain for careers in logistics, secondly to have a small heritage museum and thirdly to have a café for the public. Fact of life people like walking by the water. The Engine Room café at Coalhouse Fort is proof of this, and when people go for a walk they like a drink. So this building will become a great community asset thanks to The Trust and the Port of Tilbury.

The Port has already allowed access to the Cruise Terminal for workshops and open days allowing Thurrock Local History Society and Coalhouse Fort to have displays there. The Trust, Port and Local History Museum worked in conjunction in 2017 to erect and unveil the green plaque to Gunther Pluschow. This I feel will be the first of many such ventures.