

The Colvill Charity

‘Quietly Giving’

The Colvill Charity achieved Bicentenary status on July 7th of this year. For a local charity, established in 1823 this is indeed a remarkable achievement.

John Colvill was a Writer, Philanthropist and Town Clerk of Arbroath. Born in 1755 in Arbroath he was son to John Colville and Margaret Newlands. He was the youngest of three children with two older sisters and as his father was a Dyer it is possible the family became quite wealthy in the industrial times that they lived.

John Colvill, the son, no doubt saw the wealth and poverty generated amidst the increasing industrialisation and expanding population of the town of Aberbrothock. He was an educated man, a Writer, which is an Old Scots word for a lawyer. As mentioned above also Town Clerk, achieving this by paying the town treasurer £315 (approx. £60000 in today's value) in March 1784.

John died in 1812 aged 58. It is likely that he lies buried in the Abbey graveyard as there is recorded a grave number but there is no physical evidence of the grave. He had no children and his wealth, consisting of land, property and money was bequeathed in perpetuity for the purpose of alleviating poverty for those living in the town of Arbroath and Parish of St. Vigean, extending to the borders of county Angus. He believed poverty could be alleviated by education and wished to support those who could not readily afford an education and following Mortification of his estate

(that is the bequeathing of the estate for charitable purposes) in 1812 support for teachers, the church and individuals in poverty could begin. In 1823, after the death of his wife Catherine Mudie in 1821, the Mortification became legally active.

This support to various charities and individuals still continues today.

The Charitable fund is now invested in stocks and shares managed by Thorntons Investments based in Dundee. The income generated is distributed as deemed fit by the Trustees, all local individuals with differing backgrounds including representatives of the Church, Medicine, Military and Law. In recent years the Charity has supported other local charities and organisations such as the Salvation Army, Furniture Recycling, Café Project, Learning Tree, Dementia Project, Angus Toy Appeal, Sea Cadets, Arbroath Rotary, Reach Across, Hope Garden and Food Banks. Private individuals are also supported although the emphasis lies more with supporting local charities.

The Trustees, six in all, meet twice a year with the trust managers to consider proper use of the income generated. The fund size is approx. £500,000 and generates approx. £18000 annually for distribution although unfortunately, a large part is required to meet the costs of running the fund.

Over the years the Charity has amalgamated with other smaller trusts including The George Anderson Trust, The Jamieson Trust, The MB Carnegie Trust, The Renny Strachan Trust and the Brander Fund. Through the Colvill Charity the beneficiaries of the amalgamated trusts and fund continue to be aided.

If you wish to make a donation to the charity, your donation would be added

to the invested trust fund. The income from the investment fund would in turn be distributed for charitable purposes. This means any donation given will in turn give, in perpetuity.

The Colvill Charity has been quietly giving for 200 years.

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I would like to thank Angela Bell and Yvonne Cargill and the Trustees in the writing of this article.

For and on behalf of the Trustees,

John S Cherry.

The Colvill Charity No: SC003913.