

The Hervey Benham Charitable Trust

Founded 1978

The aims of the Trust are, primarily but not exclusively, to support:

- artistic (particularly musical) activities which benefit the people of Colchester and district and can be advanced through “pump priming” by the Trust and/or a contribution which enables “self-help” to function more effectively
- individuals with potential artistic (especially musical) talent who are held back by physical, environmental or financial disability
- preservation of Colchester and district’s heritage with particular emphasis on industrial heritage and the maritime traditions of the Essex/Suffolk coast
- local history and conservation affecting the heritage and environment of the area

The Trust’s broad objectives are to assist talented individuals or groups who would otherwise be underfunded to enable them to develop individual skills or, in the case of groups, their role in the community.

Grants awarded range from tens of pounds to a few thousand. However, the primary purpose is to offer practical support and encouragement as opposed to overall, or matching funding.

Foundation

This grant making Trust was established by Hervey Benham (1910-1987) - newspaper proprietor, author, patron of the arts and lover of maritime Essex.

During a lifetime in the local newspaper industry Hervey Benham expanded the two Colchester titles he inherited (Benham Newspapers Ltd) into the Essex County Newspapers Group, which comprised eight weekly newspapers and one evening paper. These newspapers served Colchester, Clacton, Frinton & Walton, Braintree & Witham, Maldon, Halstead and Chelmsford. In partnership with Arnold Quick the printing company QB Ltd was established and pioneered the web-offset process, which brought new quality standards to newspaper and magazine printing. Colchester, in consequence, remained an important printing centre.

A prominent Colchester citizen, he was a founder of the Colchester Civic Society in 1964 and he launched the campaign which led to the building of the Colchester Mercury Theatre in 1972.

A lifelong amateur sailor, he became an authority on the boats and their related trades along the east coast of England, themes which supplied the basis of eleven of his fifteen books.

An enthusiastic amateur bassoonist, he encouraged talented young musicians to realise their potential and enjoy their music making.

The Trust seeks to continue giving substance to the ideals of its founder by making grants out of the funds that have been managed from those originally provided by Hervey Benham.

Over the years other funds have been added from the Benham family and other sources, including the balance of funds held by Colchester & District Industrial and Commercial Educational Association Limited when it was wound up in the mid 1980’s.

The Trustees are open to accepting new funds to enhance this continuing work.

The beneficial area served by the Trust is principally Colchester and North East Essex.

Examples of grants made under the various activities supported by the Trust include:

MUSIC - *Groups*

St Botolph's Music Society
The Hervey Benham Young Soloists Concert
Colchester Operatic Society

MUSIC - *Individuals*

Under this heading grants contributed to the tuition fees of students with exceptional ability studying at centres which include :-

Junior Academy of Royal Academy of Music
Royal College of Music, Junior Department
The Hague Conservatoire (Baroque Bassoon)
Oundle for Organists (Summer School)
National Schools Symphony Orchestra
(Summer School)
Colchester Institute

Bassoon Purchase Loan Scheme and smaller grants to help purchase other instruments.

The Trust does not normally support students studying for second or further degrees.

AMATEUR THEATRE

Headgate Theatre, Colchester
Colchester Gateway Drama Club
The Mad About Theatre Company
ACE Youth Musical Theatre
Unfortunate Events Theatre Company
Glass House Theatre Company

ART

Cuckoo Farm Studios
Sponsoring an architectural stonemason student

DANCE & PERFORMING ARTS

Assistance with tuition fees to students attending centres which include:-

National Youth Theatre (Summer School)
Bodywork Company Dance Studios
Midlands Academy of Dance and Drama
Greenstead Community Centre – Christmas Show

TRAVEL BURSARIES

Awarded to individuals for projects linked with career enhancement. The annual scheme is operated in partnership with Colchester Institute.

HERITAGE

Colchester Recalled Oral History Group
Mersea Island Museum Trust
Colchester Engineering Society
Colchester Archaeological Trust – Roman Circus
Victoria County History of Essex
Essex Society for Archaeology and History
The Harwich Society
Colchester 24 Trust
Friends of Moot Hall Organ, Colchester

MARITIME TRADITION

Local regattas (incl. HB Smack Trophy)
Shipwright tools
Colne Smack Preservation Society
East Coast Sail Trust –
Thalatta Sail training

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Colchester Mercury Theatre - Mercury Young Co
Kingsway Hall Trust, Dovercourt
Frinton Summer Theatre
The Pimlott Foundation
Roman River Music

PUBLISHING LOANS

West Bergholt Local History Group
Untapped Writers Group
Colchester Archaeological Trust

PUBLISHING - (Books)

A Prospect of Maldon (Maura Benham)
Essex Gold (Hervey Benham)
Life with the Locals (Hervey Benham)
Steam and the Road to Glory (Andrew Phillips)

Books by Hervey Benham

Essex At War (1945)	The Codbangers (1979)
Last Stronghold of Sail (1948)	The Big Barges (1983) (with Roger Finch)
Down Tops'1 : the Story of the East Coast Sailing Barges (1951)	The Salvagers (1986)
Once upon a Tide (1955)	Sailing Craft of East Anglia (1987) (with Roger Finch)
Make You a Wholesome Answer: An Illustrated Story of the First 21 Years of The Colchester Repertory Company (1958)	The Smugglers' Century (1987)
Two Cheers for the Town Hall (1964)	Essex Gold : Fortunes of the Essex Oysterman (1993) (with Peter French)
Some Essex Water Mills (1976)	Life with the Locals (1996)
The Stowboaters (1977)	

A complete set of these books has been put together and placed on loan at the Mersea Island Museum

Grant application procedure

In the first instance an application form should be obtained from :

Clerk to the Trustees
The Hervey Benham Charitable Trust
c/o Sparlings Solicitors, 13 High Street, Manningtree, Essex, CO11 1AQ

Email : admin@herveybenhamtrust.org.uk

Web : www.herveybenhamtrust.org.uk

All applications will be reported to the Trustees but only those from groups or individuals normally resident in North East Essex, and whose applications meet the aims and objectives of the Trust, will be considered. This beneficial area is illustrated on the Trust's website at www.herveybenhamtrust.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 277578
Member of the Association of Charitable Foundations

Revised July 2023