

[GOVERNMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN, 1800]

[40 George 3]

CHARTER
of
THE ROYAL INSTITUTION
of
GREAT BRITAIN.

[1] **G**EORGE the THIRD by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. to all to whom these presents shall come greeting.

Whereas several of our loving subjects are desirous of forming a Public Institution for diffusing the knowledge, and facilitating the general introduction of useful mechanical inventions and improvements; and for teaching by courses of philosophical lectures and experiments, the application of science to the common purposes of life; and (having subscribed considerable sums of money for that purpose) have humbly besought us to grant unto them and such others as shall be elected, as hereinafter is mentioned, our Royal Charter of incorporation for the purposes aforesaid,

know ye, that we being desirous to promote every useful improvement in arts and manufactures for the increase of the industry and happiness of all our loving subjects, have of our special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, given and granted, and we do hereby give and grant, that our right trusty and well beloved cousins *George, Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham; George, Earl of Morton, Knight of the most ancient order of the Thistle; George, Earl of Egremont; and Frederick, Earl of Bessborough*, of our Kingdom of *Ireland*; our right trusty and well beloved counsellors *Thomas Pelham*, and *Sir Joseph Banks*, Baronet, Knight of the most honourable order of the Bath; our trusty and well beloved *Benjamin Count of Rumford*, of the holy *Roman Empire*; *Sir John Cox Hoppisley*, Baronet; *Richard Clark, Esq.* Chamberlain of our City of *London*; and *Richard Joseph*

Sullivan, Esq. and such others as shall be from time to time elected in manner hereinafter directed, they, and their successors be and shall for ever hereafter be, by virtue of these presents, one body politic, by the name of the Proprietors of "*THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF GREAT BRITAIN*," and them and their successors for the purposes aforesaid, we do hereby constitute and declare

to be one body politic and corporate, and

by the same name to have perpetual succession, and

for ever hereafter to be persons able and capable in the law, and have power to purchase, receive, and possess any goods and chattels whatsoever, and

(notwithstanding the statute of mortmain) to purchase, hold, and enjoy to them and their successors, any lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever, not exceeding at the time or times of purchasing such lands, tenements, and hereditaments respectively, the yearly value at a rack rent of two thousand pounds in the whole, without incurring the penalties or forfeitures of the statutes of mortmain, or any of them. And

by the name aforesaid, to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered unto, defend and be defended, in all courts and pleas whatsoever of us, our heirs and successors, in all actions, suits, causes, and things whatsoever; and

to act and do in all things relating to the said corporation, in as ample manner and form as any other our liege subjects, being persons able and capable in the law, or any other body politic or corporate in our kingdom of *Great Britain* may or can act or do. And also

to have and use a common seal, and the same to change and alter from time to time as they shall think fit.

[1] *The Charter and Bye-Laws of the Royal Institution of Great Britain* (London:1803), pp. 1-13 [downloaded from Google]. The original is one block of text. For easier reading, this edition divides the text into paragraphs and subparagraphs with clauses numbered in the margin.

[2.] And we do hereby declare and grant, that the said Institution shall be under the direction and conduct of a Committee of Nine Managers, and one Treasurer, and one Secretary, to be hereafter elected by and from among the Proprietors of the Institution.

And that the said *Frederick*, Earl of *Bessborough*, *Benjamin*, Count of *Rumford*, and *Richard Clark*, shall be Managers for three years, from the first day of May, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, and until other persons shall be chosen in their respective rooms;

and that the said *George*, Earl of *Egremont*, *Sir Joseph Banks*, and *Richard Joseph Sullivan*, shall be Managers for two years, from the said first day of May, and till other persons shall be chosen in their respective rooms;

and that the said *George*, Earl of *Morton*, *Thomas Pelham*, and *Sir John Cox Hippisley*, shall be Managers for one year, from the said first day of May, and until other persons shall be chosen in their respective rooms.

[3.] And it is our further will and pleasure, that the several persons herein-before named as Proprietors of the said Institution, and such other persons as shall from time to time be elected Proprietors in manner hereinafter directed, shall and may elect and choose annually out of their own body a President;

and that on his being so elected and chosen, such President shall become an ex-official Manager of the said Institution.

And that such President for the time being, shall have full power from and among the Managers of the said Institution for the time being, to elect, and choose as many Vice-Presidents, as to him shall seem meet and needful for the regular holding of the several meetings.

And for the purpose of forwarding the general views of the said Institution, that

the said *George*, Earl of *Winchelsea* and *Nottingham*, shall be the first President; and

the said *George*, Earl of *Morton*, *George*, Earl of *Egremont*, and *Sir Joseph Banks*, shall be the first Vice-Presidents;

and that our trusty and well beloved *Thomas Bernard*, Esq. shall be the first Treasurer; and that *Samuel Glasse*, Doctor in Divinity, shall be the

first Secretary for one year from the said first day of May, and till other persons shall be chosen in their respective rooms.

And we do hereby further declare and grant, that for the purpose of inspecting and examining the Institution, and the receipts and payments thereof, and reporting thereon, and also of consenting to such bye-laws as are hereinafter mentioned, there shall be a committee of nine Visitors, to be hereafter elected from among the Proprietors of the Institution;

and that our right trusty and right entirely beloved cousin, *Francis*, Duke of *Bridgewater*, the right reverend father in God our right trusty and well beloved *Shute*, Bishop of *Durham*, and our trusty and well beloved *Thomas Bernard*, Esq. shall be Visitors for three years, from the said first day of May, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, and till other persons shall be chosen in their respective rooms.

And that our right trusty and well beloved cousin, *Henry*, Viscount *Palmerston*, of our kingdom of *Ireland*, and our right trusty and well beloved *John*, Lord *Teignmouth*, of our said kingdom, and our trusty and well beloved *Rowland Burdon*, Esq. shall be Visitors for two years, from the said first day of May, and till other persons shall be chosen in their respective rooms.

And, that our right trusty and right well beloved cousin and counsellor *George John*, Earl *Spencer*, Knight elect of the most noble order of the Garter, our right trusty and well beloved *James*, Lord *Somerville*, and our trusty and well beloved *Samuel Thornton*, Esq. shall be Visitors for one year, from the said first day of May, and till other persons shall be chosen in their respective rooms.

And we do hereby further declare and grant, that the said Managers, or any five or more of them (with the consent of the said Visitors, or any five or more of them, in writing under their hands), shall and may, according to the best of their judgment and discretion, make and establish such bye-laws as they shall deem to be useful and necessary

for the regulation of the said Institution, and of the estates, goods, and business thereof, and

for fixing and determining the manner as well of electing Proprietors, and Honorary Members of

[4.]

[5.]

- the said Institution, and likewise the Managers and Visitors of the said Institution in future, as also of electing, appointing, and removing such officers, attendants, and servants as shall be deemed necessary or useful for the said Institution, and with such salaries as shall be a reasonable compensation for their duty and attendance; and such bye-laws, from time to time, to vary, alter, or revoke, and to make such new and other bye-laws as they shall think most useful and expedient, so that the same be not repugnant to these presents, or to the laws and statutes of this our realm.
- [6.] Provided nevertheless, and our will is, that from and after the twenty-fifth day of March, one thousand eight hundred, no bye-law shall be made, altered, or repealed, except by the authority of six or more of the Managers, with the consent of six or more of the Visitors, for the time being, in writing under their respective hands, and confirmed by the Proprietors at large at one of their general meetings.
- [7.] And we do authorize and empower the said Proprietors, as soon as conveniently may be, after every annual election to be made by the Proprietors of three Managers in the room of those whose time of serving shall be expired, to proceed to election from among themselves of a President, a Treasurer, and Secretary for the ensuing year, subject to such bye-laws respecting the manner and time of such election, as shall be made and established as aforesaid; and also (but subject to such bye-laws as aforesaid) to proceed to the election of a President, Treasurer, or Secretary, upon any vacancy that may happen by the death or resignation of the President, Treasurer, or Secretary.
- [8.] Provided that it shall be lawful (in case it shall be found expedient) by such bye-laws as aforesaid, to increase the number of Managers and Visitors of the said Institution, so nevertheless as that one-third part of the Managers, and one-third part of the Visitors be annually elected by the said Proprietors.
- And our further will and pleasure is, that the Managers for the time being of the said Corporation, shall cause fair and just accounts in writing to be kept of all receipts, and payments, and doings by them, their officers, and agents respectively, which shall be liable to the view and inspection of the said Committee of Visitors, and which accounts, shall on the twenty-fifth day of March, in every year, or within thirty days after, be examined, audited, and reported upon by the said Visitors, or the major part of them.
- And it is our further will and pleasure, at the humble suit and petition of our said loving subjects, that no Manager of the said Institution shall vote in any thing in which he has any immediate concern or interest; and that no person who is a Proprietor of the said Institution shall be capable of any place, office, or appointment under the said Institution, to which any salary, profit, or emolument is or shall be annexed.
- And that no such Proprietor shall be liable to any further call or demand in respect of the transactions or engagements of the said Corporation, after he shall have paid and advanced the whole of his original subscription as the qualification of a Proprietor.
- And we do further authorize and empower the said Committee of Managers, on such day as shall be fixed upon for their monthly meeting (but subject nevertheless to such bye-laws as aforesaid, and also to such orders as the said Managers may make for the regulation of their own proceedings, and which we do hereby authorize them to make), from time to time, to elect, and choose by ballot, such persons to be Proprietors of the Institution, as shall have been nominated by the executors or administrators of any deceased Proprietor, as hereinafter is mentioned, or shall have respectively paid, or secured to be paid to the funds of the Institution, in case of their election, the sum of Fifty Guineas, or such greater sum as shall at the time by the bye-laws of the Institution be fixed as the qualification of a proprietor.

[12.] And it is our further will and pleasure, that in case any Proprietor of the said Institution

shall be desirous of parting with his right and interest in the property of the said Institution, and shall in writing under his hand notify the same unto the Managers of the Institution,

then and in such case, it shall be lawful for the said Managers, on such day as shall be fixed upon for their monthly meeting (but subject nevertheless to such bye-laws and orders as aforesaid), from time to time, by ballot, to elect and choose in the room of such Proprietor, such proper person as

shall have been nominated by such Proprietor, or shall have paid to the said funds of the said Institution, to be paid over to such Proprietor the sum of Fifty Guineas, or such greater sum as shall at the time by the bye-laws of the Institution be fixed as the qualification of a Proprietor;

and then, and in such case, the right and interest of such Proprietor so giving notice,

shall cease and determine as to him and her, and shall from thenceforth become vested in such person as shall have been so elected in his or her room as aforesaid.

[13.] And it is our further will and pleasure, that, in case of the death of any Proprietor, it shall be lawful for his or her executors or administrators, by writing under the hands of such executors or administrators, to nominate a person to be admitted or balloted for as a Proprietor, in the right of the Proprietor so dying;

and in case such person so to be nominated shall be a lawfully born child of such deceased Proprietor, then such person shall be admitted as a Proprietor of the said Institution, and be entitled to all the rights and privileges of the original Proprietor thereof:

but in case such person shall be other than a lawfully born child of such deceased Proprietor, then the said Managers shall proceed to determine by ballot whether such person shall be elected a Proprietor:

and in case such person shall not thereupon be elected and admitted a Proprietor by the said Committee of Managers, then there shall be paid to the executors or administrators of such deceased Pro-

prietor, by and out of the funds of the Institution, and in full of such Proprietor's right and interest, the sum of Fifty Guineas, or such greater sum as by such bye-laws as aforesaid shall be then fixed as the qualification of a Proprietor.

And we do hereby further authorize and empower the said Committee of Managers to elect and appoint such and so many Honorary Members of the said Institution as to them shall seem meet, and with such privileges, and subject to such restrictions and regulations, as by such bye-laws as aforesaid shall be fixed and established.

And we do hereby further grant that it shall and may be lawful for any person or persons to give, devise, grant, bargain, sell, assign, transfer, demise, and convey any lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever, not exceeding the aforesaid value of two thousand pounds a year in the whole, to or for the use and benefit of the Proprietors of the said Institution, and their successors, without license of alienation in mortmain.

And also that it shall and may be lawful for the Managers of the said Institution, or the major part of them, with the consent of the Visitors of the said Institution, or any five of them, in writing under their hands (but subject to any restrictions or regulations to be contained in such bye-laws as aforesaid) for a valuable consideration, to sell, grant, demise, exchange, and dispose of any lands, tenements and hereditaments, belonging to the said Corporation.

And moreover we will, and hereby for us, our heirs and successors, ordain, constitute and appoint, that if any abuse or difference shall hereafter happen in or concerning the government or affairs of the said Institution, or the management or conduct thereof; then, and so often we, for ourselves, our heirs and successors, authorize, constitute, and appoint

the Lord High Chancellor of *Great Britain*, or Keeper of the Great Seal of *Great Britain* for the time being;

the Lord High Treasurer, or in case of the vacancy of that office, the Chancellor of our Exchequer for the time being;

the Lord President of our Privy Council for the time being,

the Keeper of our Privy Seal, and
our principal Secretaries of State for the time
being;
or any three or more of them, to reform every such
abuse, and to settle and adjust every such differ-
ence.

In witness whereof we have caused these our
Letters to be made Patent.

Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the thirteenth
day of January, in the fortieth year of our reign.
