

[STATUTES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, 1810]

[ANNO QUINQUAGESIMO GEORGE III. REGIS.]

## Cap. 51. (Local & Personal Act)

### An Act for enlarging the Powers granted by His Majesty to the Royal Institution of Great Britain and for extending and more effectually promoting the Objects thereof.

[18<sup>th</sup> April 1810.]

[1]

*Le Roy le Veult*

[The King wills it.

*Soit baille aux Sei-  
gnieurs*Let it be sent to the  
Lords.*A Ceste Bille les Sei-  
gnieurs sont assentes*To this Bill the Lords  
did assent.]Charter, 40  
G. 3. recited.

WHEREAS by Letters Patent under the Great Seal of *Great Britain*, bearing Date the Thirteenth Day of *January*, in the Fortieth Year of His present Majesty's Reign [2]; after reciting that several of His Majesty's Subjects were 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 Applications of Science to the common Purposes of Life,

His Majesty did give and grant that *George* Earl of *Winchilsea* and *Nottingham* and several other Persons therein named, and such other Persons as should be from Time to Time elected in Manner therein-after directed, and their Successors, should for ever there-after be by virtue thereof one Body Politic by the Name of "*The Proprietors of the Royal Institution of Great Britain*;" and by the same Name have perpetual Succession, and for ever thereafter 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 thereof respectively the yearly Value, at a Rack Rent of Two thousand Pounds in the Whole;

and His Majesty's further Will and Pleasure was,

that in case any Proprietor of the said Institution should be desirous of parting with his Right and Interest therein, and should in Writing notify the same to the Committee of Managers, to be appointed as therein is mentioned, then it should be lawful for the said Managers to elect in the Room of such Proprietor, a Person nominated by such Proprietor, and then the Right and Interest of such Proprietor should determine, and thenceforth become vested in such Person so elected; and

also, that in case of the Death of any Proprietor, it should be lawful for his or her Executors or Administrators to nominate a Person to be admitted or balloted for as a Proprietor in the Right of the Proprietor so dying, subject to such Restrictions and Regulations as are therein contained:

And whereas the Proprietors of the said Institution

have, at a very considerable Expence, purchased and provided a large and commodious House and Buildings situate in *Albemarle Street*, in the Parish of *Saint George, Hanover Square*, in the

[1] Copied from the original King's Printer version in [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk). The notes at the start appear on the original Act as provided by the Parliamentary Archives and signify that after the bill originated in and was approved by the house of commons, the bill went to the house of lords, where it was approved there too, and then the royal assent was given ("*Le Roy le veult.*").

[2] 13 January 1800

County of *Middlesex*, for the Purposes of the said Institution, and

have formed a Mineral Collection of *British* Specimens scientifically arranged, and extensive and valuable Libraries; and

also have erected and furnished a spacious and useful Laboratory, in which are made Experiments and Investigations important in a very high Degree to the Improvement of Chemical Science, and to its Application to Arts and Manufactures in this Country; and in the Course of which Discoveries have been made highly honourable to this Age and the *British* Nation:

And whereas the increased Scale of Expenditure which has necessarily attended the increased Scale of the Establishment having far exceeded the Funds of the said Institution, the Managers have lately laid a State of their Concerns before a General Meeting of the Proprietors, at which it was unanimously determined, that the National Objects to which the Royal Institution is now applied, should not be abandoned on Account of any Sacrifice of Property which may be required on their Part, but with a View to attract the Interest of Scientific and Public Characters in its Favour, and to induce them to form an active Co-operation for its Support, that Measures should be taken to form on its Basis a Publick National and Permanent Establishment devoted to the Cultivation of practical Science, and to the Promotion of every Improvement in Agriculture, Manufactures, and the Arts:

**And** whereas the Saleable and Hereditary Right in the Shares and Property of the said Institution, have operated as Impediments to that general Interest and Co-operation which appear to be essential to such a Publick National and Permanent Establishment as aforesaid, and therefore a General Meeting of the Proprietors have agreed, that such Saleable and Hereditary Right shall be entirely done away, and that every Proprietor who shall relinquish and give up his or her Saleable and Hereditary Share and Property in the said Institution, shall become a Life Member thereof only; and as a Compensation for such his or her Saleable and Hereditary Right as aforesaid, shall have the Power of nominating, by Writing under his Hand, or by his Will, any Person being his Wife or Child, or other Relation in Blood, to be admitted to the

Privileges of a Life Subscriber to the said Institution; and in the mean Time and until such nomination, every Life Member shall have the Power of admitting One Person to the Lectures, Collections, Libraries, and Reading Rooms, whenever he himself shall personally attend:

And whereas an Appraised Valuation has been lately made, by skilful Persons, of the Property and Effects of the said Institution, in order to ascertain the Value of each Proprietor's Share therein, which appears by such Valuation to amount to the Sum of Forty-two Pounds and Ten-pence, or thereabouts, being the Value of each Proprietor's Share; and it has been agreed by the Proprietors present at a Special General Meeting, convened in the Manner directed by the Bye Laws of the said Institution, that in case any Proprietor shall not consent to become a Life Member of the said Institution, then and in such Case as a Compensation for such his or her Hereditary and Saleable Share or Property as aforesaid, such Proprietor shall receive the pecuniary Compensation of Forty-two Pounds and Ten-pence, or at his or her Option such Sum of Money as shall be ascertained by a Jury to be the Value of such his or her Share or Property as herein-after is provided or mentioned:

And whereas by the said Letters Patent, and by the Bye Laws made in pursuance thereof, the Affairs and Concerns of the said Institution are directed and governed by a Committee of Managers, consisting of the President Fifteen Managers, and the Secretary; and the said Institution is from Time to Time inspected and examined by a Committee of Visitors, consisting of the Treasurer and Fifteen Visitors, the Members of the said Committees being chosen by and from among the Proprietors of the said Institution, and the President, Treasurer, Secretary, and One Third of the Managers, and One Third of the Visitors, having been renewed or chosen annually on the First Day of *May*, or when that Day has fallen on a *Sunday*, on the next Day:

And whereas it is deemed expedient, that all the said Managers and Visitors should be renewed or chosen annually, and that the greater Number of such Managers and Visitors respectively shall be Members of the said Institution, who have not been Managers or Visitors during the preceding Year:

And whereas by the said Letters Patent the Power of making, altering, and repealing Bye Laws for the Regulation of the said Institution is vested in the said Managers, with the Consent of the said Visitors, and the Confirmation of the said Proprietors at large; and the Power of electing the Proprietors or Members of the said Institution, and the Honorary Members of the said Institution is also vested in the said managers:

And whereas it is deemed expedient that the said Powers of making, altering, and repealing Bye Laws, and of electing the Members and Honorary Members of the said Institution, should be vested in the Members at large, subject to the Restrictions herein-after mentioned:

And whereas the said several Purposes cannot be carried into Effect without the Aid of Parliament:

May it therefore please Your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same,

That from and after the passing of this Act, the Objects of the said Body Politic, and the Powers vested in them by the said Charter, and this Act respectively, shall be extended and applied

to the Promotion of Chemical Science by Experiments and Lectures for improving Arts and Manufactures,

to discovering the Uses of the Mineral and other Natural Productions of this Country, and to the Diffusion and Extension of useful Knowledge in general; and

that the Name of "*The Proprietors of the Royal Institution of Great Britain*," by the said Charter directed to be used shall cease and be discontinued; and

that in lieu thereof the Name of the said Body Politic shall be "*The Members of the Royal Institution of Great Britain*," which last mentioned Name shall be as valid and effectual for all Intents and Purposes whatsoever, as if the same had been originally comprized in the said Charter.

II. And be it further enacted, That from and after the passing of this Act, no Member or Proprietor of the said Institution shall have any further or greater Share, Right, or Interest therein, than for and during the Term of his natural Life;

and that the said Clauses in the said Letters Patent, whereby it is declared,

that in case any Proprietor of the said Institution shall be desirous of parting with his Right and Interest in the Property thereof, and shall notify the same, then it shall be lawful for the Managers to elect in the Room of such Proprietor, a Person to be nominated by such Proprietor; and

that in case of the Death of any Proprietor, it shall be lawful for his or her Executors or Administrators, to nominate a Person to be balloted for or admitted in the Room of such deceased Proprietor, who, if a lawfully born Child of such deceased Proprietor, shall be admitted as a Proprietor; but if other than a lawfully born Child of such deceased Proprietor shall be balloted for Election as a Proprietor,

shall be null and void to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever.

III. Provided always, and be it further enacted, That each and every Proprietor or Member who shall be willing to give up and relinquish his or her Hereditary and Saleable Share or Property in the said Institution, in Consideration of such Power and Privileges as are next herein-after mentioned,

shall in such Form as shall be fixed by the Bye Laws of the said Institution, have the Power of nominating by Writing under his or her Hand, or by his or her Will, or any Codicil thereto attested by Two or more Witnesses one Person, being his Wife or Child, or other Relation in Blood, to be admitted to the Privileges of a Life Subscriber to the said Institution, and

in the mean Time and until such Nomination, each and every such Proprietor or Member shall have the Privilege of admitting One Person to the Lectures, Collection, Libraries, and Reading Rooms, whenever he or she shall personally attend, but not otherwise.

No Member or Proprietor to have more than a Life Interest.

[2(2)]

[1.] The Objects of the Corporation extended,

and its Name altered.

Members willing to relinquish their Saleable and Hereditary Property may nominate a Life Member.

Members not willing to relinquish their Saleable and Hereditary Property

IV. Provided also, and be it further enacted, That in case any Proprietor or Member, or the Trustee of any Proprietor or Member, or the Executors or Administrators of any deceased Proprietor or Member, shall within Three Calendar Months after the passing of this Act, by Writing under his, her, or their Hand or Hands, signify that he, she, or they will not agree to relinquish and give up his, her, or their Hereditary and Saleable Share or Property in the said Institution, in Consideration of such Power and Privilege as last herein-before mentioned; then

may receive the Sum of 42 l. 10 s. per Share,

each and every such Proprietor or Member, for the Time being, or his or her Trustee, Executors, or Administrators, shall be paid by the Managers of the said Institution, the Sum of Forty-two Pounds and Ten-pence *per Share*, as a Compensation for, and in full Satisfaction of, all his, her, or their Share, Right, and Interest in the said Institution, unless

or recover the Value.

such Proprietor or Member, Trustee, Executor, or Administrator, shall within the Space of Three Calendar Months after the passing of this Act, bring or cause to be brought any Action or Actions in one of His Majesty's Courts of Record at *Westminster*, against the said Corporation, for the Recovery of the Value of his, her, or their Hereditary and Saleable Share or Shares and Property in the said Institution, as such Value stood immediately before the passing of this Act,

which it shall be lawful for every such Proprietor or Member to do and to proceed to Trial therein, in like Manner as in other Actions at Law; and

after Verdict had thereupon, the said Corporation shall and they are hereby required to pay, or cause to be paid to the Plaintiff or Plaintiffs in such Action or Actions, such Sum or Sums of Money as shall be recovered in such Action or Actions as such Compensation as aforesaid; and the Person or Persons to whom the same shall be so paid or tendered, shall cease to be a Proprietor or Member of the said Corporation, or to have any Share, Property, Right, or Interest therein,

[4(2)] provided that

in all Actions where the Verdict shall be given for more than the Sum of Forty-two Pounds and Ten-pence, the Costs of Suit shall be paid by the Defendants; and

in all Actions where the Verdict shall be given for the Sum of Forty-two Pounds and Ten-pence, or for any less Sum, the Costs of Suit shall be paid by the Plaintiff or Plaintiffs.

V. And be it further enacted, That on the First Day of *May*, which shall be in the Year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and eleven, and from thenceforth in each and every Year on the First Day of *May* (unless when the same falls on a *Sunday*, and then on the next Day) the Members of the said Institution present at their annual Meeting, shall then proceed to elect by Ballot, from and among the Members of the said Institution (subject nevertheless to the Bye Laws of the said Institution respecting the Manner and Time of such Election) not only a President Treasurer and Secretary, but also Fifteen or more Managers, and Fifteen or more Visitors in the Room of the Managers or Visitors of the preceding Year, the major Part of such Fifteen or more Managers, and the major Part of such Fifteen or more Visitors, being Members of the said Institution, who have not been Managers or Visitors in the preceding Year.

Election of Managers and Visitors.

VI. And be it further enacted, That from and after the passing of this Act, no Bye laws shall be made, altered, or repealed, except by the Authority of one of the General Monthly Meetings of the Members of the said Institution:

Power as to Bye Laws vested in the General Monthly Meetings.

Provided that no Bye Law, nor the Alteration or Repeal of any Bye Law, shall be proposed at any Meeting, unless Notice of such Bye Law, or of the Alteration or Repeal of any such Bye Law, shall have been given in Writing signed by at least Fifteen Members of the Institution, and sent round to the said Members Fourteen Days at least before such General Monthly Meeting

[6(2)]

VII. And be it further enacted, That from and after the passing of this Act, the Power of the said Managers to elect Proprietors or Members of the said Institution, and Honorary Members of the said Institution, shall cease and determine, and

Election of Members vested in the General Monthly Meetings.

[7(2) from thenceforth it shall be lawful for the Members of the said Institution, at their General Monthly Meetings from Time to Time,

as well to elect and chuse by Ballot such Persons to be Members of the said Institution, as shall have been recommended by Four Members at least (in such Form as shall be fixed by the Bye Laws of the said Institution) and shall have respectively paid or secured to be paid to the Funds of the Institution, in case of their Election, such Annual or other Sum as shall from Time to Time be fixed for the Qualification of a Member of the said Institution;

as also to elect and chuse by Ballot to be Honorary Members of the said Institution, such British Subjects as are of the Blood Royal, or such Foreigners as are of elevated Rank, or distinguished for scientific or literary Attainments.

Times of the General Monthly Meetings.

**VIII.** And be it further enacted, That the General Monthly Meetings of the Royal Institution shall be hold on the First *Monday* in the Months of *February, March, April, May, June, July, August, November, and December* in every Year, at Two o'Clock in the Afternoon precisely, or on such other Days and Times, and at such other Hour as shall from Time to Time be fixed by the Bye Laws of the said Institution.

Managers may allow Salaries to their Professors, notwithstanding their being Members.

**IX.** And be it further enacted, That it shall and may be lawful to and for the Managers of the said Institution (in Writing under their Hands) to allow such Salaries to their Professors, Lecturers, and Officers, as by such Managers shall be deemed a reasonable Compensation for their Duty and Attendance, notwithstanding such Professors, Lecturers, or Officers, may be Members of the said Institution; any Thing in the said recited Charter to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.

Reciting the Rights of the Patrons of the Library.

**X.** And whereas the Library of Reference and Mineral Collection have been formed at the Royal Institution by Subscription upon the following Conditions;

that each Subscriber of One hundred Pounds, or upwards, should be an Hereditary Patron of the said Library and Collection; and

that every Subscriber of Fifty Pounds, should be a Life Patron of the same;

and it is deemed expedient, that the Hereditary Rights of the Patrons should be abolished and taken away upon a fair Compensation;

be it therefore enacted, That the Proprietors or Members who have contributed, or who shall contribute to the said Library of Reference and Mineral Collection, to the amount of One hundred Pounds or upwards, shall be Patrons for Life only of the said Library and Collection; and

each such Patron shall have Power by Writing to appoint any one other Person (being a Life Member of the said Institution) to be a Patron for Life of the said Library and Collection

**XI.** Provided always, and be it enacted, That nothing herein contained shall extend or be construed to extend to prejudice, lessen, or affect the Rights and Interests of any Life Subscriber, or Annual Subscriber, in the said Institution, but the same shall be as good, valid, and effectual in all Respects whatsoever, as if this Act had not been made.

**XII.** And be it further enacted, That the said recited Letters Patent, and the Bye Laws made in pursuance thereof (except so far as the same are altered or made void by this Act, or as any of the said Bye Laws may be contrary to the said Letters Patent, or to the Laws of the Realm) are hereby confirmed and made valid in all Respects, and to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever.

**XIII.** And be it further enacted, That this Act shall be deemed and taken to be a Publick Act, and shall be judicially taken Notice of as such by all Judges, Justices, and others, without being specially pleaded.

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The Hereditary Patrons to be Patrons for Life only,

with the Privilege of nominating another Member to be a Patron for Life,

The Act not to prejudice the Interests of Life or Annual Subscribers.

Letters Patent and Bye Laws (except as hereby altered) to be valid.

Publick Act.