

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's Royal Charter, read to a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 6 May 1783, translated from the Latin:

GEORGE, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, to all true men to whom our present letters shall come, Greeting: Forasmuch as We taking into consideration that a humble petition has been presented to us in the name of the members of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland, narrating that in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty a number of noblemen and gentlemen in that part of Our kingdom of Great Britain called Scotland formed themselves into a Society to investigate both antiquities and natural and civil history in general, with the intention that the talents of mankind should be cultivated and that the study of natural and useful sciences should be promoted, and that the outcome of their endeavours had far exceeded their highest expectations; that many people, distinguished in their station or in letters, not only in our kingdom of Great Britain but in other realms, had by learned lucubrations and valuable donations contributed to the prosperity of the Society; that besides donations of relics of antiquity and natural curiosities, various noblemen and gentlemen had contributed money so that the Society might be able to carry out its laudable purposes; that the petitioners had bought a house in the City of Edinburgh so that they might keep in it their books, manuscripts and other objects; but that without being made a body incorporate at law, permanent possession of that house and of the other effects they at present possess or which they may later acquire could not be legally constituted; therefore the petitioners pray humbly that it may please Us graciously to grant Our letters patent under the seal specified below, constituting and erecting the present members of the said Society, and all who may subsequently be added as members, into one body politic and corporate or legal incorporation, by the title and name of Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and that as such and through such title and name it may have perpetuity and succession and that it may have legal capacity in each and every of our Courts of Law to petition, to enter into actions as pursuer, defender or respondent, with all and sundry other necessary provisions: And We, considering the laudable intentions of the petitioners and being desirous of promoting so useful an institution, have therefore erected, created and incorporated inasmuch as We by Our royal prerogative and special favour, on Our own behalf and on behalf of Our royal successors, by these present letters patent, do erect, create and incorporate, on account of the purposes set out in the memorial of the petition, all and individually the present members of the said Society, and all who may be later added as members of the same, into one body corporate and politic, by the title and name of Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, instituted in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty, of which Society We declare Ourselves and Our royal successors to be Patrons: By which name and title it will have perpetual succession; further it will have and use a common seal, for which we give the privilege of bearing as insignia of gentility, on a field azure a cross of St Andrew argent, in chief an imperial crown and in base a thistle proper, all within a royal tressure or: And they and their successors under that same title and name shall have legal capacity to petition, to enter into contracts, to receive, acquire, hold and enjoy forever, for themselves and their successors, relics of antiquity, specimens of natural or artificial curiosities, books, manuscripts, goods, objects, and any other effects whatsoever, such as they own or may hereafter acquire, and to acquire by purchase and enjoy lands, tenements and other heritage not exceeding a value of one thousand pounds sterling, and to advance a sum or sums of money to any person or persons, and on such security as they shall consider suitable; and the said Society will order itself and its course of actions and its business in accordance with the statutes, ordinances, rules and byelaws made or to be made by it, with the power from day to day as need arises of changing and revoking the same and making new ordinances in their place as they shall judge suitable and convenient, provided they are just, good and equitable, and so long as they are in no particular contrary to the laws of this kingdom. In witness whereof We have ordered to be appended to these presents Our Seal, appointed in terms of the Treaty of Union to be kept and used in Scotland instead and in place of the Great Seal of the same. And at Our Court of St James's, on the twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty three, and in the twenty-third year of Our reign.

As the signature superscribed by the hand of Our Sacred Lord the King. [*Endorsed:*] Written to the Seal, and registered, the 5th day of May 1783.

Thomas Miller, Subs. *Gratis*.

Sealed at Edinburgh the 6th Day of May one thousand seven hundred and eighty three years.

John Wauchope, Dep. £80 Scots *Gratis*.