

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00878-5 - The Works of John Ruskin, Volume 30

John Ruskin

Excerpt

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PART I

1

THE GUILD OF ST. GEORGE

ABSTRACT OF THE
OBJECTS AND CONSTITUTION
(1877)

WITH THE MEMORANDUM
AND ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION
(1878)

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[*Bibliographical Note.*—The formal Articles of Association of the Guild were, as already stated (p. xxv.), dated October 14, 1878, some delay in the matter having been caused by Ruskin's illness in that year. They had, however, been generally approved by the Board of Trade at the end of 1877, and on December 20 of that year Ruskin had drawn up an abstract of them for general circulation : see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 86, § 13 (Vol. XXIX. p. 350).

The Abstract was printed on an octavo fly-sheet of three pages, with the following drop-title :—

Abstract | Of the Objects and Constitution | of | St. George's Guild.

Issued gratis with Letter 86 of *Fors*. There are no headlines ; the pages are numbered.

The numbering of the paragraphs is introduced in the present edition for convenience of reference.

The first draft of the Articles of Association of St. George's Guild was drawn up in 1875 : see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 55, § 8 (Vol. XXVIII. p. 376). The Articles were not, however, finally filed at the Board of Trade till 1878.

They were then printed, folio, pp. 9 ; issued stitched, without wrappers, but folded as a deed, and lettered on one side : "The | Guild of St. George. | Memorandum | and | Articles of Association. | Tarrant and Mackrell, 2 Bond Court, Walbrook, London, | Solicitors." There are no headlines, the pages being numbered centrally. Text of Memorandum, pp. 1-4 ; Articles, pp. 5-9.]

ABSTRACT OF THE OBJECTS AND CONSTITUTION OF ST. GEORGE'S GUILD

[1877]

1. THE St. George's Guild consists of a body of persons who think, primarily, that it is time for honest persons to separate themselves intelligibly from knaves,¹ announcing their purpose, if God help them, to live in godliness and honour, not in atheism and rascality; and who think, secondarily, that the sum which well-disposed persons usually set aside for charitable purposes (namely, the tenth part of their income), may be most usefully applied in buying land for the nation, and entrusting the cultivation of it to a body of well-taught and well-cared-for peasantry.

2. For the teaching of these labourers, schools are to be erected, with museums and libraries in fitting places. The founders' views of what the education of a peasant should be are explained, *passim*, in *Fors Clavigera*.²

3. Persons entering the Guild promise, therefore, to give, if so much can be spared, a tenth of their income, or, at all events, whatever they can afford for general charity, to this special object.³ They undertake, further, to behave honestly and justly to all men, and to obey the Master of the Guild in all matters relating to the management of the affairs of the Guild.

¹ [On this point, see *Fors*, Letter 63, § 5 (Vol. XXVIII. p. 542).]

² [See the summary of Ruskin's views, with references to *Fors*, given in the Introduction to Vol. XXVII. pp. lx. *seq.*]

³ [For the requirement of a tenth, in Ruskin's first statement about St. George's Fund, see *Fors*, Letter 5 (Vol. XXVII. p. 95); for his subsequent relaxation of the rule, Letter 80 (Vol. XXIX. p. 182), though in Letter 88 he seems to re-erect the "stockade" (*ibid.*, p. 396).]

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4. The Master is elected by majority of the Guildsmen, and is at any time subject to deposition by majority of votes; but is absolutely uncontrolled in authority, while in office, over all the proceedings of the Guild.

5. The Guild will hold its land, as other registered Societies do, in its own name; its capital will be vested in Trustees chosen by the Master and accepted by the Guildsmen. The Master is bound to furnish accounts of the affairs of the Guild, certified by the Trustees, half-yearly.

No one but the Master can incur any debt in the name of the Guild.

6. It is required by the Board of Trade, if the registration of the Guild is consented to by them, that a liability for a sum stated in the memorandum now before them, as not exceeding five pounds, should extend to the members of the Guild in the event of its affairs being wound up.

In the meantime, persons not wishing to incur any responsibility, or make any promises, yet interested in the success of the Guild, may practically become members of it merely by sending it such subscriptions as they please, and managing their own business with perfect honesty, and resolute benevolence.

7. General subscriptions may be either paid directly to the account of the Guild at the Union Bank, Chancery Lane, or to Mr. Egbert Rydings, Laxey, Isle of Man. Persons wishing to be enrolled in the Guild must read the instructions in Letters 55 and 58 of *Fors Clavigera*,¹ and then communicate with me, the present Master of the Guild, by letter addressed to Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

J. RUSKIN.

20th December 1877.

¹ [See Vol. XXVIII. pp. 376-379, 419-420.]

The St George's Company is constituted with the object of determining, and instituting in practice the wholesome laws of agricultural life and economy: and of instructing the agricultural labourer in the science, art, and literature, belonging to his profession.

The members of the St George's Company are divided into two ranks; named Companions, and Servants. and are under the authority of an elected Master who during the time of his holding office, has supreme control over the society's operations.

The Master is chosen by a majority of the Companions and may be removed from his office by a their pleasure, but not restrained in it.

The Companions are persons who have either themselves inherited, or given their written authority to the Master to receive, their names, before two witnesses, in the Register of the Company. They enter either in Copies

united will. Defeat, or in some other well recognized and safe place; such inscription of their name being understood to signify their promise, given with the seriousness of an oath, to forward the objects of the society to the best of their power, and to obey the laws of it, so far as their own personal life may ~~be~~ affected by them, without inconvenience to them.

The entire property of the Company belongs to the Companions, and in the event of its ~~operations~~ being being thought advisable to terminate its operations, the lands and capital of it ~~would be~~ are removable by the Companions, in the proportion of their former contributions to the same.

But while the functions of the Company continue, neither the Master nor the Companions can receive any part, profit, or advantage whatsoever, from any of the Company's operations or possessions.

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION OF THE GUILD OF ST. GEORGE¹

[1878]

- 1st. The name of the Association is the "Guild of St. George."
- 2nd. The registered Office of the Association will be situated in England.
- 3rd. The objects for which the Association is established are:—
 1. To determine, and institute in practice, the wholesome laws of laborious (especially agricultural) life and economy, and to instruct first the agricultural, and, as opportunity may serve, other labourers or craftsmen, in such science, art, and literature as are conducive to good husbandry and craftsmanship.
 2. The acquisition by gift, purchase, or otherwise, of plots or tracts of land in different parts of Great Britain and Ireland.
 3. The acquisition by gift, purchase, or otherwise, and the erection of Schools, Museums, and other educational establishments, in different parts of Great Britain and Ireland.
 4. The acquisition by gift, purchase, or otherwise, of such pictures, sculptures, books, and objects of art and natural history, as may be properly adapted for the cultivation of taste and intelligence among rural labourers and craftsmen.
 5. The erection of dwelling-houses for agricultural labourers, and of farm buildings, and the repair thereof.
 6. The selling, aliening, and disposing for such consideration, in money or otherwise, and upon such terms and conditions, and in such manner in all respects, as may in each case be thought best, of all or any part of the property and effects of the Association, and the acquisition of other property and effects of a like character in place thereof, or the application towards such other of the objects of the Society as may in each case be thought best of the money to arise from any such sale, alienation, or disposal.
 7. The holding, tilling, cultivating, leaving uncultivated, turning into waste or common land, or otherwise applying to such purposes as, having regard to the nature of the soil and other surrounding circumstances, may in each case be thought most generally useful, of all or any of the said plots or tracts of land.

¹ [Drafted by counsel: see *Fors*, Letter 86 (Vol. XXIX. p. 350). For the first draft of this Memorandum, and Ruskin's notes for alterations, see *Fors*, Letter 55, §§ 8, 9 (Vol. XXVIII. pp. 376-379).]

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8. The leasing for any term or terms of years at such rent, and under and subject to such covenants and conditions, and upon such terms and in such manner in all respects, as may in each case be thought best, of all or any of the said plots or tracts of land, schools, museums, dwelling-houses, and farm buildings.
9. To make grants of money out of the funds of the Association to or in aid of Associations having similar objects, either by way of gift or loan with or without interest.
10. The doing all such other lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects.

4th. The income and property of the Association, whencesoever derived, shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Association, as set forth in this Memorandum of Association; and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend or bonus, or otherwise howsoever, by way of profit to the persons who at any time are or have been Members of the Association, or to any of them, or to any person claiming through any of them. Provided always that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith of remuneration to any officers, servants, or retainers of the Association, or to any Member thereof, or to any other person in return for any services actually rendered to the Association.

5th. The fourth paragraph of this Memorandum is a condition on which a licence is granted by the Board of Trade to the Association, in pursuance of Sec. 23 of the Companies Act, 1867. For the purpose of preventing any evasion of the terms of the said fourth paragraph, the Board of Trade may from time to time, on the application of any Member of the Association, impose further conditions which shall be duly observed by the Association.

6th. If the Association act in contravention of the fourth paragraph of this Memorandum, or of any such further conditions, the liability of the Master shall be unlimited, and the liability of every Member who has received any such dividend, bonus, or other profit as aforesaid, shall likewise be unlimited.

7th. Every Member of the Association undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Association, in the event of the same being wound up during the time that he or she is a Member, or within one year afterwards, for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the Association contracted before the time at which he or she ceases to be a Member, and of the costs, charges, and expenses of winding up the same, and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributories amongst themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding the sum of five pounds; or in case of his or her liability becoming unlimited, such other amount as may be required, in pursuance of the last preceding paragraph of this Memorandum.

8th. If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Association there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Association, but shall be given or transferred to some other institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the

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Association, to be determined by the Members of the Association at or before the time of dissolution, or, in default thereof, by such Judge of the High Court of Justice as may have or acquire jurisdiction in the matter.

WE, the several persons whose names and addresses are subscribed, are desirous of being formed into an Association in pursuance of this Memorandum of Association.

NAME.	ADDRESS.
JOHN RUSKIN, Master	Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire.
Witness to the signature of the above—	
Dawson Herdson	Ashenson Ground, Coniston, Ambleside.
GEORGE BAKER	Bellefield, Birmingham Heath.
Witness to the signature of the above—	
Jno. Knight	The Hawthorns, Sparkhill, Birmingham.
JOHN HENRY CHAMBERLAIN	Grange House, Small Heath, Birmingham.
Witness to the signature of the above—	
Jno. Knight	The Hawthorns, Sparkhill, Birmingham.
SAML. TIMMINS	Elvetham Lodge, Edgbaston, Birmingham.
Witness to the signature of the above—	
William White	Caversham Villa, Edgbaston, Birmingham.
FANNY TALBOT	Elm Wood, Bridgwater.
Witness to the signature of the above—	
Arthur A. Burrington	Bridgwater, Somerset.
ROBERT SOMERVELL	Clerk, Hazelthwaite, Windermere.
Witness to the signature of the above—	
James Stewardson	Clerk, Lound Street, Kendal.
HERBERT FLETCHER	Colliery Proprietor and Manager, The Hollins, Bolton-le-Moors.
Witness to the signature of the above—	
A. Carmichael Bruce	Barrister-at-Law, Temple, London, E.C.

Dated 14th October 1878.¹

¹ [For Mr. George Baker, who succeeded Ruskin as Master of the Guild, see *Fors*, Vol. XXIX. pp. 164, 170. The late Mr. J. H. Chamberlain, a well-known architect, was one of the trustees: see below, p. 85. For Mrs. Talbot, see again Vol. XXIX. p. 164. For Mr. Somervell, see *Fors*, Vol. XXVIII. p. 659.]

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF THE GUILD OF ST. GEORGE¹

1. For the purposes of registration the number of the Members of the Guild is declared to be unlimited.

2. These articles shall be construed with reference to the provisions of the Companies Act, 1862, and the Companies Act, 1867; and terms used in these Articles shall be taken as having the same respective meanings as they have when used in those Acts.

3. The Guild is established for the purposes expressed in the Memorandum of Association.

4. The Members of the Guild shall be styled "Guildsmen and Guildswomen of St. George."

5. Any person may, with the consent and approval of the Master of the Guild, to be testified by writing under his or her hand, become a Guildsman or Guildswoman by having his or her name entered on the Roll of the Guild, with due solemnity.

6. The name of every Guildsman and Guildswoman shall be entered on the Roll of the Guild, either by himself or herself, in the presence of two witnesses of full age, who shall attest such entry; or, if the Guildsman or Guildswoman shall so desire, by the Master of the Guild, with the same formalities.

7. The Roll of the Guild shall be kept in safe custody within the walls of the College of Corpus Christi, in Oxford, or at such other safe and convenient place as the Members of the Guild shall from time to time direct.

8. The Master shall have power to expel any Member from the Guild, and to declare his or her position therein forfeited; but in such case he shall deliver to the Member so expelled, or send by post to his or her usual or last known place of abode in England, a written notice under his hand stating the ground for such expulsion; and he shall also state to the next General Meeting of the Guild which shall be held after such expulsion, the name of the Member so expelled, and the ground for his or her expulsion. Any Member so expelled shall have power, within one calendar month after receiving such notice, to give notice in writing to the Master of his or her intention to appeal to the next General Meeting of the Guild, and the decision of the Master may be overruled, and the expulsion cancelled, by the vote of a majority in number of the Guildsmen and Guildswomen present personally or by proxy at such General Meeting.

¹ [Drafted by counsel on instructions by Ruskin.]