

Philosophical Society 13<sup>th</sup> March 1777.

Rules proposed for the Philosophical Society  
by a committee appointed for that purpose.

- 1<sup>st</sup> The Society shall meet once every fortnight in the Mathematical School room, at 7 o'clock in the Evening of Saturday.
- 2<sup>d</sup> Any Person desirous to be admitted a member must apply, by Letter, to the President, signifying his inclination; which the President shall communicate to the Society <sup>at the</sup> first meeting, and the Candidate shall be elected by ballot, no Person to be admitted either as a member or a visitor.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> The President shall continue in that office for two years; and his successor shall be chosen, out of two proposed by the President, by ballot, and also a vice-president to be elected to preside in his absence.
- 4<sup>th</sup> All the Members shall behave decently in the Society (avoiding, above all things, personalities) and not interrupt any Gentleman while speaking, under the pain of being rebuked from the Chair.
- 5<sup>th</sup> A Speaker on each side of the Question to be appointed by the President to open the debate of the next meeting.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Every question shall be determined by a Majority of Votes; & every Member upon the vote being put shall express himself in positive terms agreeable to the state of the Vote.
- 7<sup>th</sup> The President shall have it in his power to bring into the Society any number of Visitors, not exceeding six.

John Aikin / S.



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# Philosophical Society 27<sup>th</sup> March 1777.

Mr. John Aiken, Preses.

Question for the Entertainment of this Evening is  
~~How Physic has been of service to mankind?~~  
~~How the general use of Physic has been improved?~~

The Society being heard a considerable time and the vote  
being called, carried that Physic has not been of service.

10<sup>th</sup> April 1777. Mr. J. Aiken Preses

Question for the Entertainment of this Evening is  
Whether does Love proceed more from Love for  
ourselves, or for the object beloved?

The Society being heard at considerable length  
and the votes being called, carried that Love  
proceeds more from love for ourselves.

John Aiken

24<sup>th</sup> April 1777. Mr. W. Dowall Preses

Question for the Entertainment of this Evening is—

Whether is a marriage or single state the most  
happy? — The Society being heard at considerable  
length, and the votes being called carried, that a  
married state is the most happy.

William Dowall

9<sup>th</sup> May 1777. Mr. W. Dowall Preses

Question for the Entertainment of this  
Evening is Whether is the Sun a Body of  
Light or Heat? — The Society being  
heard at considerable length & votes being  
called carried, the sun is a Body of Light —

William Dowall



1777

# Philosophical Society.

The following Rules were made & approved of by the Society on the 24th of August on the margin.

March 13<sup>th</sup>. That the next President is to be elected (as in Rule 8<sup>to</sup> 13<sup>d</sup>) on the last night of the then present Preses, and to Entertain the Society, on the first night of his taking the Chair, with a discourse on what subject he chooses, for about 1/2 of an hour.

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Philosophical Society 22. May 1777.

Mr. William McDowall Preses.

Question for the Entertainment of this Evening is,  
Whether can we confide more safely in the person  
who has obliged us, or whom we have obliged?

The Society being heard at considerable length  
and the Votes being called carried, that we  
can confide more safely in the person who  
has obliged us.

Wm. McDowall

30<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1777.

Mr. McDowall Preses

This night the Society met, and proposed that  
the members should assemble, as usual, upon  
Thursday the Thirtieth of October next,  
and then discuss the following question —

Whether real or Imaginary <sup>enjoyment</sup> happiness is pro-  
ductive of the greatest Happiness?

13<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1777.

This Evening the Society assembled, and after considering  
the above question, votes were called & the majority were  
of opinion that real enjoyment is productive of the  
greatest happiness. — Wm. McDowall

29. Nov. 1777.

This Evening the Society assembled & considered the following  
question, vizt. Swearing justifiable? — After the  
members were heard at considerable length & the votes  
called, carried that Swearing is not justifiable



Philosophical Society 13<sup>th</sup> December 1777.

Mr. James Dinwiddie Preses  
Question for the Entertainment of this Evening is  
Whether a Savage or civilized Life is productive of the  
greatest happiness to the Individual?  
After the Society was heard at considerable length, votes  
were called and the majority were of opinion that  
a civilized life is the most happy.

28 Feb. 1778

Mr. Dinwiddie Preses  
Question — Is Celibacy justifiable in any  
Character or situation?

The question appointed for next evening is, is  
the human race descended from one first pair?  
Mr. Gwynon on the Affirmative — Mr. M. Mounie  
on the negative.

14 March 1778

Mr. Dinwiddie Preses The Question Whether  
the Human Race are all descended from one  
parent being fully debated — It was determined  
by a great majority, that they are —  
Thereafter the Society, in Pursuit of the Statute  
of the year 1759 adjourn till the 7<sup>th</sup> Nov. Next.



Minutes of Nov: 1778

Convened the following members of the Society

pp<sup>t</sup> Edmund Butterworth      B. M<sup>r</sup>. Mylie  
pp David Pagan              B. And<sup>r</sup>. Tennent  
pp Gilbert Grissom          B. Thos. Welch  
pp Edward Kewal              B. W<sup>m</sup>. Mcmoine  
pp John Mcmoine  
pp James Mylie

The Society proceeded to make choice of a Præceptor  
for the night & accordingly made choice  
of Edmund Butterworth. B. Præceptor this  
night.



The Society having taken the former Regulations  
into their Consideration approve of the same  
as now amended There was produced to the  
Society an Application from Andrew Tennant &  
The<sup>r</sup> W<sup>th</sup> to be Admitted into the Society  
& the votes being put they were unanimously  
Approved of & Admitted accordingly

Thereafter the Society proceeded to make choice of a  
Priest & Vice Priest for the ensuing 6 weeks  
and the votes being put it was carried that Mr. White  
should be Priest & Mr. Butterworth Vice Priest &  
further made choice of 2<sup>d</sup> Ministers at Clerk  
for the same & Mr. Pagan Cashier for the  
winter - Thereafter the Society resolved to contribute  
one Shilling each in the next time to defray expenses  
The Society appointed the ~~next~~ next night Debated  
to be whether the extending the repeal of the Penal  
Laws ag<sup>t</sup> Catholics to Scotland would be good policy  
and Mr. Butterworth WAS appointed to maintain it would  
be good policy & Mr. Tennant the reverse And appeared  
next meeting to be this day eight days

14 Nov<sup>r</sup> 1778

The Society having taken the propriety of  
repealing the Penal Laws ag<sup>t</sup> Papists into  
Consideration it carried that it would be good  
policy to abolish them - It resolved to  
argue whether Self or Social Love is  
most predominant in Society - & appointed  
Mr. Butterworth to establish that Social  
Love is most predominant & Mr. Tennant  
the reverse



Dumfries 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 1778

The Society having well determined by a great  
majority that Selfishness is most predominant  
and appeared the question for next night be  
to be held whether the Student or Operative  
life is most happy. I appointed Mr Pagan  
to support the Operative life & Mr Munnal  
the opposite

Dumfries Dec<sup>r</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> 1778

The Society taking into consideration  
the foregoing question, determined in  
favor of the active life.

Same night the Society elected Mr  
Gilbert Gerson President, and Mr David  
Pagan vice president, and agreed to dis-  
pute next meeting on the following ques-  
tion, Whether bigamy or Libertinism have  
done most hurt to Society. Mr Wm Mc  
Morine that the former has done most  
harm, and Mr Butterworth his anta-  
gust. determined that bigamy had the most hurt  
Dumfries 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 1779

Question for the next night's debate is whether  
the soul always thinks or not, Mr Pagan <sup>always</sup> thinks  
thinks that it does not, Mr Munnal <sup>always</sup> thinks  
thinks that it does not.

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Philosophical Society Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> 1776

Præses Mr. Dinwiddie. The question for this night's debate is whether the abolition of the Repentance School would be expedient or not. The Society being heard at great length on this important subject & the vote being called it carried that the Repentance School ought to be abolished.

James Dinwiddie Præses

December 13<sup>th</sup> 1776

Præses Mr. Dinwiddie. The question for this night's debate is whether the Divine or physical is most useful to Society. The Society being heard & the question & the vote being called it carried that the Divine was most useful to Society.

James Dinwiddie Præses

Jan'y 2<sup>nd</sup> 1777

Præses Mr. Dinwiddie. The question for this night's debate is whether oppositions exist or not, after the Society was heard at length. The vote was put & carried that oppositions never did exist.

James Dinwiddie

Feb'y. 28<sup>th</sup> 1777

Præses Mr. John Aiken. The question for this night's debate is whether the Theatre has been of good or hurt to Society. The debate being ended by the vote called it carried that the Theatre was of use to Society.

John Aiken Præses

Præses Mr. John Aiken. The question for this night's debate is whether the abolition of the Gall Minutails would be of service to the Army or not. The Society being heard at considerable length on the debate & the vote being put, it carried that the Gall Minutails ought not to be abolished.

John Aiken Præses



Philosophical Society September 6<sup>th</sup> 1776

Pres. Mr. James Dunwoodie: The question for this night's debate is what form of Government is best. The Society being heard upon the question at great length, & the vote being called it carried by a great Majority that Monarches was the best form of Government.

James Dunwoodie Prs.

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Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> 1776

Pres. Mr. Dunwoodie the question for this night's debate is Whether prosperity or adversity is most dangerous to virtue. The Society being fully heard on the question & the vote being put it carried that adversity was most dangerous to virtue.

James Dunwoodie Prs.

October 8<sup>th</sup> 1776

Pres. Mr. G. Buttenworth The Subject for this night's debate is Whether the Introduction of fire arms have been of Service or hurt. The Society being fully heard & the vote called it carried that Fire arms have been of great Service.

G. Buttenworth Prs.

Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> 1776

Pres. Mr. J. Crichton The Subject for this night's debate is Whether the Slave trade be Justifiable or not. The Society being heard & the vote being called it carried that the Slave trade is not Justifiable.

James Crichton Prs.

Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> 1776

Pres. Mr. Dunwoodie. The question for this night's debate is Whether the Transition from virtue to vice, or from vice to virtue be most difficult. The Society being heard & the vote put it carried that the Transition from virtue to vice is most difficult.

James Dunwoodie Prs.

November 11<sup>th</sup> 1776

Pres. Mr. Dunwoodie. The question for this night's debate is Whether Women ought to have any share in the Government of a State or not. The Society being at great length & the vote put it carried that Women ought not to Govern.

James Dunwoodie Prs.



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Dumfries 24<sup>th</sup> August 1776  
 We the Subscribers have Agreed to form ourselves into a  
 Society, to meet at such times, to debate on such Subjects,  
 And to Govern ourselves by such Regulations, as shall be  
 determined by a majority of the Society;

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 James Finlayson              | 24 John Wightman                 |
| 2 Edmund Butterworth           | 25 Adam Tait                     |
| 3 Will <sup>m</sup> McDowally  | 26 James W. Elder James W. Elder |
| 4 William Macdonald            | 27 John Creech                   |
| 5 Tom. Mackenzie               | 28 Thomas Brown                  |
| 6 Tho: Malcolm                 | 29 P. Macquibbin                 |
| 7 John Anderson                | 30 Wm. Whinnell                  |
| 8 John Aikins                  | 31 Wm. Kirkpatrick               |
| 9 Thornbagen                   | 32 Alex. Kennedy                 |
| 10 Alex. Pirie                 | 33 James Pirie                   |
| 11 G. Grierson                 | 34 John Maxwell                  |
| 12 Mrs. Wylie Jun <sup>r</sup> | 35 Will <sup>m</sup> M. Moine    |
| 13 James Wrighton              |                                  |
| 14 Will <sup>m</sup> Thomson   |                                  |
| 15 Charles Salmon              |                                  |
| 16 Will <sup>m</sup> Chalmers  |                                  |
| 17 John Gillespie              |                                  |
| 18 John M. Moine               |                                  |
| 19 Thos. M. Conchie            |                                  |
| 20 Thomas Boyd                 |                                  |
| 21 G. D. Stewart               |                                  |
| 22 William Paterson            |                                  |
| 23 Richard Forrest             |                                  |
| 24 Edmund Wall                 |                                  |