



Sunday Observance Act 1780

1780 CHAPTER 49 21 Geo 3

An Act for preventing certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day, called Sunday.

Preamble

Whereas certain houses, rooms or places within the cities of London or Westminster or in the neighbourhood thereof have of late frequently been opened for publick entertainment or amusement upon the evening of the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday; and at other houses, rooms or places within the said cities or in the neighbourhood thereof, under pretence of enquiring into religious doctrines and explaining texts of Holy Scripture, debates have frequently been held on the evening of the Lord's Day concerning divers texts of Holy Scripture by persons unlearned and incompetent to explain the same, to the corruption of good morals, and to the great encouragement of irreligion and profaneness:

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Short title given by [Short Titles Act 1896 \(c. 14\)](#)
- C2** Act amended by [Sunday Entertainments Act 1932 \(c. 51\), s. 4](#), [Common Informers Act 1951 \(c. 39\), s. 1\(1\)](#), [Sch.](#) and [Sunday Theatre Act 1972 \(c. 26\), s. 1](#); excluded by [Licensing Act 1964 \(c. 26\), s. 88](#)
- C3** Act excluded (E.W.) by [Cinemas Act 1985 \(c. 13, SIF 45A\), s. 9\(1\)](#)
Act excluded (E.W.) (3.1.1995) by [1994 c. 40, ss. 21, 82\(2\)](#)
Act restricted (E.W.) (28.12.2000) by [S.I. 2000/3372, art. 2](#)

[1.] House, &c. opened on a Sunday, to which persons shall be admitted by payment, &c, shall be deemed a disorderly house, &c.

From and after the passing of this present Act any house, room or other place which shall be opened or used for publick entertainment or amusement, or for publickly debating on any subject whatsoever, upon any part of the Lord's Day, called Sunday, and to which persons shall be admitted by payment of money or by tickets sold for money, shall be deemed a disorderly house or place; and the keeper of such house, room or place shall forfeit the sum of two hundred pounds for every day that such house, room or place shall be opened or used as aforesaid on the Lord's Day, to such

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Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Sunday Observance Act 1780 (repealed). (See end of Document for details)

person as will sue for the same, and be otherwise punishable as the law directs in cases of disorderly houses; and the person managing or conducting such entertainment or amusement on the Lord's Day, or acting as master of the ceremonies there, or as moderator, president or chairman of any such meeting for publick debate on the Lord's Day, shall likewise for every such offence forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds to such person as will sue for the same; and every doorkeeper, servant or other person who shall collect or receive money or tickets from persons assembling at such house, room, or place on the Lord's Day, or who shall deliver out tickets for admitting persons to such house, room or place on the Lord's Day, shall also forfeit the sum of fifty pounds to such person as will sue for the same.

2 The person who acts as master or mistress in any such house shall be deemed the owner thereof. All houses where refreshments are sold at greater prices on Sundays than on other days, &c. liable to the penalties inflicted by this Act.

And whereas, by reason of the many subtle and crafty contrivances of persons keeping such houses, rooms or places as aforesaid, it may often be difficult to prove who is the real owner or keeper thereof: Any person who shall at any time hereafter appear, act or behave him or herself as master or mistress, or as the person having the care, government or management of any such house, room or place as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken to be the keeper thereof, and shall be liable to be sued or prosecuted and punished as such, notwithstanding he or she be not in fact the real owner or keeper thereof: And wherever any such house, room, or place shall belong to or be kept by divers persons in partnership, as joint-owners or joint-keepers thereof, each and every such joint-owner or joint-keeper of such house, room or place shall be deemed the keeper thereof, and shall be liable to be sued or prosecuted and punished as such; and any house, room or place at which persons shall be supplied with tea, coffee or any other refreshments of eating or drinking on the Lord's Day at any greater prices than the common and usual prices at which the like refreshments are commonly sold upon other days at such house, room, or place, or at coffee houses or other houses where the same are usually sold, shall be deemed a house, room or place to which persons are admitted by the payment of money, although money be not there taken in the name of or for admittance, or at the time when persons enter into or depart from such house, room or place; and any house, room or place which shall be opened or used for any publick entertainment or amusement or for publick debate on the Lord's Day, at the expence of any number of subscribers or contributors to the carrying on any such entertainment or amusement or debate on the Lord's Day, and to which persons shall be admitted by tickets, to which the subscribers or contributors shall be intitled, shall be deemed a house, room or place to which persons are admitted by the payment of money within the meaning of this Act.

3 Penalty on advertising, &c.

And for the better preventing persons assembling on the Lord's Day for such irreligious purposes as aforesaid, be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that any person advertising or causing to be advertised any publick entertainment or amusement or any publick meeting for debating on any subject whatsoever on the Lord's Day, to which persons are to be admitted by the payment of money or by tickets sold for money, and any person printing or publishing any such advertisement, shall respectively forfeit the sum of fifty pounds for every such offence to any person who will sue for the same.

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4, 5. **F1**

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Textual Amendments

F1 Ss. 4, 5 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1966 (c. 5)

6 **F2**

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Textual Amendments

F2 S. 6 repealed by Limitations of Actions and Costs Act 1842 (c. 97), s. 2 and Public Authorities Protection Act 1893 (c. 61), s. 2

7 **F3**

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Textual Amendments

F3 S. 7 repealed by Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963 (No. 1), Sch. 5

8 **F4**

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Textual Amendments

F4 S. 8 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1966 (c. 5)

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