

Evolution of Britain's voting system



■ **1430:** Males who own land worth 40 shillings – so-called *forty shilling freeholders* – given vote

■ **1817:** Legal and social reformer *Jeremy Bentham* (left) is first to advocate votes for women



■ **1832: *Reform Act*** increases number of individuals entitled to vote in parliamentary elections to one in six adult males, but majority of working men still cannot vote

■ **1867: *Second Reform Act*** doubles electorate to around two million, giving vote to all male householders as well as lodgers who pay rent of £10 a year or more, agricultural landowners and tenant farmers

■ **1869: *Municipal Corporation Bill*** results in unmarried women householders being allowed to vote in local elections

■ **1872:** Voting by secret ballot introduced by *William Gladstone's* (top right) Liberal Party

■ **1884: *Third Reform Act*** extends vote to two-thirds of adult males in England and Wales, but servants and most members of armed forces remain disenfranchised. Electorate now totals over 5,500,000

■ **1897:** Women's suffrage campaign, led by *Emmeline Pankhurst* (right), gains momentum

■ **1918: *Representation of the People Act*** gives vote to women age 30 and older, and men age 21

■ **1928:** Equal voting rights granted to all women from age 21

■ **1966: *Harold Wilson's*** Labour government extends vote to 18-year olds

■ **2000:** First trials of touch-screen electronic voting machines and on-line voting

■ **2001:** Postal voting introduced

■ **May 5, 2011:** UK's 45.6m voters to choose between first-past-the-post and alternative vote system

