

Politics in Britain

The political system



Plan:

1/ Constitutional monarchy vs parliamentary democracy

- The basic legal documents in the UK
- The governing monarch and her family, their functions
- The branches of power: legislative, executive and judiciary
- The Parliament, its Houses, the Cabinet and Prime Minister

2/ The role of the Political Parties in the UK, system of election

The System of government

The United Kingdom is a

constitutional monarchy

and

parliamentary democracy

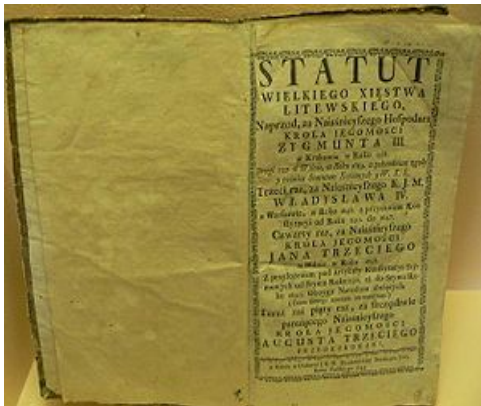
The UK is **constitutional monarchy**.

This means that **the official head of state is the monarch**, but his or her **powers are limited by the constitution**.

The British constitution is not written in any single document.

Legal documents

- **Magna Carta** – the Great Charter - **1215**
- Petition of Rights – **1628**- **the power of Charles I was restricted**
- Habeas Corpus Act – **1640** – **during the Civil War**
 - Bill of Rights – **1689** – **declared constitutional monarchy**
 - Statute of Westminster – **1931** – **regulated the relations in the Commonwealth**



A monarch is trained from **Birth** for the position of **Head of State** and even when a younger brother succeeds, he too has enormous experience of his country, its people and its government. **The people know who will succeed,** and this certainly gives a nation **invaluable continuity and stability.**

The Queen is the personification of the State.

The Queen is

- the head of the executive power,
- an integral part of the legislature,
- the head of the judiciary,
- the commander-in-chief of all the armed forces of the Crown
- the temporal head of the established Church of England.



In reality

She reigns but she doesn't rule.

THE QUEEN'S WORKING DAY

- The Queen has **many different duties** to perform every day:
 - investitures,
 - ceremonies,
 - receptions or
- reading letters from the public, official papers and briefing notes;
 - audiences with political ministers or ambassadors;
- meetings with her Private Secretaries to discuss her future diary plans.

THE QUEEN'S CEREMONIAL DUTIES

- the State Opening of Parliament,
- Audiences with new ambassadors
- the presentation of decorations at Investitures
- the presentation of Maundy money
- the hosting of garden parties

THE ROYAL FAMILY

**MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL
FAMILY**

Queen Elizabeth II is a descendent of **the Saxon king, Egbert. ??????**

She is **the 63d monarch** since Egbert.

HM THE QUEEN

The Queen was born in London on 21 April 1926, the first child of The Duke and Duchess of York, subsequently King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Five weeks later she was christened Elizabeth Alexandra Mary in the chapel at Buckingham Palace.

The Princess's early years were spent at 145 Piccadilly, the London house taken by her parents shortly after her birth; at White Lodge in Richmond Park; and at the country homes of her grandparents, King George V and Queen Mary, and the Earl and Countess of Strathmore. When she was six years old, her parents took over Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park as their own country home.



Елизавета II и герцог Эдинбургский во время коронации.



Елизавета II и герцог Эдинбургский в день 60-летия свадьбы.

The Queen's children



Charles
Prince of Wales

b. 1948

m. Lady Diana
Spencer

m. Camilla Parker
Bowles



Anne
Princess Royal

b.1950

m. Captain Mark
Phillips

m. Commander
Timothy Laurence



Andrew
Duke of York

b. 1960

m. Sarah
Ferguson
(divorced
1996)



Edward
Earl of Wessex

b. 1964

m. Sophie
Rhys-Jones

The Queens grandchildren



Prince William

b. 1982



Prince Harry

b. 1984



Peter Phillips

b. 1977



Zara Phillips

b. 1981



**Princess
Beatrice**

b. 1988



**Princess
Eugenie**

b. 1990



**Lady Louise
Windsor**

b. 2003

THE ROYAL RESIDENCES

Buckingham
Palace



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Frogmore

THE ROYAL RESIDENCES

Balmoral Castle



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Hampton Court Palace



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The organs of government in the United Kingdom are

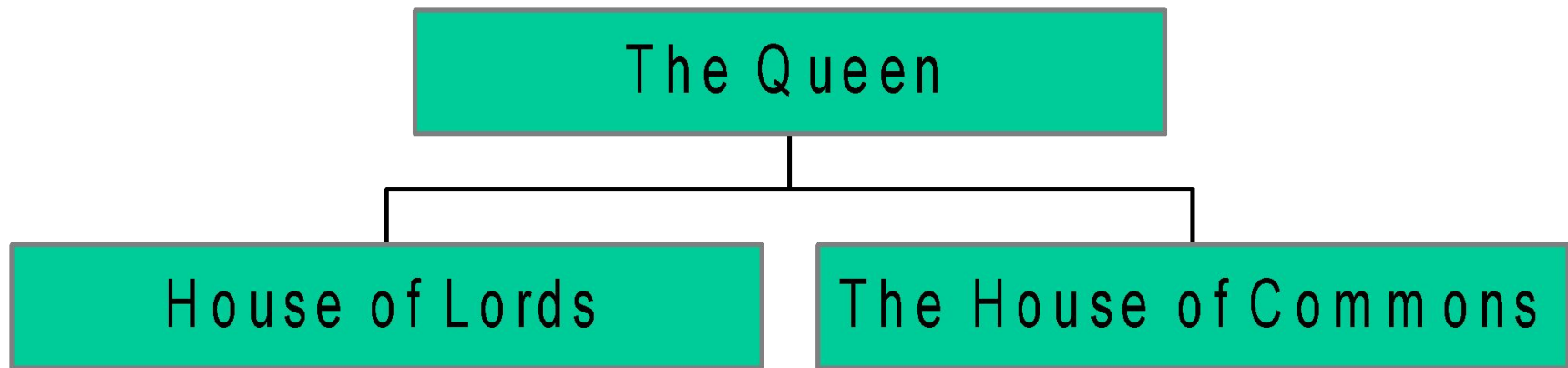
- *the legislature;*
- *the executive power;*
- *the judiciary.*

the legislature power
belongs to **Parliament**
which main function is
law-making.



Anglo-Saxons	witenagemot
Norman council	Great Council
early 13th century	Parliament of England
	mostly summoned when the king needed to raise money
1264	the first parliament was summoned
	archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls and barons, two knights from each shire and two burgesses from each borough.
1295	Model Parliament , there appeared the Commons
1341	the House of Commons and the House of Lords
1540	Speaker – a presiding officer in the House of Commons
1640	Short Parliament
1640 and 1660: Civil War	Long Parliament: No House of Lords
1660	Restoration of monarchy and parliament

It consists of **the House of Commons**
and the House of Lords.



574 life peers,
92 hereditary peers,
26 bishops,

650 MPs.

The House of Lords

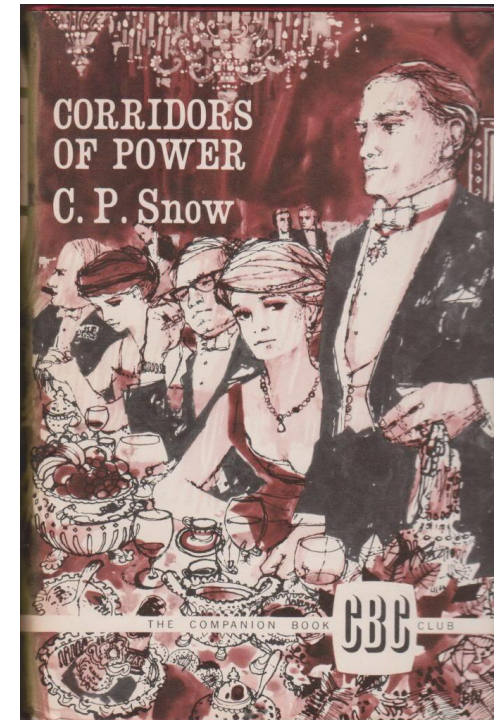
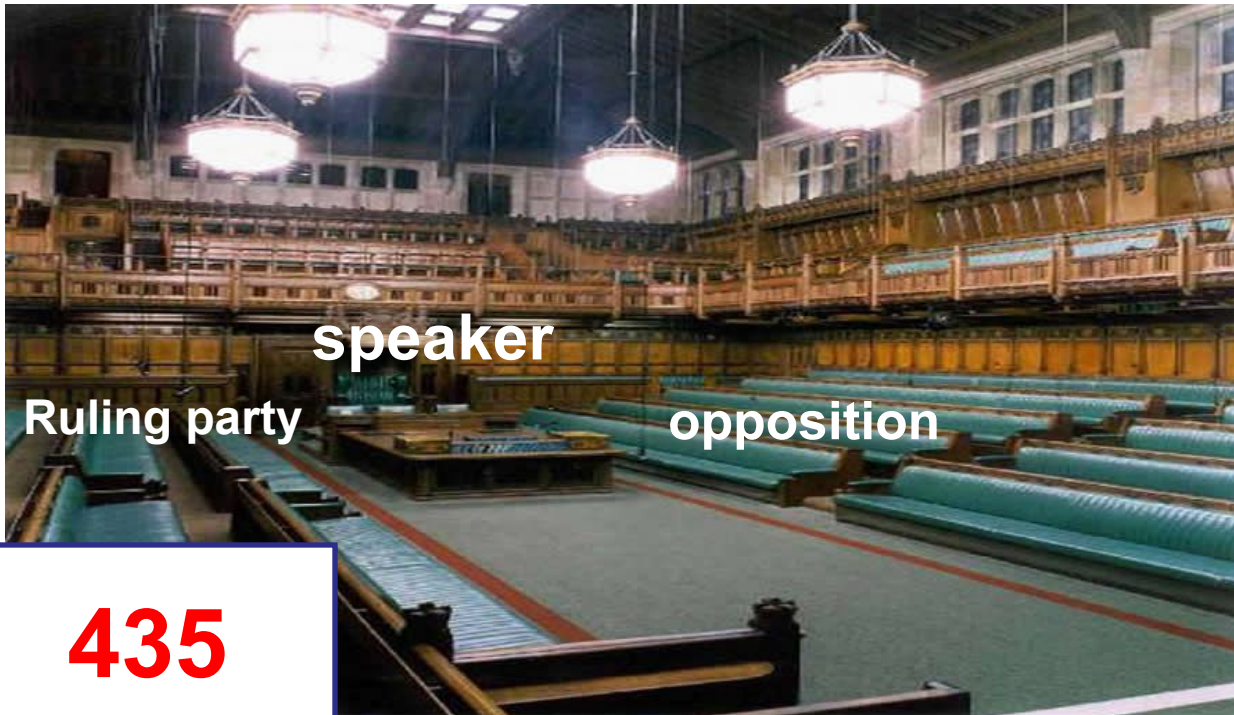
- 574 life peers,
- 92 hereditary peers,
- 26 bishops



The House of Commons

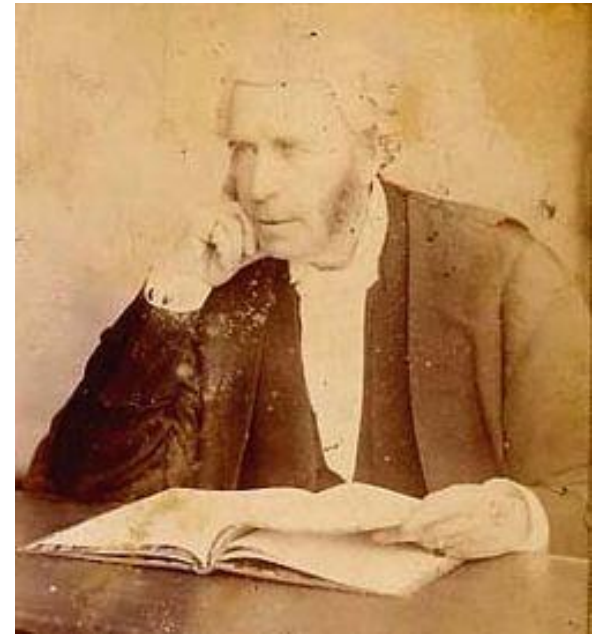
is elected by an almost universal adult suffrage.

There are at present **650 members** of the House of Commons, who are elected by people **every five years**. Members of the House of Commons receive a salary for their parliamentary work and hold their seats during the life of a Parliament.



Erskine May: Parliamentary Practice

- The rules how to behave in Parliament
- No reading
- No violency



- MPs are elected either at a **general election** or at a **by-election** following the death or retirement.
- Parliamentary elections are held **every 5 years** and it is the Prime Minister who decides on the exact day of the election.
- **The minimum voting age is 18.**
- And the voting is taken by **secret ballot.**
- The **election campaign** lasts about **3 weeks.**

the executive power

- Is realized by:
 - a) the Cabinet** and other ministers of the Crown;
 - b) Government departments;**
 - c) local authorities**, who administer and manage many services at the local level; and
 - d) statutory boards**, which are responsible for the operation of particular nationalised industries or public services;

- **The executive power of the Crown** is exercised by the **cabinet**, headed by the **prime minister**.



The Cabinet
is a
**committee of
ministers**

Five last prime ministers since...



- 1974-1976 Harold Wilson
- 1976-1979 James Callaghan
- 1979-1990 Margaret Thatcher
- 1990-1997 John Major
- 1997- 2007 Tony Blair
- 2007 – 2010 Gordon Brown
- 2010 - David Cameron



David Cameron

- Prime Minister
- First Lord of the Treasury
- Minister for the Civil Service

Each member of the
Cabinet is
a minister
responsible for
**a government
department.**



George Osborne

- Chancellor of the Exchequer

Responsibility

- Government spending
- Presents the Budget annually in March
- Lives at 11 Downing street



Philip Hammond

- Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Responsibility

- Relations with other countries



Michael Gove

- Secretary of State for Justice
- Lord Chancellor



Theresa May

- Secretary of State for the Home Department

Responsibility

- Internal relations
- The police
- Law and order
- Law courts



Secretary of State for Education

Nicola Ann Morgan

1970 - Margaret Thatcher



The Cabinet meets at the Prime Minister's house – number **10 Downing street.**





- The second largest party becomes the official opposition with its own leader and **the Shadow Cabinet.**
- The leader of the shadow cabinet nowadays is **Jeremy Corbyn.**

Political parties

- At present the main political groupings are **the Conservative** and **Labour Parties** and **the Party of Liberal Democrats**.
- There are also some other parties: the Social Democratic Party, the Scottish National and Welsh National Parties, the Communist Party of Great Britain and other small parties.

The Conservative Party

often called the

Tory Party,

started as **Royalists in the 17th century**.

It is the **party of big business, industry, commerce and landowners**. The party represents those who believe in private enterprise. The Tories are a **mixture of the rich and privileged** – the monopolists and landowners.

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The Liberal Party

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began its activities as anti-Royalists.

The Liberals represented **the trading and manufacturing class** in the 19th century.

Their slogan was 'Civil and Religious Liberties'. Later Liberals lost the support of working-class voters and made an alliance with Social Democrats. The Tories called the Liberals '**Whigs**'. A 'whig' was a **Scottish preacher**, who could preach moralising sermons for long hours.

The Labour Party

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was established at the beginning of the last century. It was set up by **the trade-unions** and various small socialist groups. This party drew away working people's support. Despite its many sincere and courageous fights, it soon came under the influence of imperialist ideas.

- **Chartism** was a working-class movement for political reform in Britain which existed from 1838 to 1858. It took its name from the People's Charter of 1838.
- The national chartist association was founded in Manchester.

The People's Charter called for six reforms

- A vote for every man 21 years of age
- The Secret Ballot
- No Property Qualification for Members of Parliament
- Payment of Members.
- Equal Constituencies.
- Annual Parliament Elections.

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The party that obtains the majority of seats in the House is called the **Government**, and the others are the **Opposition**.

The Government is the party

which has the **majority** in the Parliament
and the Queen appoints its leader as the
Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister appoints
**a team of main ministers as the
Cabinet**

(about 20 people).

the judiciary

determines common
law and interprets
statutes.

