

A short history of the UK electoral system

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(History of Parliament)

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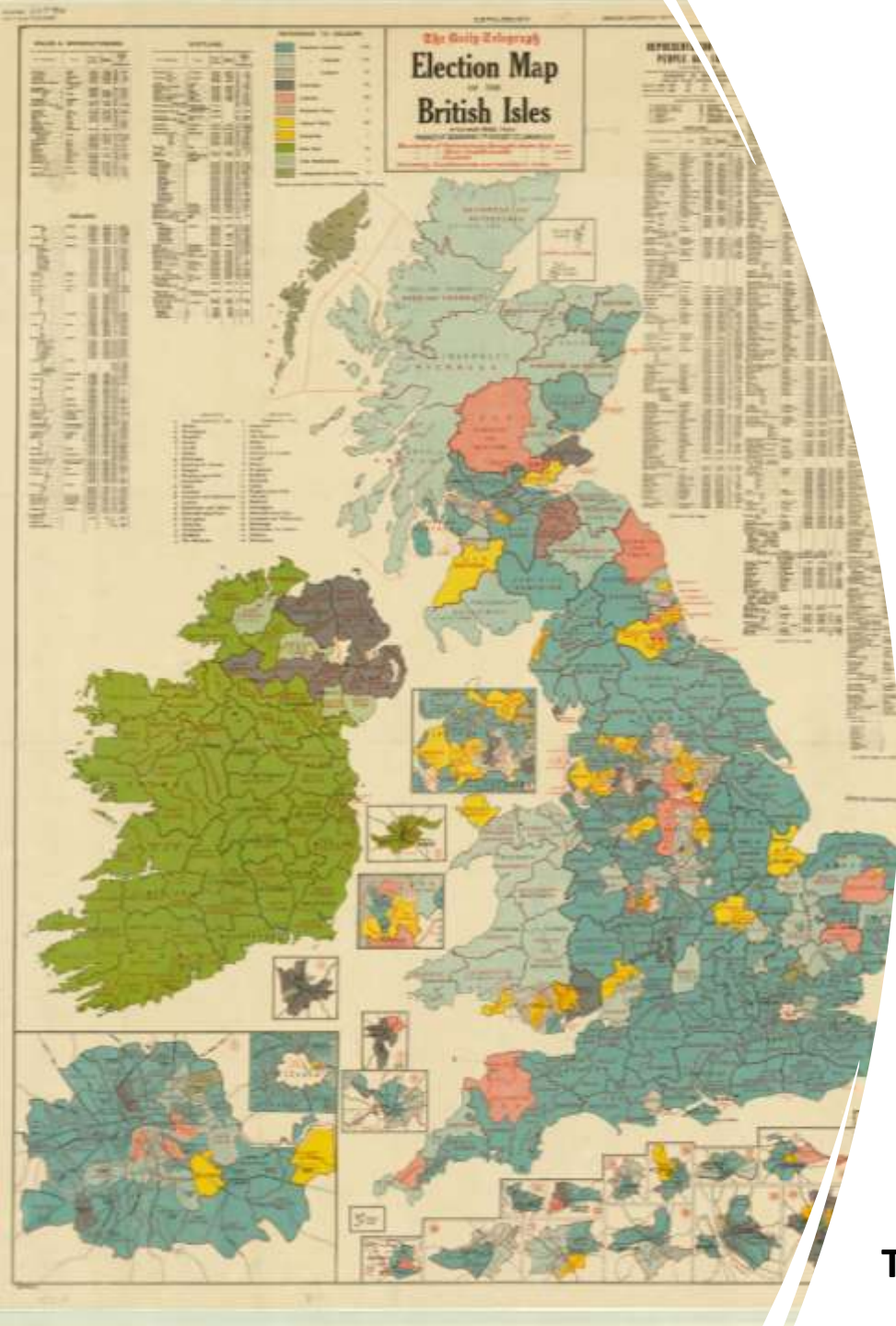
House of Commons: the 'democratic' part of Parliament

- We vote for our local Member of Parliament (MP)
- Find out who your MP is: www.theyworkforyou.com



A system that has evolved over 700 years

- Not 'democratic' until 1928?
- Evolved following Acts of Union
- System initially very uneven
- Constituency map updated at intervals since 1832



The electoral map in 1919

Voters have always elected MPs

- Who could vote has varied from place to place
- From 1832 voting rights slowly became more equal
- The way people vote has changed over time
- In 1918 all adult men and most women over 30 got the vote
- In 1928 all adult women got the vote



The role of MPs

- Represent constituents on national and local issues
- Raise and debate issues; design and vote on legislation
- MPs increasingly associated with parties – especially from 1832
- MPs can also be part of a government or official opposition



MPs representing constituents in 1805 & 2023