

### Timeline of key dates in British legal and political history

Date	Event	Commentary
15th June 1215	Signing of the Magna Carta	Initially drawn up by the Church and the Barons who were mounting an insurgency against him, King John signed the Magna Carta on the 15th of June 1215. However, since he was effectively forced to sign the document under duress, King John immediately requested that the Pope annul the Magna Carta, thus triggering a civil war. His son, Henry III, reissued the document in 1216, and it became law in 1225. The final version of the document, the one that is referred to today, was drawn up in 1297. The Magna Carta established various limitations on monarchical power in England and has since come to symbolise the origin of British liberties and protections against tyrannical rule.
11 December 1281 – March 1284	English Crown conquers Welsh Principalities	Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, known as the last native Welsh prince, was killed in battle by Edward I's forces in December 1282. The Statute of Rhuddlan 1284, also known as the Statute of Wales, imposed English law and customs into much of today's Wales.
14th April 1536	The enactment of the first Act of Union with Wales	Following the English conquest of Wales in the late thirteenth century, the perceived injustices of English rule and its punitive sanctions led to discontent and rebellion in Wales. The main such rebellion was held between 1400 and 1415 under the leadership of a lawyer, Owain Glyndŵr. A century later, partly in order to avoid further rebellions, Henry VIII instructed Thomas Cromwell to absorb the whole of today's Wales into the English political and legal system. This included the Marcher lordships that had kept relative autonomy after 1284. The absorption was achieved by two Acts of Parliament, the first in 1536 and the second in 1543. They have subsequently become known as the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543.
1542	The enactment of the Crown of Ireland Act 1542	This Act of the Irish Parliament provided that the monarchs of England would also become monarchs of Ireland. This was a step further than had been taken in 1171, when Henry II had declared himself to be Lord of Ireland.
24 March 1603	Reign of James I begins	Following the death of Elizabeth I, James VI of Scotland became James I of England. Despite sharing a Monarch, both countries remained independent until 1707.
1607	<i>Prohibitions del Roy</i> case	Sir Edward Coke contended in this case that judicial decisions should be made by qualified judges, not by the monarch.
1610, 1611, 1614	<i>Dr Bonham's Case; the Case of Proclamations; Day v Savadge</i>	This series of cases seemed to suggest that the common law was supreme to the actions of both the monarch and the Parliament.
1628	Petition of Right	Unhappy with the rule of the monarch, the Barons issued a Petition of Right in 1628 to demand that martial law was suspended, that civilian law be imposed, and that justice was to be done under law.
1642-1651	English Civil Wars	Civil wars raged in England between Royalists and Parliamentarians between 1642 and 1651. Charles I was tried and executed in 1649, thus beginning the Commonwealth of England. Charles II was proclaimed King of Scotland in the same year, and crowned in 1651. In the same year, Parliamentarians finally defeated the Royalists.
1661	Monarchy restored	Charles II was crowned King of England and Ireland in 1661. The Commonwealth of England had had two written constitutions during the interregnum years: 'The Instrument of Government' and the 'Humble Petition and Advice'.
1679	Habeas Corpus Act	Habeas Corpus, which literally means 'let you have the body', was an Act passed in 1679 to ensure that the King complied with the habeas corpus writ which demanded that he brought his detainees before a court of law to determine whether their imprisonment was lawful. The King had previously failed to do so, thus failing to comply with the Magna Carta and the Petition of Right.
1688	The Glorious Revolution	The Protestant William of Orange forced the abdication of Catholic King James II of England and became William III of England and Ireland. It is claimed that the revolution contributed to establishing parliamentary democracy in England.
16th December 1689	Bill of Rights given Royal Assent	The Bill of Rights of 1689 received its Royal Assent on December 16th 1689 and now forms one of the written elements of the UK constitution. The Act originated from the Declaration of Right, which formed part of the negotiations that led to William III acceding to the throne. The

		Declaration, which became the Bill of Rights upon enactment, set out the rights of Parliament and the Subject in relation to the Monarchy and included the main illegalities that Parliament believed the King and his officers to have committed. Amongst other things, it highlighted the lack of due process through the courts for those accused of crimes, it reasserted the separation of powers, it underlined the operation of the rule of law, it asserted the legislative supremacy of Parliament and the essence of parliamentary privilege.
1st May 1707	Act of Union between England and Scotland	The Act of Union between Scotland and England took effect on May 1st 1707. Scotland had remained as a separate sovereign state following James VI of Scotland also becoming James I of England in 1603. However, in 1707 the English and Scottish Parliaments accepted the Act of Union, thus legally uniting both countries as 'Great Britain'. The Scottish and English Parliaments dissolved themselves and a new Parliament of Great Britain was created, using the same site and buildings at Westminster as the English Parliament had used previously. Despite the union, Scotland still retained considerable autonomy in certain matters. Thus, for example, distinct Scottish legal, education and religious institutions were preserved.
1765	<i>Entick v Carrington</i>	This case established that the government and its officers are subject to the law and to the authority of the courts.
1st January 1801	Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland	The Act of Union received Royal Assent on August 1st 1800 and came into effect on January 1st 1801. England had sought to incrementally increase its control over Ireland for centuries prior to 1800, but complete union was not achieved until this date. As part of this staggered process, the Tudor monarchs had encouraged Irish and Scottish settlers to colonise the land of the native Irish. This process, and the perceived unfairness of land tenure legislation, amongst other things, led to discontent and to recurrent rebellions against English rule. These rebellions, and the Wolfe Tone rebellion of 1798 in particular, were a major contributing factor in the decision of William Pitt's government to seek an Act of Union. Under the Act, the Irish Parliament was abolished and integrated into the Parliament at Westminster with Irish MPs, Peers and Bishops incorporated into the Parliament. The result was the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
7th June 1832	1832 Reform Act receives Royal Assent	The Reform Act of 1832 introduced dramatic changes to the electoral franchise in Britain. Inter alia, the changes introduced included electoral registers, free elections, and extended suffrage to a wider pool of men so that propertied men with a household worth £10 could now vote.
1839	<i>Stockdale v Hansard</i>	This case had ramifications for parliamentary supremacy and parliamentary privilege.
1842	<i>Edinburgh and Dalkeith Railway v Wauchope</i>	This case required the court to consider when an Act of Parliament had been validly enacted.
1865	<i>Mersey Docks and Harbour Board v Cameron</i>	This case established that the Crown is exempt from law unless the law states that the Crown is bound by it, or the content of the law is such that it must necessarily be bound by it.
15th August 1867	1867 Reform Act receives Royal Assent	The Representation of the People Act, also known as the Second Reform Act, received Royal Assent on August 15th 1867. It significantly extended suffrage, enfranchising all male householders who paid rates, thereby allowing working class men the vote for the first time.
18th July 1872	Ballot Act receives Royal Assent	The Ballot Act 1872 introduced a secret ballot and made detailed provisions in respect of the conduct of returning officers in elections.
6th December 1884	1884 Reform Act receives Royal Assent	The 1884 Representation of the People Act extended suffrage further, allowing virtually all men, except domestic servants and those in receipt of poor relief, to vote in general elections.
1887	<i>Dillon v Balfour</i>	Inter alia, this case confirmed that MPs had immunity from actions in defamation for words spoken during parliamentary proceedings.
30th November 1909	House of Lords rejects Liberal budget	Due to the extended suffrage established by the 1832, 1867 and 1884 reform Acts, the ever more democratic House of Commons had begun to gain increased legitimacy over the unelected House of Lords. The 1906 general election had produced an overwhelming Liberal majority in the Commons. However, the Conservative peers inflicted a succession of defeats upon major Liberal measures when they came before the House of Lords. The growing tension culminated in the House of Lords' rejection of the 1909 Budget. In turn, this precipitated the

		enactment of the Parliament Act 1911.
10th August 1911	Parliament Act passed	Due to the hostilities between the Liberal government and the Conservative peers, which in turn had led to deadlock, the Parliament Act was enacted in August 1911. The Act provided that money bills became law within one month of leaving the House of Commons, regardless of the opinion of the Lords, and that any other legislation became law after two years, even if opposed by the Lords. In effect, the House of Commons could now send Bills for Royal Assent without the consent of the Lords, thus firmly establishing the supremacy of the Commons over the Lords. The Act also reduced the maximum length of a Parliament from seven years to five years. Any extension of a Parliament beyond five years would require the approval of the House of Lords.
1914-1918	First World War	The First World War lasted from 1914-1918.
6th February 1918	Representation of the People Act receives Royal Assent	The Representation of the People Act 1918 extended suffrage to all males and gave women over the age of 30, subject to property qualifications, the vote for the first time.
1920	<i>Attorney General v de Keyser's Royal Hotel Ltd</i>	The key case of <i>Attorney General v de Keyser's Royal Hotel Ltd</i> , related to the use of the royal prerogative, was reported.
23rd December 1920	Government of Ireland Act is passed	The Government of Ireland Act 1920 partitioned Ireland, providing for two separate Parliaments, one in Belfast for the newly established Northern Ireland, the other in Dublin for the newly established Southern Ireland. Both Parliaments were to be subordinate to the UK Parliament. Whilst the Northern Ireland Parliament was opened by King George V in 1921 and remained in existence until 1972, the Southern Irish Parliament only met to approve the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922, which established the Irish Free State and brought the concept of a Southern Ireland under the control of the UK Parliament to an end.
1921	<i>Attorney General v Fulham Corporation</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Attorney General v Fulham Corporation</i> referred to the simple ultra vires principle.
5th December 1922	The Irish Free State Constitution Act receives Royal Assent	The Irish Free State Constitution Act received Royal Assent on December 5th 1922. An Act of the UK Parliament, it brought the constitution of the Irish Free State into effect.
1924	<i>R v Sussex Justices ex parte McCarthy</i>	With reference to judicial review, the dicta of Lord Hewart in the case of <i>R v Sussex Justices ex parte McCarthy</i> referred to the rule against bias.
1925	<i>Roberts v Hopwood</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Roberts v Hopwood</i> referred to relevant and irrelevant considerations.
2nd July 1928	Representation of the People Act receives Royal Assent	The Representation of the People Act of 1928 extended suffrage to women on the same basis as men.
1931	Statute of Westminster is enacted	The Statute of Westminster 1931 provided that the Dominions were not legislatively subordinate to the UK in relation to their own domestic affairs, thus effectively removing the UK Parliament's legislative supremacy in respect of the UK's Dominions.
1934	<i>Ellen Street Estates v Minister for Health</i>	The key case of <i>Ellen Street Estates v Minister for Health</i> , related to parliamentary supremacy, was reported.

11th December 1936	His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act receives Royal Assent	His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act received Royal Assent on December 11th 1936. Due to popular opposition to his affair with Wallis Simpson, the King decided to abdicate the throne in December 1936.
1st July 1937	Ministers of the Crown Act receives Royal Assent	The Ministers of the Crown Act 1937 introduced provisions for the payment of ministerial salaries. It also offered the first official recognition of the posts of Prime Minister (which had been in de facto existence since the early eighteenth century) and Leader of the Opposition.
1939-1945	Second World War	The Second World War lasted from 1939-1945
1st December 1942	Beveridge Report published	The report of William Beveridge on 'Social Insurance and Allied Services' was published on December 1st 1942. The report would come to be the basis of the 1945 Labour government's concept of a modern welfare state and included reference to things such as a free national health service, a system of child allowances and a government commitment to full employment.
1943	<i>Carltona v Commissioner for Works</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Carltona v Commissioner for Works</i> referred to delegation of power and illegality.
5th July 1945	UK general election	The Labour Party won 392 seats on 47.7% of the UK vote, thus allowing Labour to form its first majority government. Clement Attlee became Prime Minister. The Conservatives, despite the leadership of Winston Churchill, won 39.7% of the UK vote and 210 seats. The Liberal Party returned 12 MPs to the House of Commons on a 9% share of the UK vote.
5th March 1946	Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech	Churchill delivered his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech at Westminster College, Fulton College, Missouri on March 5th 1946. In it, he claimed that "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent".
1947	The Crown Proceedings Act is enacted	The Crown Proceedings Act 1947 was enacted, providing for the criminal and civil liability of members of the executive in certain circumstances.
13th November 1947	Hugh Dalton resigns as Chancellor	An example of strict adherence to the convention of individual ministerial responsibility, Chancellor Hugh Dalton resigned from office on November 13th 1947 after having stopped on the way to Parliament to disclose to a journalist the content of the emergency budget he was about to deliver.
1948	<i>Associated Provincial Picture Houses v Wednesbury Corporation</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Associated Provincial Picture Houses v Wednesbury Corporation</i> established the concept of Wednesbury unreasonableness.
2nd April 1948	US Congress approves Marshall Plan	On April 2nd 1948, the United States Congress effectively approved the Marshall Plan. Regarded as one of the precursors to European integration, the plan effectively meant that the USA would provide economic aid to restart the European economy. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK all participated in the Marshall Plan. In total, the UK received some \$3000 million. In return, the United States correctly assumed that such economic aid would be primarily used to purchase manufactured goods and raw materials that it produced.
7th-11th May 1948	Congress of Europe	The Congress of Europe was a conference held between European leaders and politicians at The Hague between May 7th and 11th 1948. The Congress would play a role in the formation of the Council of Europe in 1949.
5th July 1948	National Health Service comes into operation	Aneurin Bevan, the Secretary of State for Health, implemented some of the proposals of the 1942 Beveridge report by establishing a free national health service.
30th July 1948	British Nationality Act enacted; Representation of the People Act receives Royal Assent	The British Nationality Act and the Representation of the People Act received Royal Assent on the same date. The former gave all British subjects the right to enter and remain in the UK, whilst the latter removed the practice of plural voting and abolished University seats in the House of Commons.

	Assent	
10th December 1948	The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is adopted	Regarded as the first global expression of human rights, the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on December 10th 1948. It has since formed the basis of numerous international treaties, including the European Convention on Human Rights.
4th April 1949	NATO established	The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was established on April 4th 1949 when Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France and the UK were joined by the United States, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland in a mutual defence pact. This effectively guaranteed the commitment of the United States to the defence of Europe at a time when relations between East and West were progressively worsening.
5th May 1949	Council of Europe established	The Council of Europe was established on May 5th 1949. The Council of Europe was established to protect human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, develop continent-wide agreements to standardise member states' social and legal practices and to promote a sense of a European identity. It originally had ten members (Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK) but has since expanded to encompass 47 member states. Amongst other things, the Council of Europe has been responsible for the European Charter on Minority Languages and the European Social Charter. However, its most notable achievement was the agreement of the European Convention on Human Rights, which was opened for signature in 1950. The UK became one of its first signatories in 1951, and the Convention came into effect in 1953.
2nd June 1949	Government of Ireland Act	In 1949, the Irish government withdrew from the Commonwealth and declared itself a Republic. The link with the British Crown was thereby severed. In response, the UK Parliament passed the Government of Ireland Act 1949. The Act principally provided for the departure of Ireland from the Commonwealth but it also affirmed Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom, subject to any future referendum to the contrary.
16th December 1949	Parliament Act receives Royal Assent	The Parliament Act 1949 amended the Parliament Act 1911 by further reducing the House of Lords' power of delay from two years to one year. The Bill was introduced in 1947 and the new measures were passed using the provisions of the Parliament Act 1911 on December 16th 1949.
9th May 1950	Schuman Plan announced	Regarded as one of the precursors for European integration, on May 9th 1950 Robert Schuman proposed that France and the Federal Republic of Germany should join together in pooling their iron and steel resources. Schuman initially took inspiration from Jean Monnet's ambitions to bind France and Germany in a common interest. The UK government declined to participate in the subsequent negotiations which follow on from the Schuman declaration on the grounds that a French draft communiqué committed participants to pooling production and accepting a new 'higher authority whose decisions will bind'.
18th April 1951	Treaty of Paris signed	Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the Treaty of Paris which established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The European Steel and Coal Community came into existence on July 23rd 1952 and was regarded as a political project of Franco-German reconciliation, since both the steel and coal industries were regarded as vital to war industries.
25th October 1951	UK general election	The Conservatives won 48% of the vote and 321 seats. Labour won 48.8% of the vote and 295 seats. The Liberals won 2.6% of the vote and 6 seats. Winston Churchill became Prime Minister.
25th May 1955	UK general election	Following Winston Churchill's retirement in 1955, his replacement as Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, called a general election in May 1955. The Conservatives won 49.6% of the vote and 344 seats. Labour won 46.4% of the vote and 277 seats. The Liberals won 2.7% of the vote and 6 seats.
1st-2nd June 1955	Messina Conference	Regarded as a precursor to the European Economic Community, the Messina Conference, negotiations between the foreign ministers of the six members of the ECSC, discussed draft proposals for a tariff-free European market. Despite sending a representative, the UK played no further part in the discussions.

1956	<i>Edwards v Bairstow</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Edwards v Bairstow</i> concerned mistakes as to fact.
25th March 1957	Treaty of Rome signed	The six founding member states of the European Coal and Steel Community (Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) signed the Treaty of Rome on March 25th 1957, thus establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom. The objective of the Treaty was to establish a common market via the removal of barriers to the free movement of capital, people, goods and services. The Treaty of Rome came into force on January 1st 1958. Britain did not participate after leaving the negotiations at Messina in June 1955.
30th April 1958	Life Peerages Act receives Royal Assent	The Life Peerages Act 1958 allowed the creation of Life Peers by the monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister.
8th October 1959	UK general election	The Conservatives won 49.4% of the vote and 365 seats. Labour won 43.8% of the vote and 258 seats. The Liberals won 5.9% of the vote and 6 seats. Harold Macmillan became Prime Minister.
20th November 1959	European Free Trade Association Treaty signed	The UK had initially rejected the opportunity to engage in negotiations regarding the EEC due to its concerns about having one single external trade tariff for all the Community's member states. Consequently, in November 1956 the UK developed its own proposals for a Free Trade Area which would not impose a common external tariff. These proposals led to the creation of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) comprising of Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. The treaty was agreed in Stockholm on October 8th 1959.
31st July 1961	Macmillan announces application to join the EEC	For a multitude of reasons, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan announced in 1961 that he would seek to join the EEC. These reasons included: US pressure for Britain to join the EEC; idealism regarding the Commonwealth had begun to diminish; the economies of the EEC had stable and rapid growth whilst the UK was increasingly beset by inflation; balance of payments difficulties and sterling crises; the UK's growth rate was increasingly outstripped by the members of the EEC.
14th January 1963	De Gaulle vetoes UK entry into EEC	On January 14th 1963, President Charles de Gaulle of France announced that Britain was not ready to become a member of the EEC and that France would veto Britain's application for membership on the grounds that Britain remained highly distinctive in comparison to the rest of the EEC with a unique history, character and economic structure that he believed would require extensive reform of the EEC to accommodate.
4th June 1963	John Profumo resigns	An example of the operation of the convention of individual ministerial responsibility, Secretary of State for War, John Profumo, resigned his seat and his ministerial post on June 4th 1963 over lies he had told Parliament regarding an affair he had with Christine Keeler, a woman who had had an affair with a Soviet spy.
31st July 1963	Peerages Act passed	The Peerage Act 1963 provided that hereditary peers would be permitted to renounce their peerages, principally so that they could stand for election to the House of Commons.
1964	<i>British Broadcasting Corporation v Johns (Inspector of Taxes)</i>	This case emphasised that new forms of royal prerogative rights could not be created.
1964	<i>Ridge v Baldwin</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Ridge v Baldwin</i> concerned the rules of natural justice.
15th October 1964	UK general election	Labour won 44.1% of the vote and 317 seats. The Conservatives won 43.4% of the vote and 304 seats. The Liberals won 11.2% of the vote and 9 seats. Harold Wilson became Prime Minister.
8th April 1965	Merger Treaty signed	The Merger Treaty merged the executives of the three European Communities (the EEC, the European Coal and Steel Community and Euratom). The Treaty became effective on July 1st 1967.
1966	Right of petition to the European Court of Human Rights from the UK	The UK accepted the citizens' right of petition to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

31st March 1966	UK general election	Labour won 47.9% of the vote and 363 seats. The Conservatives won 41.9% of the vote and 253 seats. The Liberals won 8.5% of the vote and 12 seats. Harold Wilson remained Prime Minister.
March 1967	Creation of Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration	The Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 established the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration on similar lines to the ombudsmen that existed in Scandinavia and New Zealand.
2nd May 1967	Labour government announces intention to seek entry into EEC	Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced on May 2nd 1967 that the UK would make a second application to join the European Economic Community. President de Gaulle of France remained opposed to UK membership and he would subsequently veto the UK application on 27 November 1967.
1968	<i>Padfield v Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Padfield v Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food</i> concerned the operation of rules related to ultra vires.
26th November 1968	Race Relations Act comes into force	The Race Relations Act 1968 extended the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1965 to cover discrimination in respect of housing and employment, areas which had not been addressed in the earlier legislation.
1969	<i>Madzimbamuto v Lardner-Burke</i>	The case of <i>Madzimbamuto v Lardner-Burke</i> concerned constitutional conventions and parliamentary supremacy.
1969	<i>Anisminic Ltd v Foreign Compensation Commission</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Anisminic Ltd v Foreign Compensation Commission</i> concerned illegality and the nature of justiciability in judicial review.
14th August 1969	British Army deployed in Londonderry	Following sectarian trouble in Northern Ireland, on the request of the Northern Irish Prime Minister, James Chichester-Clark, the British Army was deployed to assist the Royal Ulster Constabulary in maintaining order in the province.
1970	<i>Lavender and Son v Minister of Housing and Local Government</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Lavender and Son v Minister of Housing and Local Government</i> concerned the way in which discretion should be exercised.
1st January 1970	Voting age reduced to 18	The Representation of the People Act 1969 reduced voting age from 21 to 18. The change became effective on January 1st 1970.
29th May 1970	Equal Pay Act enacted	The Equal Pay Act 1970 provided that women were entitled to claim equal pay with men where they did work of a broadly similar nature to their male counterparts.
18th June 1970	UK general election	The Conservatives won 46.4% of the vote and 330 seats. Labour won 43.1% of the vote and 287 seats. The Liberals won 7.5% of the vote and 6 seats. Edward Heath became Prime Minister.
22nd April 1970	EEC Budget Treaty	The EEC Budget Treaty, which was agreed on April 22nd 1970, provided the EEC with its own source of revenue, primarily through national contributions based on customs duties on goods entering member states from outside the EEC, levies on agricultural products and a percentage of VAT.
1971	<i>Blackburn v Attorney General</i>	The case of <i>Blackburn v Attorney General</i> concerned the courts' jurisdiction to review treaty-making power exercised under the royal prerogative.
1971	<i>British Oxygen Company Ltd v Minister of Technology</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>British Oxygen Company Ltd v Minister of Technology</i> concerned the application of the ultra vires doctrine to policies.
28th October 1971	House of Commons votes in favour of EEC	The House of Commons voted in favour of the UK's membership of the EEC on October 28th 1971. The subsequent European Communities Act received Royal Assent on 17th October 1972.

	entry	
22nd January 1972	Signing of the Brussels Treaty of Accession	Prime Minister Edward Heath signed the Brussels Treaty on January 22nd 1972, paving the way for the UK to accede to the EU on the 1st of January 1973.
24th March 1972	Suspension of the Northern Ireland Parliament.	Due to escalating levels of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, the UK Prime Minister, Edward Heath, announced in March 1972 that central government would assume responsibility over law in Northern Ireland. On the 24th of March, the Stormont Parliament was suspended, thus beginning a period of nearly three decades where Northern Ireland would be directly ruled from Westminster.
1973	<i>Brutus v Cozens</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Brutus v Cozens</i> concerned errors of fact and errors of law.
1st January 1973	UK accedes to EEC	The United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland entered the EEC. Norway did not enter after a referendum in April 1972 in which 67% of Norwegians voted against membership.
9th March 1973	Northern Ireland Border Referendum	Following the suspension of the Stormont Parliament in March 1972, the UK government called a referendum on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland on March 9th 1973. Voters were asked whether they wished Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK or whether they wished for Northern Ireland to join with the Republic of Ireland. The result was an overwhelming endorsement of Northern Ireland's remaining within the UK. No further border referendums have since taken place.
18th July 1973	The Northern Ireland Constitution Act receives Royal Assent	The Northern Ireland Constitution Act received Royal Assent on July 18th 1973. The Act's purpose was to abolish the suspended Northern Ireland Parliament and to provide for a Northern Ireland Assembly and executive to restore devolved government to the province. Despite elections being held to the newly-formed Assembly, its executive collapsed in 1974, thus bringing its existence to an end.
1974	<i>British Railways Board v Pickin</i>	The case of <i>British Railways Board v Pickin</i> concerned parliamentary supremacy.
28th February 1974	UK general election	Labour won 37.8% of the vote and 301 seats. The Conservatives won 37.9% of the vote and 296 seats. The Liberals won 19.3% of the vote and 14 seats. Harold Wilson became Prime Minister.
1st April 1974	Local Government Act 1972 comes into force	The Conservative government's Local Government Act 1972 came into force on April 1st 1974. The Act established a uniform two tier system of local government.
10th October 1974	UK general election	Labour won 39.2% of the vote and 319 seats. The Conservatives won 35.9% of the vote and 277 seats. The Liberals won 18.3% of the vote and 13 seats. Harold Wilson remained Prime Minister.
10th February 1975	Margaret Thatcher elected Conservative Party leader	Margaret Thatcher became the first female leader of a British political party on February 10th 1975 when she won the second round ballot of the Conservative leadership election.
16th May 1975	Reorganisation of local government in Scotland	In 1975 local government in Scotland was reorganised on the basis of a two-tier system of large regional councils and smaller district councils.
5th June 1975	EEC Referendum	In a referendum held on the 5th of June 1975, 67% of those voting in the UK voted in favour of remaining in the EEC on the basis of the Labour Government's renegotiated terms of entry.
1977	<i>Laker Airways v Department of Trade</i>	Lord Denning commented obiter in the case of <i>Laker Airways v Department of Trade</i> that he did not see any reason why the exercise of the royal prerogative by the executive should not be reviewed by the courts.



1st March 1979	Scottish and Welsh devolution referendums	In order for the Government's proposals for the devolution of powers to Scotland and Wales to be adopted, 40% of the total electorates (not just those who voted on the day) in those respective countries would have to vote in their favour. In the referenda held on the 1st of March 1979, 32.8% of the total Scottish electorate voted in favour of establishing a Scottish Parliament (51.6% of those who voted on the day), whilst only 20.3% of those who voted on the day were in favour of establishing a Welsh Assembly.
3rd May 1979	UK general election	The Conservatives won 43.9% of the vote and 339 seats. Labour won 36.9% of the vote and 269 seats. The Liberals won 13.8% on the vote and 11 seats. Margaret Thatcher became the UK's first female Prime Minister.
7th June 1979	European Parliament election	The election held on June 7th 1979 was the first direct election of representatives to the European Parliament. The UK opted to use the simple majority system and returned 60 Conservative MEPs out of the 78 in England, Scotland and Wales.
25th June 1979	House of Commons votes for Select Committee reform	The current Select Committee system, a key mechanism by which the Commons holds the government to account, was adopted following a vote in favour of reform on the 25th of June 1979.
28th July 1981	Supreme Court Act receives Royal Assent	Now known as the Senior Courts Act 1981, the Supreme Court Act 1981, an extremely important Act in the field of judicial review, received Royal Assent on July 28th 1981.
30th October 1981	British Nationality Act receives Royal Assent	The British Nationality Act 1981 provided for new forms of citizenship. In addition to British Citizens, the Act defined British Dependent Territories Citizens and British Overseas Citizens. All but British Citizens were deprived of full entry and settlement rights in the UK.
1982	<i>R v Inland Revenue Commissioners ex parte National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R v Inland Revenue Commissioners ex parte National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses</i> concerned the grounds for judicial review.
1983	<i>Manuel v Attorney General</i>	The case of <i>Manuel v Attorney General</i> concerned parliamentary supremacy.
1983	<i>O'Reilly v Mackman</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>O'Reilly v Mackman</i> concerned the exclusivity principle.
1983	<i>Attorney General of Hong Kong v Ng Yuen Shiu</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Attorney General of Hong Kong v Ng Yuen Shiu</i> concerned legitimate expectations.
9th June 1983	UK general election	The Conservatives won 42.4% of the vote and 397 seats. Labour won 27.6% of the vote and 209 seats. The Liberal-SDP alliance won 25.4% of the vote and 23 seats. Margaret Thatcher remained Prime Minister.
1984	<i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Khan</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Khan</i> concerned legitimate expectations.
25th January 1984	Union membership banned at GCHQ	On January 25th 1984, the government banned union membership among the staff at Government Communications Head Quarters, claiming that union membership and the potential for strike action could compromise national security.
26th June 1984	EU budget rebate agreed for the UK	From 1979 until 1984 the UK government's European policy was dominated by the issue of the UK contribution to the EEC budget, which had long been considered unfair. The issue was resolved by an agreement reached on June 26th 1984 to rebate a proportion of the UK's contribution.

12 <sup>th</sup> October 1984	Brighton Grand Hotel Bombing	A bomb was placed at the Grand Hotel, Brighton by the Provisional IRA, in an attempt to assassinate the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher and her Cabinet during the Conservative Party Conference. Five people were killed when the bomb detonated and 31 people injured.  One of those murdered was a sitting MP Sir Anthony Berry, Member for Enfield Southgate.
1985	<i>Council of Civil Service Unions v Minister of State for Civil Service</i>	The case of <i>Council of Civil Service Unions v Minister of State for Civil Service</i> concerned the judicial review of the executive's use of the royal prerogative.
1985	<i>Wheeler v Leicester City Council</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Wheeler v Leicester City Council</i> concerned the use of power for improper purposes.
1986	<i>Nottinghamshire County Council v Secretary of State for the Environment</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Nottinghamshire County Council v Secretary of State for the Environment</i> concerned a strict interpretation of irrationality.
9th January 1986	Michael Heseltine resigns	In an apparent example of the application of the convention of collective ministerial responsibility, Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine resigned his Cabinet post in January 1986. In the weeks and months leading up to his resignation, Heseltine had become increasingly disgruntled with the lack of support within the Cabinet for his proposals regarding the future ownership of British helicopter firm Westland. Matters came to a head when the Cabinet finally decided against Heseltine's proposals, and the Prime Minister demanded that all future communication between Cabinet members and the press was to be checked by the Cabinet Office to ensure adherence to the convention of collective ministerial responsibility. Heseltine immediately resigned, citing a lack of trust within the Cabinet that was, in his opinion, in itself a breach of the doctrine of collective ministerial responsibility.
17th February 1986	Single European Act signed	On February 17th 1986 the EEC's Single European Act was signed. The primary aim of the Single European Act was to create a genuine internal free market in goods, labour and capital within the EEC by 1992. However, in addition, the SEA marked a shift towards strengthening of the supranational institutions of the community with the EEC gaining competences in new policy areas like the environment, research and development and regional policy.
1987	<i>R v Panel on Takeovers and Mergers ex parte Datafin Plc and Another</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R v Panel on Takeovers and Mergers ex parte Datafin Plc and Another</i> concerned the rules on whether the decision making body was in fact a private or a public body.
1987	<i>Lloyd v McMahon</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Lloyd v McMahon</i> concerned the flexibility of the rules of natural justice.
11th June 1987	UK general election	The Conservatives won 42.2% of the vote and 375 seats. Labour won 20.8% of the vote and 229 seats. The Liberal-SDP Alliance won 22.6% of the vote and 22 seats. Margaret Thatcher remained Prime Minister.
1988	Launch of Next Step Agencies	1988 saw the launch of the Next Step Agencies which restructured parts of the civil service and had an effect on the operation of the convention of ministerial responsibility.
1989	<i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Northumbria Police Authority</i>	The case of <i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Northumbria Police Authority</i> concerned the royal prerogative.
9th December 1989	European Social Charter adopted	At the meeting of the European Council in Strasbourg all member states except the United Kingdom adopt the European Social Charter.
1990	<i>Lord Keith Lord Advocate v</i>	The case of <i>Lord Keith Lord Advocate v Dumbarton District Council</i> reiterated that Crown immunity extended to Crown servants carrying out certain Crown functions under the royal

	<i>Dumbarton District Council</i>	prerogative.
1990	<i>R v Secretary of State for the Environment ex parte Rose Theatre Trust Company</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R v Secretary of State for the Environment ex parte Rose Theatre Trust Company</i> concerned standing for public interest groups.
30 <sup>th</sup> July 1990	Ian Gow MP for Eastbourne, murdered	Ian Gow MP was murdered outside his home by the Provisional IRA. A bomb was planted in his driveway under his car and detonated at 08:39. Gow died of his wounds shortly afterwards. The IRA claimed responsibility for the murder.
5th October 1990	Britain joins the ERM	On October 5th 1990, the Conservative government committed the UK to joining the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, despite the reservations of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.
22nd November 1990	Margaret Thatcher announces her resignation	On November 22nd 1990, Margaret Thatcher resigned as Conservative party leader and as Prime Minister during a leadership election campaign. She was succeeded as party leader and as Prime Minister by John Major.
1991	<i>R v Army Board for the Defence ex parte Anderson</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R v Army Board for the Defence ex parte Anderson</i> concerned the circumstances in which the rule of natural justice may require an oral hearing to be given.
9th May 1991	War Crimes Act receives Royal Assent	The War Crimes Act received Royal Assent on the 9th of May 1991. The Act was notable for creating criminal offences retrospectively, by criminalising behaviour that was legal when it occurred during the Second World War. The government used the Parliament Act to pass the Act due to the opposition of the House of Lords.
4th October 1991	<i>Factortame Ltd and Others v Secretary of State for Transport</i>	In a key case regarding the application of European Community law, the judgment of the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords in the case of <i>Factortame Ltd and Others v Secretary of State for Transport</i> emphasised that European law was supreme to any seemingly conflicting provisions of domestic legislation in the UK. Consequently, the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 had to be suspended whilst a final judgment was reached by the European Court of Justice on the extent of any conflict between the European law and the domestic legislation.
1992	<i>Pepper v Hart</i>	The case of <i>Pepper v Hart</i> reiterated that the courts decided on the existence of parliamentary privilege. The case is also authority for the limited use of Hansard in judicial proceedings.
1992	<i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Doody</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Doody</i> concerned situations where a decision-maker must give reasons for a decision.
7th February 1992	Maastricht Treaty signed	The Maastricht Treaty was signed on February 7th 1992. In December 1991 the heads of member states governments met at Maastricht, Netherlands, to sign a new Treaty on European Union. The Treaty represented a further deepening of European integration and the official creation of the European Union, as opposed to the pre-existing European Communities. In particular, the Treaty laid out the schedule for achieving economic and monetary union with a single currency and a European central bank and introduced a series of measures involving the Social Chapter. The competence of the EU was also extended into new areas including foreign and defence policy, immigration, asylum and social policy. The UK negotiated opt outs from the Single Currency and the Social Chapter. The ratification procedure was completed in the UK in June 1993.
9th April 1992	UK general election	The Conservatives won 41.9% of the vote and 336 seats. Labour won 34.4% of the vote and 271 seats. The Liberal Democrats won 17.8% of the vote and 20 seats. John Major remained Prime Minister.
1993	<i>R v Disciplinary Committee of the Jockey Club ex parte Agha Khan</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case <i>R v Disciplinary Committee of the Jockey Club ex parte Agha Khan</i> concerned the distinction between public bodies and private bodies.

15th December 1993	The Downing Street Declaration	On 15th December 1993 the UK and Irish Governments made a joint declaration, subsequently known as the Downing Street Declaration, regarding the political situation in Northern Ireland. The Declaration reiterated earlier UK pledges that the UK government had “no selfish or strategic interest in Northern Ireland” and the Irish government explicitly accepted that the Unionists could not be coerced into a united Ireland. It also introduced for the first time the possibility of Sinn Fein becoming involved in talks, on condition that there was a suspension of IRA violence for at least three months. The Declaration is regarded as a key step on the road to eventual peace in Northern Ireland.
1994	<i>R v Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs ex parte Lord Rees-Mogg</i>	The case of <i>R v Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs ex parte Lord Rees-Mogg</i> reiterated that the courts will not review the government’s prerogative right to enter into treaties. In this instance, the Treaty in question was the Treaty on European Union.
1994	<i>R v Inspectorate of Pollution ex parte Greenpeace No 2</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case <i>R v Inspectorate of Pollution ex parte Greenpeace No 2</i> concerned standing for NGOs.
31 <sup>st</sup> August 1994	IRA announces ceasefire	As a result of the Downing Street Declaration, the IRA announced on August 31st 1994 a “complete cessation of military operations” – a ceasefire. This was followed in October 1994 by a ceasefire by the Loyalist paramilitary groups.
25th October 1994	John Major announces creation of Committee on Standards in Public Life	Following a succession of revelations which highlighted improper and unethical behaviour by politicians, Prime Minister John Major appointed the Committee on Standards in Public Life in October 1994 under the chairmanship of Lord Nolan. Its remit was “To examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all holders of public office, including arrangements relating to financial and commercial activities, and make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements which might be required to ensure the highest standards of propriety in public life.” The Committee has made twelve reports on a wide variety of topics.
1995	<i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Fire Brigades Union</i>	The case of <i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Fire Brigades Union</i> related to some of the complexities in the relationship between prerogative rights and statute.
1995	<i>R v Cambridge Health Authority</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case <i>R v Cambridge Health Authority</i> is authority for the fact that the courts should not normally consider the merits of a decision.
1996	<i>R v Ministry of Defence ex parte Smith</i>	With reference to judicial review and human rights, the case <i>R v Ministry of Defence ex parte Smith</i> concerned the ground of irrationality.
1996	<i>R v Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs ex parte The World Development Movement Ltd</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case <i>R v Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs ex parte The World Development Movement Ltd</i> concerned standing for NGOs.
9th February 1996	IRA ceasefire ends	In apparent frustration with the UK government’s decision not to allow Sinn Fein to attend all-party peace talks until the IRA had decommissioned its arms, the IRA end their ceasefire on the 9th of February 1996 by exploding a bomb at Canary Wharf in London, killing two people. The Northern Ireland peace process was thus effectively stalled until the UK general election of May 1997.

15th February 1996	Scott Report published	In 1992, the directors of a UK-based company had been brought to trial for allegedly supplying Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government with equipment that could be used to make weapons. During the trial, it was alleged that the UK government was fully aware of the company's activities and that it had taken no action against it. As a result, a Committee of inquiry was appointed, led by Lord Justice Scott, to investigate weapons and dual-use exports to Iraq and related government policy. The Inquiry's Report, which was published on the 15th of February 1996, found that the government had failed to disclose its new, more liberal arms exports policy to Parliament.
4th July 1996	Defamation Act receives Royal Assent	The Defamation Act 1996 received Royal Assent on July 4th 1996. Amongst other things, the Act permitted an individual to waive parliamentary privilege in relation to what they had said during parliamentary proceedings in order to allow a defamation action to be brought.
1997	<i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Venables and Thompson</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case <i>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Venables and Thompson</i> was an example of a decision-maker acting unlawfully due to irrelevant considerations.
1st May 1997	UK general election	Labour won 43.2% of the vote and 419 seats. The Conservatives won 30.7% of the vote and 165 seats. The Liberal Democrats won 16.8% of the vote and 46 seats. Tony Blair became Prime Minister.
6th May 1997	Bank of England made independent	In its first major decision, the Labour government announced on the 6th of May 1997 that the Bank of England was to be given operational independence. Thereafter, the Bank would be able to set interest rates without reference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A monetary policy committee would take charge of setting interest rates with the objective of meeting inflation targets set by the government.
11th September 1997	Scottish devolution referendum	On a turnout of 60.2%, the Scottish electorate endorsed the creation of a Scottish Parliament with tax raising powers. 74% supported the creation of the Parliament. The provision of tax raising powers proved more controversial but was still supported by a margin of 64% to 36%. The Labour government then secured the passage of the Scotland Act 1998 which created a 108 member Scottish Parliament, elected using the Additional Member System on four year fixed terms. The Parliament was given considerable legislative powers but defence, foreign affairs, currency, macro-economic management, immigration and nationality, trade, energy, employment and transport were matters reserved for the Westminster Parliament.
18th September 1997	Welsh devolution referendum	In a referendum held on September 18th 1997, on an overall turnout of 50.1%, the Welsh electorate voted in favour of establishing a 60 member National Assembly for Wales, elected by the Additional Member System. 559,419 or 50.3% of those voting were in favour of the proposed Assembly (a majority of 6,721). The government then succeeded in passing the Government of Wales Act 1998 which laid down the necessary statutory framework to establish the National Assembly for Wales. In many respects, the Government of Wales Act differed fundamentally from the Scotland Act; whereas in Scotland primary legislative powers were devolved to the Parliament, in Wales, only executive powers were devolved to the Assembly. The majority of the provisions of the Government of Wales Act 1998 were subsequently repealed and replaced by the Government of Wales Act 2006, which established a significantly more powerful Assembly.
2nd October 1997	Treaty of Amsterdam signed	Signed on October 2nd 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam mainly represented an attempt to make preparations for an enlarged European Union. The European Parliament was given powers of co-decision with the Council of Ministers on issues including social policy, employment and transport. Qualified Majority Voting was extended and the Schengen agreement, which abolished border checks in all EU nations except the UK and Ireland, was incorporated into EU law. From the UK perspective, the Treaty of Amsterdam was significant in that it saw the UK end its opt-out from the Social Chapter.
10th April 1998	Good Friday Agreement announced	Following the Labour government's decision to allow Sinn Fein to enter talks without having the IRA decommission its arms, cross party negotiations on the political future of Northern Ireland were held between October 1997 and April 1998. Agreement was finally reached on Good Friday between the two governments and the political parties in the talks. The agreement included: the proposed establishment of a Northern Ireland Assembly, elected by Single Transferrable Vote; that key Assembly decisions would have to be made on a cross-community

		basis; that Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic of Ireland's constitution be amended; that a North-South Ministerial Council, a British-Irish Intergovernmental conference and a British-Irish council be established.
7th May 1998	Referendum on London Mayor and Greater London Authority	In a referendum held on 7th May 1998, on a turnout of 34%, 72% of voters in London supported the creation of a London Mayor and Greater London Authority.
22nd May 1998	Referendum on Good Friday Agreement	The proposals agreed in the Good Friday Agreement 1998 were put to the electorates of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in referenda on the 22nd May 1998. On a turnout of 80.9%, 71.1% of voters in Northern Ireland supported the Good Friday agreement. The proposals were also endorsed in the Republic of Ireland, with 94.4% in favour and 5.6% opposed.
25th June 1998	Northern Ireland Assembly elections	The election for the new 108 member Northern Ireland Assembly was held on June 25th 1998. The Ulster Unionist Party won 28 seats, the SDLP 24, the Democratic Unionist Party 20 seats, Sinn Fein 18, the Alliance Party 6 seats, the United Kingdom Unionists 5 seats, the Progressive Unionist Party and the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition 2 seats each. Persistent disputes over the issue of arms decommissioning meant that a power-sharing executive was not appointed until 29th November 1999.
29th October 1998	Publication of Jenkins Commission Report	The Jenkins Commission Report on electoral reform in the UK was published on the 29th of October 1998. Although never implemented, the Commission recommended that the electoral system for elections to the House of Commons should be changed from the first-past-the-post system to a limited version of an Additional Member System or AV Top-up. Under the proposals, some 80% to 85% of MPs would be elected on an individual constituency basis using the Alternative Vote system. The remainder would be elected via a system of open party lists. Another of the Commission's proposals, that an Electoral Commission be established, was implemented in 2000.
9th November 1998	Human Rights Act receives Royal Assent	The Human Rights Act 1998 received Royal Assent on November 9th 1998. The Act incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, coming into effect in October 2000 in England and Wales (having come into effect in Scotland in May 1999). One consequence was that UK citizens no longer had to go to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg to have their case heard since the Convention became a legally-enforceable mechanism in the UK courts. However, the Human Rights Act was drafted with a keen eye upon the idea of parliamentary sovereignty; the UK courts cannot strike down domestic legislation, they can only issue a 'declaration of incompatibility' if legislation contradicts the European Convention. Legally, Ministers remain free to ignore these judicial declarations if they so wish.
6th May 1999	Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly elections	The first elections for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly were held on May 6th 1999. The First meetings of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly followed on May 12th and the new devolved institutions assumed their full powers on July 1st 1999.
11th November 1999	Last day on which all but 92 hereditary peers sit in the House of Lords	In accordance with the House of Lords Act 1999, all but 92 hereditary peers were abolished. When the reformed House of Lords next sat on November 27th 1999, 83% of the members held their seats in the upper chamber by virtue of life peerages. This had a significant impact on the political complexion of the Lords. The 1999 legislation was intended to be an interim measure before more far reaching reform, but given the lack of consensus no such radical reform has been undertaken.
2000	<i>R v Mullen</i>	The case of <i>R v Mullen</i> was further evidence that the state is required to act according to law. In this instance, the fact that the state had believed that someone had committed a crime did not justify participating in illegal activity in order to apprehend and convict the defendant.

2000	<i>R v Bow Street Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate ex parte Pinochet Ugarte (no 2)</i>	<i>R v Bow Street Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate ex parte Pinochet Ugarte (no 2)</i> was evidence of the rule against bias.
20th January 2000	Wakeham Commission Report published	The Royal Commission on Reform of the House of Lords, also known as the Wakeham Commission, reported on January 20th 2000. It proposed a House of Lords of approximately 550 members and that there should be 87 elected Lords serving 12-15 year terms. The peers would be elected by regional list PR system. It suggested that the remainder of members of the House of Lords should be appointed by an independent commission and that the number of Church of England bishops should be reduced to 16.
11th February 2000	Northern Ireland Assembly suspended	The Northern Ireland executive had been appointed on the 29th November 1999 and powers were transferred to the Northern Ireland Assembly on the 2nd of December 1999. However, on February 11th 2000, after just 72 days of devolved government, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Mandelson signed the order suspending the Assembly and Executive in view of the failure to make further progress on the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.
30th November 2000	Electoral Commission established	The Electoral Commission came into operation on November 30th 2000 having been created by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Electoral Commission has a number of responsibilities in respect of elections: it can make recommendations to the government on the reform of electoral law; it works with the Boundary Commission to revise constituency boundaries for elections; it has responsibilities in referendum campaigns, including nominating the contending 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns; it is responsible for registering political parties, monitoring their donations and their spending in election campaigns; it has a responsibility to promote public awareness of elections and electoral systems.
11th December 2000	Treaty of Nice agreed	Signed on 11th December 2000, the Treaty of Nice principally served to reform the institutional architecture of the European Union to cope with an enlarged membership.
2001	<i>Hamilton v Al-Fayed</i>	The case of <i>Hamilton v Al-Fayed</i> involved the waiver of parliamentary privilege under the Defamation Act 1996 in order for Neil Hamilton to bring an action against Mohammad Al-Fayed.
2001	<i>R (on the application of Daly) v Secretary of State for the Home Department</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R (on the application of Daly) v Secretary of State for the Home Department</i> concerned the different tests for irrationality and proportionality.
2001	<i>R v North and East Devon Health Authority ex parte Coughlan</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R v North and East Devon Health Authority ex parte Coughlan</i> concerned legitimate expectation.
2001	<i>Re Medicaments and related Classes of Goods (No 2)</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Re Medicaments and related Classes of Goods (No 2)</i> concerned the definition of what is meant by bias.
7th June 2001	UK general election	Labour won 40.7% of the UK vote and 412 seats. The Conservatives won 31.7% of the vote and 166 seats. The Liberal Democrats won 18.3% of the vote and 52 seats. Tony Blair remained as Prime Minister.
10th August 2001	Northern Ireland Assembly suspended	Following positive steps towards arms decommissioning by the IRA, power was restored to the Northern Ireland Assembly and its executive on 30th May 2000. However, due to ongoing difficulties regarding decommissioning, the Assembly was again temporarily suspended on the 10th of August 2001.
23rd October 2001	IRA announces it has begun decommissioning	With the Northern Ireland Assembly suspended and the Unionists refusing to return to the power-sharing executive, on the 22nd of October 2001 Gerry Adams announced that he had asked the IRA to begin decommissioning. The following day, at 4.00 p.m. the IRA issued a statement announcing that it had begun decommissioning.

2002	<i>Thoburn v Sunderland City Council</i>	The case of <i>Thoburn v Sunderland City Council</i> concerned the potential distinction between ordinary statutes and constitutional statutes for the purposes of implied repeal.
2002	<i>R (on the application of Heather) v Leonard Cheshire Foundation</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R (on the application of Heather) v Leonard Cheshire Foundation</i> concerned the distinction between public bodies and private bodies.
2002	<i>Porter v Magill</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>Porter v Magill</i> concerned the use of power for improper purpose and the rule against bias.
14th October 2002	Northern Ireland Assembly suspended	Due to allegations about the continued activity of the IRA and of Republican spy rings within the Assembly, and the threat of a Unionist walk out, the UK government suspended the Northern Assembly on the 14th of October 2002. It remained in suspension until the 7th of May 2007.
2003	<i>R (on the application of Association of British Civilian Internees: Far East Region) v Secretary of State for Defence</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>R (on the application of Association of British Civilian Internees: Far East Region) v Secretary of State for Defence</i> concerned the existence of proportionality as a separate ground of review in a case which did not involve a claim regarding the Human Rights Act or the European Convention on Human Rights.
2003	<i>Bellinger v Bellinger</i>	With reference to Human Rights, the case of <i>Bellinger v Bellinger</i> was an example of a declaration of incompatibility being granted.
18th March 2003	139 Labour MPs revolt over Iraq War	Due to being a prerogative power, the UK government could commit British armed forces to war without parliamentary consent. However, due to obvious dissent within Parliament and the nation as a whole about the war in Iraq, the government put the deployment of its forces to a vote in the House of Commons on March 18th 2003. The Labour government won the vote, despite 217 MPs voting against them.
13th June 2003	Announcement of plans to abolish post of Lord Chancellor	On June 13th 2003 Prime Minister Tony Blair announced plans to abolish the 1,400 year old post of Lord Chancellor, and to establish an independent Judicial Appointments Commission and a Supreme Court. These plans, subject to some amendment by the House of Lords, would eventually be realised by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005.
2004	<i>Campbell v MGN Ltd</i>	With reference to Human Rights, the case of <i>Campbell v MGN Ltd</i> concerned the indirect effect of the Human Rights Act between private individuals.
2004	<i>Aston Cantlow and Wilmcote with Billesley Parochial Church Council v Wallbank and Another</i>	With reference to Human Rights, the case of <i>Aston Cantlow and Wilmcote with Billesley Parochial Church Council v Wallbank and Another</i> concerned the definition of a public authority.
2004	<i>Anufrijeva v Southwark Borough Council</i>	With reference to Human Rights, the case of <i>Anufrijeva v Southwark Borough Council</i> concerned the award of damages.
4th November 2004	North East Referendum	The Labour government had outlined proposals for directly elected regional assemblies in a white paper published in May 2002. The proposed regional assemblies would have 20-25 members (elected by PR) and, although lacking legislative powers, would have had responsibilities for formulating regional strategies on economic development, planning, housing, transport, health and culture among other issues. A referendum was held in the North East of England on November 4th 2004 on the proposals to create an Assembly for the region. However, the region's electorate rejected the government's proposals by the emphatic margin of 78% against and 22% in favour. The vote effectively killed off the government's hopes of



		introducing elected regional assemblies in England.
18th November 2004	Hunting Act receives Royal Assent	The Hunting Act 2004 was enacted to prohibit the hunting of mammals with dogs. Due to opposition in the House of Lords, it was passed by use of the Parliament Acts.
2005	<i>R (on the application of Jackson) v Attorney General</i>	The case of <i>R (on the application of Jackson) v Attorney General</i> concerned the doctrine of parliamentary supremacy and its realistic limits nowadays.
24th March 2005	Constitutional Reform Act receives Royal Assent	The Constitutional Reform Act 2005 received Royal Assent on March 24th 2005. The Act gave effect to the pledges made by the Labour government to reform the office of the Lord Chancellor and create a Supreme Court and Judicial Appointments Commission. The Act retained the post of Lord Chancellor, albeit in diminished form: the Lord Chancellor's powers to appoint members of the judiciary were transferred to the Judicial Appointments Commission in April 2006; the Speaker of the Lords was now no longer automatically the Lord Chancellor; the Lord Chancellor would no longer be the most senior judge in the country. The Act also established a Supreme Court to replace the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords. The Lord Chancellor would no longer sit in the highest court in the land.
5th May 2005	UK general election	Labour won 35.3% of the vote and 356 seats. The Conservatives won 32.3% of the vote and 198 seats. The Liberal Democrats won 22.1% of the vote and 62 seats. Tony Blair remained Prime Minister.
26th September 2005	Independent International Commission on Decommissioning reports that IRA decommissioning is complete	On September 26th 2005, John de Chastelain, Chairman of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning declared that IRA arms had been put beyond use and that he was 'satisfied that the arms decommissioned represent the totality of the IRA's arsenal.'
2006	<i>R (on the application of Al Rawi and others) v Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Another</i>	With reference to human rights, the case of <i>R (on the application of Al Rawi and others) v Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Another</i> is evidence for the fact that the courts considered the proportionality of a decision as well as its legality.
25th July 2006	Government of Wales Act receives Royal Assent	The Government of Wales Act 2006 received Royal Assent on July 25th 2006. The Act repealed the majority of the provisions of the Government of Wales Act 1998 and re-established the Assembly as a much stronger legislative body. It also formally separated the Assembly's legislative and executive arms.
8 <sup>th</sup> November 2006	Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 receives Royal Assent	From its introduction as a Bill on 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2006 this Act courted controversy. It formed a key part of the Government's drive to reduce regulatory burdens, however, in its early form it stated that its role was to allow the Government to 'reform legislation' – this prompted widely publicised concerns regarding the potentially unlimited power the Bill would grant to the Government if it were to pass unreviewed – such as permitting the amending of Magna Carta or the suspension of trial by jury. The Government conceded many points and accepted the need for amendment.
2007	<i>YL v Birmingham City Council</i>	With reference to judicial review, the case of <i>YL v Birmingham City Council</i> concerned the distinction between public bodies and private bodies.
February 2007	The white paper, House of Lords: Reform, is published	Regarded as the beginning of the second wave of House of Lords reform, a white paper was published in February 2007, outlining the options for the composition of the House of Lords.
27th June 2007	Gordon Brown becomes Prime Minister	Following Tony Blair's resignation, Gordon Brown was elected as leader of the Labour Party and became Prime Minister on June 27th 2007. During his first weeks in charge, the Prime Minister outlined his proposals to place elements of the royal prerogative on a statutory footing, together with increasing the role of Parliament, and included the powers to: declare war; appoint

		candidates to senior positions; ratify treaties.
13th December 2007	Prime Minister Gordon Brown signs the Lisbon Treaty	Intended to replace the failed Constitutional Treaty, the Lisbon Treaty continued the work of streamlining the European Union into an organisation that could work effectively with 27 Member States, with the possibility of further enlargement in the future. After a troublesome ratification period, the Treaty came into force on December 1st 2009.
2008	<i>R (on the application of Corner House Research and Another) v Director of the Serious Fraud Office</i>	With regards to judicial review, the case of <i>R (on the application of Corner House Research and Another) v Director of the Serious Fraud Office</i> concerned the operation of the principle of illegality.
July 2008	The white paper, <i>An Elected Second Chamber: Further Reform of the House of Lords</i> , is published	Following House of Commons votes in March 2007 in favour of a 80% and 100% elected House of Lords, the government developed the proposals further in its July 2008 white paper. Reform proposals were finally included in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill. However, all clauses referring to House of Lords reform were removed prior to enactment in 2010.
15th June 2009	Report of the Commission on Scottish Devolution	The report of the Commission on Scottish Devolution, also known as the Calman Commission, was published on June 15th 2009. The final report recommended, amongst other things, that the Scottish Parliament should have greater control over revenue raising powers, that the Scottish government should have borrowing powers to fund capital projects, and that further competence be devolved within the existing devolved areas.
15 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	Iraq Inquiry Announced	The Prime Minister, Gordon Brown MP, announced a public inquiry into the United Kingdom's policy in relation to Iraq between 2001 and 2009.
20 <sup>th</sup> July 2009	Reform of the House of Commons Select Committee formed	On this day the Reform of the House of Commons Select Committee was formed with Tony Wright MP as its chairperson. It was due to report by 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2009 at the latest.
21 <sup>st</sup> July 2009	Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 receives Royal Assent	Introduced in the wake of the Parliamentary expenses scandal, this Act sets up the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). IPSA provides independent oversight of MPs expenses claims. The Act also established a Commissioner for Parliamentary Investigations to investigate alleged breaches of IPSA's rules.
1st October 2009	The Supreme Court is established	In accordance with the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords was replaced by the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom as the highest court in the UK on October 1st 2009, situated at the Middlesex Guildhall.
1 <sup>st</sup> November 2009	Committee on Standards in Public Life publishes report on expenses scandal	As the fallout from the Parliamentary expenses scandal continued, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) published a report entitled 'MPs' expenses and allowances, Supporting Parliament, safeguarding the taxpayer' – the report proposed a large number of recommendations to make the expenses system more effective and transparent, chief among which was the expectation that MPs should always act in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Law [recommendation 1]. The Committee also envisaged the removal of a number of other previously claimable expenses, such as mortgage interest property used by the MP to allow them to work (e.g. a second home in London) [recommendation 3], though this had some caveats [recommendation 12], a reduction in accommodation allowances where MPs lived within 'a reasonable commuting distance' [recommendation 7], and a reduction in the scope of journeys where a first class rail ticket could be purchased [recommendation 27], for example. Another crucial recommendation of the CSPL was that IPSA take responsibility for determining the pay and pensions of MPs [recommendation 43].
12 <sup>th</sup> November 2009	Wright Committee publishes 'Rebuilding the	The House of Commons Reform Committee, also known as the Wright Committee after its chairperson Tony Wright, published a report entitled 'Rebuilding the House'. The Committee was formed with a view to reinvigorating Parliament as an organisation, to 'rebalance its relationship with the executive', and to increase public participation in parliamentary processes

	House' report	<p>(report, p.5).</p> <p>The Committee made a number of recommendations including in relation to Select Committee reform (such as that the Chairs of Select Committees should be elected by secret ballot), how time is allocated within the House (e.g. between government and backbench business), how competence is allocated for other procedural matters within the House, and the inclusion of e-petitions and other means for securing public involvement in the work of the House.</p> <p>The Government indicated that it was happy to implement some, but not all of the proposals.</p> <p>The work of the Committee must be seen against the backdrop of the then on-going MPs expenses scandal. The Committee's proposals were widely seen as entailing vital reform to the House of Commons</p>
18th November 2009	Report of the All Wales Convention is published	Appointed by First Minister Rhodri Morgan under the leadership of Sir Emyr Jones-Parry, the report of the All Wales Convention was published on November 18th 2009. Tasked with inquiring into the Welsh population's views about devolution, the Convention recommended the holding of a referendum on the possibility of devolving more powers to the National Assembly for Wales.
22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2010	First debate on Wright Committee reform proposals	A number of aspects of the reform proposals of the Committee were passed at this stage, but equally other issues, such as the election of Select Committee chairs and the establishment of a Backbench Business Committee, remained unresolved.
4 <sup>th</sup> March 2010	Second debate on Wright Committee reform proposals	The Commons unanimously agreed to make the necessary amendments to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons to permit the election of Committee chairs and members. However, the frontbench members of both the Labour Government and Conservative Opposition sought to qualify the scope of the Backbench Business Committee proposals, but the frontbenches were defeated 106 votes to 221.
8th April 2010	The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 receives Royal Assent	The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 received Royal Assent on April 8th 2010. The Act ensured the impartiality of the Civil Service, made provisions regarding parliamentary standards, including issues regarding MPs' allowances and salaries, and ensured that the majority of international treaties were to be subject to ratification by Parliament.
6th May 2010	UK General Election	The Conservatives won 36.1% of the vote and 306 seats. Labour won 29.0% of the vote and 258 seats. The Liberal Democrats won 23.0% of the vote and 57 seats. David Cameron became Prime Minister as leader of a coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.
11th May 2010	Coalition Government Agreement	The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats agreed on a programme of government on the 11th of May 2010. As well as pledging to reduce the UK's financial deficit and other economic reforms, the coalition committed itself to: the establishment of five year fixed parliaments; a referendum on the introduction of the Alternative Vote system to replace the simple majority system in UK general elections; reducing the number of MPs from 650 to 600; reforming the House of Lords; implementing the reform proposals of the Wright Committee on the reform of the House of Commons; considering the West Lothian question; implementing the Calman Commission proposals for amendments to the Scottish devolution settlement; the holding of a referendum on the devolution of further legislative powers to the National Assembly for Wales.
15 <sup>th</sup> June 2010	Wright Committee Reforms on Backbench Business Implemented	<p>After much delay from both the previous and new Governments, the proposals of the Wright Committee on Backbench business were implemented.</p> <p>The House of Commons voted overwhelmingly to establish a Backbench Business Committee to give more control to the House outside of Government-controlled time (35 days per year); though the Government retained the power to set the day on which debates can be held. The Committee can consider any subject raised by an MP, suggestions from constituents, or issues raised in e-petitions (regardless of the number of signatories).</p> <p>Although the Wright Committee had also proposed a House Business Committee, and</p>

		agreement had been reached to implement this in the 2010-2015 Parliament, this has not been implemented.
25 <sup>th</sup> September 2010	Ed Miliband elected Leader of the Labour Party	Following election defeat and a leadership contest, Ed Miliband MP is elected as the leader of the Labour Party and becomes the Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.
16th February 2011	Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 receives Royal Assent	The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 received Royal Assent on February 16th 2011. The Act implemented the coalition government's proposals to reduce the number of parliamentary constituencies from 650 to 600. It also provided for a referendum to be held in May 2011 on the introduction of the Alternative Vote system to replace the simple majority system.
3rd March 2011	Referendum on extending the law-making powers of the National Assembly for Wales	In a referendum held on March 3rd 2011, on a turnout of 35.2%, 63.5% of the voters were in favour of increasing the legislative powers of the National Assembly for Wales so that it could pass primary legislation. Acts of the National Assembly for Wales can be passed in the Assembly's fields of competence without needing the approval of the UK Parliament.
18 <sup>th</sup> March 2011	The Commission on a Bill of Rights is established	The Commission on a Bill of Rights was established to consider whether to retain the Human Rights Act 1998 or to replace this with a British Bill of Rights.  The Commission concluded its work and reported on 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2012.
5th May 2011	Referendum on the Alternative Vote system	As promised in the coalition agreement, a referendum was held on the alternative vote system on May 5th 2011. On a turnout of 42.2%, 67.9% of the voters rejected the adoption of AV.
21st June 2011	Scotland Bill receives third reading in the House of Commons	The UK government had introduced a Scotland Bill before the House of Commons on November 30th 2010. It received its third reading in the House of Commons on the 21st of June 2011. Once granted Royal Assent, the Scotland Act will implement the findings of the Calman Commission by increasing the financial autonomy of the Scottish Parliament, including provisions regarding a new rate of income tax, and by otherwise enhancing the competence of the Scottish Parliament.
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2011	Judgment given in <i>R (Cart) v Upper Tribunal</i>	Neutral citation: [2011] UKSC 28. The Supreme Court unanimously agreed to change the circumstances under which the Upper Tribunal can be judicially reviewed – that is, according to the second tier appeal criteria. The criteria permit review where an important point of principle or practice is raised, or where some other compelling reason is present.
19 <sup>th</sup> July 2011	European Union Act 2011 receives Royal Assent	Amongst other provisions the Act stipulates that the UK must hold a referendum throughout the United Kingdom before any Treaty changes or new Treaties relating to the European Union may take effect (see s.4). The Act also asserts the sovereignty of Parliament, stating that EU law is only effective by virtue of the European Communities Act 1972 (see 2011 Act s.18).
15 <sup>th</sup> September 2011	The Fixed-Term Parliament Act 2011 receives Royal Assent	On its face the Act sets the dates of all future UK Parliamentary elections as taking place every 5 years (s.1(3) 'the first Thursday in May in the fifth calendar year following that in which the polling day for the previous parliamentary general election fell'), the next election being due on 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2015 (s.1(2)). The date of the polling day may be 2 months later than this (not earlier), but the Prime Minister must provide reasons to Parliament (s.1(5)-(7)). Provision is made for early elections in the event of, for example, votes of no confidence (see s.2)

6 <sup>th</sup> December 2011	House of Commons Committee on Members' Expenses publishes report on the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009	The Committee published the report on 'The Operation of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009' (First Report of Session 2010-12, HC1484-I). The report was very critical of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). It argued that IPSA had misconstrued the purpose given to it under the Act [174], and that IPSA had set up an impractical system [175-177], that it was not offering value for money [178], that it has not supported the public in understanding how the payments scheme for MPs works [182], and that only partial publication of supporting evidence for claims submitted by MPs can easily be misunderstood [183], and perhaps most damagingly of all, that the IPSA scheme obstructs MPs in the fulfilment of their duties [186-188]. A number of other criticisms were also made, along with recommendations to correct the claimed shortcomings of the IPSA system.
8 <sup>th</sup> February 2012	MPs pay frozen for 2012/13	MP salaries, like those of other public sector workers, are frozen by IPSA for the 2012/13 financial year.
19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2012	Brighton Conference on the European Court of Human Rights	The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe met to discuss reforming the European Court of Human Rights with a view to managing a growing case load through tightening admissibility criteria. The outcome of the Conference was Protocol 15 of the ECHR.
1 <sup>st</sup> May 2012	Scotland Act 2012 receives Royal Assent	The Act implemented the recommendations of the Calman Commission (Report of the Commission on Scottish Devolution). The Act gives power to the Scottish Parliament in relation to a new rate of income tax and other devolved responsibilities.
1 <sup>st</sup> May 2012	Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 receives Royal Assent	The most well publicised consequence of this Act was the significant reduction in the legal aid budget which it enabled. The Act removed a number of high cost areas of practice from the scope of legal aid as well as making a number of other changes to how legal aid funding is administered. Both prior to and after the Act received Royal Assent, campaigners, including senior members of the Bar and Judiciary, expressed concerns over the implications the Act would have on the rule of law and access to justice.
27 <sup>th</sup> June 2012	The House of Lords Reform Bill 2012-13 receives its first reading	The Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and others introduced the Bill to the House of Commons. The purpose of the Bill was to limit the terms of office of Lords to 15 years, to provide for Lords to be elected, and to provide for resignations, suspensions and expulsions of Lords, amongst other provisions.
27 <sup>th</sup> June 2012	The Recall of Elected Representatives Bill 2012-13 receives first reading	The Bill was introduced by Zac Goldsmith MP. The purpose of the Bill is to allow electors to recall their representatives in specified circumstances.
9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2012	The House of Lords Reform Bill 2012-13 receives its second reading in the House of Commons	Following a heated debate 91 Conservative MPs rebelled against the Government and voted against the second reading of the Bill. The Government was not defeated, but did not opt to ask for the Bill to be sent to Committee stage. The Government later withdrew the Bill. The failure to progress the Bill in the face of Conservative Backbencher opposition was widely advertised as the reason for the Liberal Democrats' (then the Conservative's partners in the 2010-2015 Coalition Government) failure to support the implementation of changes to constituency boundaries.

6 <sup>th</sup> August 2012	Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg withdraws House of Lords Reform Bill	The House of Lords Reform Bill 2012 is withdrawn following opposition from Conservative Backbench MPs. Reform of the House of Lords was a key election commitment for Nick Clegg's party, the Liberal Democrats, and the failure to push the Bill through was seen as a breach of the Coalition Agreement.
12 <sup>th</sup> September 2012	Hillsborough Independent Panel publishes report	<p>The Report explored a number of areas of serious public concern in relation to the inquests following the Disaster, including the alteration of officers' statements, and allegations made against the fans who attended the match.</p> <p>In summary, the Report concluded that the fans were not at fault, that there were numerous operation failures, and that the police had sought to deflect responsibility for the disaster. The Report led to a High Court judgment on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012 quashing the original inquests into the tragedy, and ordering new ones to be held.</p>
15 <sup>th</sup> October 2012	Edinburgh Agreement	The United Kingdom Government and devolved Scottish Government reached an agreement at Edinburgh on how the Scottish Independence Referendum would be organised. The key elements of the agreement were that the referendum should (i) have a clear legal base, (ii) be legislated for by the Scottish Parliament, (iii) be capable in giving the public, governments and parliament confidence in the outcome, and (iv) be a decisive and fair test.
29 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	Leveson Inquiry Report Published	Lord Justice Leveson's report 'An Inquiry into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press' is published. The Inquiry was set up following revelations surrounding 'phone-hacking' at the News of the World newspaper and elsewhere. One of the most contentious proposals was that a new press regulator be established by statute in place of the then Press Complaints Commission. The Government struggled to reach agreement with opposition parties on how best to set up such a regulator.
13 <sup>th</sup> December 2012	Government opens consultation on the reform of judicial review	<p>The Government published a consultation paper entitled 'Judicial Review: proposals for reform' and began a consultation set to run until 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013. The Government sought to amend the rules governing judicial review to avoid what it perceived as an increasing burden on public services stemming from a growing number of judicial reviews against government decisions.</p> <p>The proposals are generally poorly received by legal commentators, the judiciary, and Members of both Houses of Parliament.</p>
18 <sup>th</sup> December 2012	Commission on a Bill of Rights submits final report to the UK Government	<p>The Report, entitled 'A UK Bill of Rights? – The Choice Before Us', argued (7:2) that there were good reasons for replacing the Human Rights Act 1998 with a British Bill of Rights on the basis that it would provide at least the same protection as the 1998 Act, and would also give a sense of ownership that is not provided by the 1998 Act.</p> <p>The minority were concerned that instituting a British Bill of Rights could act as a cover to reduce rights protection overall, and remove the UK from the European Convention on Human Rights.</p>
19 <sup>th</sup> December 2012	Judgment given in Attorney General v Coroner of South Yorkshire and Coroner of West Yorkshire	<p>Neutral citation: [2012] EWHC 3783. In the light of the Report produced by the Hillsborough Independent Panel, a three-judge panel of the High Court including Judge LCJ published their judgment on whether new inquests into the deaths of those killed at the Hillsborough disaster were required. The Lord Chief Justice, giving the only judgment, said that</p> <p>'This combination of circumstances, as we have narrated, makes inevitable the order for a new inquest. The interests of justice must be served. Within the limits of the coronial system, the facts must be investigated and reanalysed in a fresh inquest when, however distressing or unpalatable, the truth will be brought to light. In this way the families of those who died in this disaster will be vindicated and the memory of each victim will be properly respected.' [29]</p> <p>'All the inquisitions will be quashed. There will be new inquests in each and every case.' [30]</p> <p>The judgment cast doubt on the quality of the original inquests held into the Hillsborough Disaster on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1989.</p>

29 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	Government loses vote on review of constituency boundaries	MPs, including Liberal Democrat MPs, voted 334 to 292 against the Government to postpone constituency boundary changes until 2018. This meant that one of the key changes included in the Sixth Periodic Review of Constituency Boundaries- a reduction in the number of MPs (and thus, constituencies) from 650 to 600- was also postponed. The withdrawal of Liberal Democrat support for these changes was caused by the failure of the Conservative elements of the Coalition Government to support reform to the House of Lords.
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	Electoral Commission publishes report on Scottish Independence referendum question	In its report the Electoral Commission expressed concerns over the neutrality of the wording of the Scottish Government's proposed independence referendum question ('Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country? Yes/No'). The Commission suggested the alternative wording of 'Should Scotland be an Independent Country? Yes/No'. This new wording was agreed by the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments.
11 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	House of Lords Select Committee on the Inquiries Act Publishes report	A report entitled 'The Inquiries Act 2005: post-legislative scrutiny' was published. The report made a number of recommendations including a requirement that the Government make use of the legislative framework more and build up an institutional memory by establishing a Central Inquiries Unit. The former Chairman of the Committee made a number of very critical remarks regarding operating of the Act to date.
18 <sup>th</sup> March 2013	Press regulator established by Royal Charter	Following the Leveson Inquiry report of November 2012, and intense cross-party talks, a Royal Charter established a Recognition Panel. The Panel is not a media regulator but instead is supposed to inspect industry established independent regulators to ensure compliance with the highest editorial standards. This was acknowledged as a compromise with the media who were concerned about restrictions of their freedom of expression if a regulatory body with statutory powers were to be created.
25 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	Crime and Courts Act 2013 receives Royal Assent	The Act makes changes to the provisions governing judicial appointments set out in the Constitutional Reform Act 2005.  Many of the detailed rules in the 2005 Act are removed and replaced by regulations set out periodically by the Lord Chancellor with the agreement of the judiciary (e.g. relating to composition of the Judicial Appointments Commission). The 2013 Act also included provisions aimed at increasing the diversity of the judiciary, especially at the senior level.
30 <sup>th</sup> August 2013	UK Parliament votes against military action in Syria	The Government lost a motion endorsing military action against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad by 285-272 votes. The vote was interesting because it represents an example of a new constitutional convention, namely the expectation that a government will seek the consent of Parliament before engaging in military action.
6 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	Government opens consultation on 'Judicial Review: proposals for further reform'	The Government, having considered the outcome of the earlier consultation on the reform of judicial review, put forward new proposals for consultation, to run until 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2013. The proposals included the possible narrowing of the test on standing, that is, who can bring a judicial review.
16 <sup>th</sup> February 2014	Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 receives Royal Assent	Part 4 of the Act concerns judicial review. One of the key changes brought in by the Act is that, if the outcome of a decision-making process would not have been substantially different for the applicant, whether or not a decision was properly and lawfully taken, then the applicant can only bring a judicial review if the matter involves an issue of 'exceptional public interest' (see s.84 generally, and s.81(1)(2B) specifically).

26 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	Judgment in <i>Kennedy v The Charity Commission</i>	<p>Neutral citation: [2014] UKSC 20. This judgment indicated that the Human Rights Act should not be seen as the sole source of fundamental rights and values in the United Kingdom's constitutional arrangements. Lord Mance at paragraph 46 writes:</p> <p>'Since the passing of the Human Rights Act 1998, there has too often been a tendency to see the law in areas touched on by the Convention solely in terms of the Convention rights. But the Convention rights represent a threshold protection; and, especially in view of the contribution which common lawyers made to the Convention's inception, they may be expected, at least generally even if not always, to reflect and to find their homologue in the common or domestic statute law.'</p> <p>See also Lord Toulson at paragraph 133.</p>
14 <sup>th</sup> May 2014	House of Lords Reform Act 2014 receives Royal Assent	The House of Lords Reform Act 2014, introduced as a Private Members Bill, received Royal Assent. The principle consequences of the Act were that it would permit Lords to retire, to be removed if they did not meet attendance thresholds, or if they were convicted of a serious criminal offence. The Act does not affect entry into the House of Lords and so is reliant upon members choosing to retire in most circumstances.
14 <sup>th</sup> May 2014	Immigration Act 2014 receives Royal Assent	The Act contains some significant and not uncontroversial provisions relating to the interpretation of claims under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and a significant narrowing of the appeal routes open to unsuccessful applicants (only where the Home Secretary (i) refuses a human rights claim; (ii) denies refugee or humanitarian status; (iii) revokes refugee/humanitarian status).
15 <sup>th</sup> July 2014	Judgment in <i>R(on the Application of the Public Law Project) v The Secretary of State for Justice</i> delivered	Neutral citation: [2014] EWHC 2365 (Admin). The Court found that the proposal by the Government to introduce a 'residence test' as part of the decision-making process for the award of legal aid was unlawful because it was outside of the powers Parliament had delegated to the Lord Chancellor by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. The test required that an individual prove that they have been lawfully resident within the United Kingdom for 12 months prior to the application for legal aid. The test itself had been widely opposed by, among others, the Law Society.
29 <sup>th</sup> August 2014	Douglas Carswell MP resigns	Douglas Carswell the then Conservative MP for Clacton resigned from his seat and the Conservative Party and announced his intention to stand as an MP for the United Kingdom Independence Party prompting a by-election.
18 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	Scottish Independence Referendum	In answer to the referendum question "Should Scotland be an independent country?" 55.3% voted no and 44.7% voted yes (turnout of 84.5%). Aside from its evident constitutional significance for the United Kingdom in terms of the continuation of the Union, the vote was also interesting in that it extended the voting franchise to 16 year olds.
19 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	Smith Commission announced	Following the outcome of the Scottish Independence Referendum, the Government announced that the Smith Commission would produce a report to recommend how to conduct further devolution of powers from the Westminster to the Scottish Parliament.



30 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	Mark Reckless MP resigns	Mark Reckless the then MP for Rochester and Strood resigned from his seat and the Conservative Party and announced his intention to stand as an MP for the United Kingdom Independence Party prompting a by-election.
9 <sup>th</sup> October 2014	Douglas Carswell returned as MP for Clacton	Douglas Carswell is returned as the MP for Clacton but this time as the United Kingdom Independence Party's (UKIP) first Member of the United Kingdom Parliament. Although another high profile defection took place shortly before this election (Mark Reckless MP for Rochester and Strood) Douglas Carswell was the only UKIP MP returned in the 2015 General Election the following year.
13 <sup>th</sup> October 2014	Supreme Court launches live TV streaming of cases	The Supreme Court begins showing case hearings via a live television streaming service on the Court's website.
20 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	Mark Reckless returned as MP for Rochester and Strood	Mark Reckless is returned as MP for Rochester and Strood but this time as the United Kingdom Independence Party's (UKIP) second Member of the United Kingdom Parliament. He would go on to lose his seat to the Conservative Party in the May 2015 General Election. Along with the earlier resignation of Douglas Carswell (MP for Clacton), discussion at the time focussed around the further fragmentation of the United Kingdom's electoral landscape.
27 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	Smith Commission publishes report	The purpose of the Commission was to seek agreement between those parties holding seats in the Scottish Parliament. Among the recommendations of the Commission were: that the Scottish Parliament and Government be declared permanent [para 21]; that the Sewel Convention relating to UK Parliamentary law making in devolved areas and on devolved issues be put on a statutory footing [para 22]; a manner and form control on legislation affecting the scope of the legislative franchise [para 27]; that while foreign affairs remain a reserved matter, the Scottish Government should be represented at the European Union [para 31]; that pensions [para 42] and other key social security and tax elements such as Universal Credit [para 43], the National Minimum Wage [para 59], and National Insurance contributions [para 80] will remain reserved. However, it was also recommended that the Scottish Parliament be given more control in relation to income tax [paras 75-79], and that part of Value Added Tax receipts raised in Scotland should go to the Scottish Government's budget [para 84].
22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015	Government issues command paper on the Smith Commission	The Government published a command paper entitled 'Scotland in the United Kingdom: An enduring settlement' with a view to translating many of the proposals of the Smith Commission into law.
25 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Judgment given in <i>Pham v Secretary of State for the Home Department</i>	Neutral citation: [2015] UKSC 19. This judgment is interesting because the Supreme Court moved significantly closer to the possibility of judicial review applications being based proportionality, rather than, or in addition to, <i>Wednesbury</i> unreasonableness.
26 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Recall of MPs Act 2015 receives Royal Assent	<p>Early discussions around previous incarnations of the idea of a 'Recall' power envisaged that electors would have a power simply to call a vote of no confidence in their MP and take a poll on the matter. If sufficient numbers of the MP's constituents agreed with the vote, a by-election would be triggered.</p> <p>The 2015 Act allows for recall only where an MP is sentenced to a prison term (s.1(3)) or where they are suspended from the House for a period 'of the requisite length' (s.1(4)-(9)). A petition is</p>

		then opened for 8 weeks. For a by-election to be triggered at least 10% of eligible voters must sign the petition (s.14(3)).
26 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Judgment given in <i>R(Evans) v Information Commissioner</i> [2015] UKSC 21	<p>The Supreme Court ruled that the Attorney General had acted unlawfully in seeking to use his powers under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s.53 to overturn the ruling of the Upper Tribunal ordering the disclosure of previously private letters written by Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, to numerous Government departments regarding matters of public policy over a period of years. The letters have subsequently been coined the 'black spider' letters in view of the Prince's style of handwriting.</p> <p>The case has evident constitutional significance in view of the absolute political neutrality expected of a constitutional monarch of the United Kingdom where Charles is next in line to the throne after Queen Elizabeth II. The judgments given by the Court reflect divisions over the nature of the Constitution.</p>
5 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Supreme Court launches video on demand service	The Supreme Court has made all past video-recorded hearings (since the launch of a live streaming service in October 2014) available via an online archive for one year from the date of the hearing. Also included will be hearings from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.
7 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	2015 General Election	<p>The United Kingdom's first Coalition Government since the Second World War came to an end as voters went to the polls. While another hung Parliament was widely predicted by pundits, the exit polls indicated that the Conservatives would be the largest party. However, the Conservative Party did better than the exit polls predicted, securing a 12-seat majority (331 seats out of 650 seats) in the House of Commons with 36.9% of the vote on a turnout of 66.1% (a gain of 24 seats). The Labour Party did worse than the exit poll predicted securing 232 seats on 30.4% of the vote share (losing 26 seats).</p> <p>This election was also fascinating because of the successes of the minor parties. The Scottish National Party secured 56 out of the 59 Westminster Parliament seats in Scotland. While securing only 1 seat each the United Kingdom Independence Party and the Green Party received 3.88million and 1.16million votes respectively, which they argued undermined the legitimacy of a first-past-the-post voting system where the electoral landscape has fragmented.</p>
28 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Scotland Bill 2015 receives first reading in House of Commons	This Bill seeks to amend the Scotland Act 1998 in the light of the Smith Commission and the Government's response to the Smith Commission.
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Scotland Bill passes second reading	<p>The Bill seeking to implement the Government's response to the Smith Commission passed its second reading in the House of Commons and was referred to the Committee of the whole House – that is, it will be open to debate by all members of the House of Commons rather than in a smaller committee. The whole House debated the Bill over four days, with the Government indicating that it will introduce a number of amendments at Report stage.</p> <p>The Report stage took place on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015</p>
25 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	European Council Meeting	At the first European Council meeting following the Conservative Party's success in the 2015 General Election, David Cameron begins to discuss his reform proposals for the United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union, although much of the meeting is focussed on the on-going migration crisis and Greek Debt crisis.

9 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Government proposes amending the Hunting Act 2004	The Government laid the Draft Hunting Act 2004 (Exempt Hunting) (Amendment) Order 2015 before the House of Commons to amend the regulation of hunting with dogs under the Hunting Act 2004. Shortly afterwards, on 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2015, the Leader of the House of Commons, Chris Grayling, announced that MPs will not debate the provision.
15 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	English votes for English Laws debate in the House of Commons	<p>The 'West Lothian question' asks whether or not those MPs whose Westminster parliamentary constituencies are in the devolved regions (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) should be allowed to vote on matters considered by the Westminster Parliament which pertain only to England.</p> <p>In view of the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, and the findings of the Smith Commission published in the same year (and the subject of the Scotland Bill 2015), the question of who – in the absence of an English Parliament equivalent to that of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh or Northern Ireland Assemblies – should be permitted to vote on purely English matters was once again given thought in the media, Parliament and elsewhere.</p> <p>The proposals for English votes for English laws seek to clarify the position by requiring the Speaker of the House to certify Bills as relating to English only matters, such that only English MPs would be permitted to vote on this.</p>
21 <sup>st</sup> August 2015	Solicitors and barristers end long-running legal aid protests	Solicitors and barristers ended strike action after 52 days following discussion with the Ministry of Justice. The strike action was in response to a proposed 8.75% cut in legal aid funding which, it was argued, would cause many small legal firms to close, and reduce the quality of justice available to ordinary people in the criminal justice system.
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2015	Electoral Commission publishes guidance on EU referendum question	The Commission advised that the question be amended from 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?' to 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union? Remain a member of the European Union/ Leave the European Union'. As with the Scottish Independence Referendum the concerns were around the neutrality of the language, rather than the clarity and simplicity of the question.
8 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	The European Union Referendum Bill 2015-16 is laid before the House of Lords	The Bill received its first reading in the House of Lords. The more substantive second reading of the Bill took place on 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2015. The Bill will provide the legal basis for holding a referendum on whether the United Kingdom (and Gibraltar) should remain within, or leave the European Union. The Bill adopts the question format recommended by the Electoral Commission.
10 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Democratic Unionist Members of Northern Irish Government resign	Following accusations relating to the murder of an ex-IRA paramilitary member and the subsequent arrest of three prominent republicans, the DUP resigned from government. The stability of power sharing in Northern Ireland became less certain. The possibility of a return to direct rule by the British Government is raised the following month.
12 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Jeremy Corbyn MP elected as leader of the Labour Party	Following a thorough election contest, Jeremy Corbyn, initially an outsider, is elected as the Leader of the Labour Party on 59.5% of the vote.

22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2015	Liberal Democratic peers consider blocking Government manifesto promise	<p>Liberal Democrat peers consider blocking Government housing legislation. While peers regularly amend and vote down elements of Bills making their way through the Parliamentary process in their role as a reviewing chamber, particular attention was paid to this instance for a number of reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proximity to the Liberal Democrat's conference meant that they drew particular attention to this action.</li> <li>2. Following the 2015 General Election the Liberal Democrats only had a limited number of MPs in the House of Commons (8) as compared with the 101 Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords. It was argued that their attempts to block Government manifesto legislation in this way were hypocritical given their long-standing position that an unelected Upper Chamber is undemocratic.</li> <li>3. It appeared to contradict the Salisbury Convention. This constitutional convention is one means by which the constitutional balance between an elected House of Commons and an unelected House of Lords remains relatively stable. The expectation at the root of the convention is that the Lords will not block legislation that formed the basis of part of the Government's manifesto.</li> </ol>
15 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution publishes report on EU Referendum Bill	<p>This brief report notes that the Bill in question provides the legislative framework for a Referendum on the United Kingdom and Gibraltar's membership of the European Union. It notes issues in relation to timing, in particular that the referendum should not coincide with any other polls; that the Purdah rules be clarified, that is what central and local Government may publish during the referendum period; and the process for recognising the 'official' organisation leading the argument for the 'Remain' and 'Leave' sides.</p>
22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2015	House of Commons changes standing orders in relation to EVEL	<p>The House of Commons agreed to change its Standing Orders (Standing Order 83J) in relation to English Votes for English Laws (EVEL) (see HC Deb 22 October 2015 cols.1159-1255). The changes mean that only those MPs representing English and Welsh constituencies may vote on matters which only affects England and Wales. Legislation falling under this category will be certified as such by the Speaker of the House of Commons.</p> <p>The Speaker must consider two criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the provisions affect either England only, or England and Wales only, and</li> <li>2. That the provisions are <i>within</i> the competence of the devolved legislatures.</li> </ol> <p>After Report stage a piece of legislation falling under the EVEL procedure moves to Legislative Grand Committee (England and Wales), if certified as relating to England and Wales, and then/or to Legislative Grand Committee (England). A Legislative Grand Committee comprises all MPs from the relevant constituencies. Members of the Legislative Grand Committee consent and vote on the relevant provisions in the certified legislation.</p>
9 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	The Scotland Bill 2015-16 reached Report stage in the House of Commons	<p>The Scotland Bill 2015-6 reached the Report stage in the House of Commons and was subject to a number of substantive amendments by the Government.</p>
10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	The Scotland Bill 2015-16 receives its first reading in the House of Lords	<p>The Scotland Bill 2015-16 was given its first reading in the House of Lords, with its second reading due to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015.</p>
10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	The UK Prime Minister David Cameron writes to the President of the Council of the European Union, Donald	<p>As part of his desire to renegotiate the relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union, David Cameron wrote to Donald Tusk outlining the key areas in which the United Kingdom Government wished to see reform in the European Union.</p> <p>These areas were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic governance, with a particular desire to protect the City of London as a financial centre by legally protecting those Member States of the European Union who</li> </ol>

	Tusk	<p>were not in the single European currency (the Euro).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Competitiveness, with a focus on reducing the amount of regulation affecting businesses.</li> <li>3. Sovereignty, especially the Treaty imperative to work towards ‘ever closer union [of peoples]’, enhanced power for national Parliaments, and adherence to the principle of subsidiarity (that what can best be achieved at a national or local level should not be carried out a European level).</li> <li>4. Immigration, specifically the free movement of peoples and the pressure on national resources (e.g. school places for children).</li> </ol> <p>Elements of the letter are based on political rhetoric more than the factual legal position, but it represents an accurate political statement of the Government’s publicly stated negotiating position.</p>
23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2015	House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution publishes report on the Scotland Bill 2015-16	<p>The Report notes the constitutional implications of the proposed statutory recognition of the permanence of the Scottish Parliament on the sovereignty of the Westminster Parliament. In particular the agreement that the Scottish Parliament can only be abolished by a referendum in Scotland (Clause 1) and the statutory recognition of the Sewel Convention (Clause 2) requiring consultation with the Scottish Parliament on Westminster legislation concerning devolved Scottish matters, were cited as constitutionally significant.</p> <p>It is also noted that previously raised concerns around the <i>ad hoc</i> nature of the development of devolution arrangements in the United Kingdom remain unaddressed by the Bill or any other process; for example, in relation to English Votes for English Laws.</p>
3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2015	Government wins vote on military action in Syria	<p>The Government won a motion before the House of Commons endorsing air strikes in Syria against so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Daesh) by 397-223 votes. This is another example (see also 30<sup>th</sup> August 2013) of a constitutional convention which creates an expectation that the Government will seek the consent of Parliament before engaging in military action.</p> <p>The vote is also interesting because it revealed divisions on both the front and backbenches of HM Official Opposition, the Labour Party, over the use of military action. The most noticeable division was between the party leader Jeremy Corbyn MP and the foreign affairs spokesman Hilary Benn MP.</p>
17 <sup>th</sup> December 2015	Government Publishes Strathclyde Review	<p>The Review examines the relationship between the House of Commons and the House of Lords and in particular the ability of the House of Lords to scrutinise on, and potentially block, secondary legislation. The Review was precipitated by a disagreement between the Government and the Lords over the implementation of changes to tax credits via secondary legislation – which at the time the Government sought to argue was a money Bill per the Parliament Acts 1911 &amp; 1949 – but it has wider constitutional implications for the role of the House of Lords. For further discussion of the Money Bills element see s.2 pp.9-11 of the Review.</p> <p>Strathclyde suggests three options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To remove the Lords’ scrutiny function in relation to secondary legislation altogether. Review would only then be undertaken by the Commons.</li> <li>• Retain the current approach, but clarify the position by (non-statutory) codification and a resolution.</li> <li>• Permit the Lords to deny approval, or annul secondary legislation, but allow the Commons to override this decision with a vote.</li> </ul> <p>This is a Government report and so does not deal with all of the concerns which might be raised in relation to the necessary scrutiny of secondary legislation.</p>

17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2015	European Council meeting	European Ministers met to discuss, amongst other things, the United Kingdom's plans for a referendum on its membership of the European Union. The conclusions of the meeting record that:  'The European Council had a political exchange of views on the UK plans for an (in/out) referendum. Following today's substantive and constructive debate, the members of the European Council agreed to work closely together to find mutually satisfactory solutions in all the four areas at the European Council meeting on 18-19 February 2016.' [20] EUCO 28/15
8 <sup>th</sup> January 2016	British National Party removed from register of political parties	The Electoral Commission has removed the British National Party from the register of political parties after the organisation failed to submit an annual notification confirming the details registered with the commission are accurate, and having failed to pay a re-registration fee of £25.00.
12 <sup>th</sup> January 2016	First Act passed under EVEL provisions	The Housing and Planning Bill 2015-16 was passed by the House of Commons becoming the first piece of legislation to complete the legislative process under the new English Votes for English Laws provisions (EVEL). The Bill was first certified as coming under the EVEL provisions on 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
28 <sup>th</sup> January 2016	Secretary of State for Justice cancels cut in criminal legal aid	The Secretary of State for justice, Michael Gove MP, cancelled the planned 8.75% cut in legal aid funding which had precipitated industrial action on the part of solicitors, barristers, and other members of the legal profession in 2015. However, this decision did not reverse a previous cut of 8.75%
19 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	Council of the European Union publishes outcome of United Kingdom – European Union negotiations	Following the European Council meeting on 17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2015, Member States at the 18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2016 European Council meeting agreed a text detailing new arrangements taking account of the letter sent by David Cameron, the United Kingdom Prime Minister, on 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015. The agreement (EUCO 1/16) is said to be fully compatible with existing Treaty arrangements.
20 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	European Union Referendum date announced	Following the publication of the outcome of the Government of the United Kingdom's efforts to negotiate a new settlement for the United Kingdom in the European Union, The Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced that a referendum on the United Kingdom and Gibraltar's membership of the European Union would be held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2016, and that he would campaign to remain in the European Union.
22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016	PM statement to the House of Commons on the agreement reached with the Council of the European Union	The Prime Minister made a statement to the House of Commons on the new settlement reached between the United Kingdom and the Council of the European Union. Following the statement the Prime Minister responded to questions from MPs (see HC Deb 22 February 2016 Cols. 21-68)
23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2016	Scotland Act 2016 receives Royal Assent	The Act grants further devolved powers to the Scottish Parliament in areas including taxation, transport and consumer protection.

30 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	House of Lords European Union Committee publishes report on 'The EU referendum and EU reform'	<p>The House of Lords European Union Committee published a report responding to the 'new settlement' which the Government had negotiated with the European Union.</p> <p>Among other things, the report highlights that the proposed referendum question makes no reference to the settlement negotiated, the lack of discussion between Central and Devolved Governments, and the absence of consultation on the negotiating priorities outlined in the Prime Minister's 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016 letter,</p> <p>The report emphasised the need for an informed debate, given the significance of the decision to be made on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016.</p>
3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2016	ICIJ Discloses Leak of Offshore Tax Haven Documents: 'The Panama Papers'	<p>The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists disclosed that around 11.5million documents had been leaked to by an undisclosed source. The documents originate from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca and demonstrate how some of the richest people in the world, politicians, and others had engaged the firm to arrange to hold their wealth and property in offshore jurisdictions.</p> <p>The controversy is still unfolding</p>
26 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	Hillsborough Disaster Inquest delivers verdict	<p>Following the report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel in September 2012, and the ruling of the High Court in December 2012 ([2012] EWHC 3783), a new Inquest was established on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. The new inquest had to consider 14 questions in relation to the Disaster.</p> <p>One of the main findings of the Inquest was that the victims of the Disaster were unlawfully killed. This means that the Independent Police Complaints Commission and the Crown Prosecution Service may now consider investigating the Disaster.</p>
9 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	House of Lords European Union Committee publishes report 'The UK, the EU and a British Bill of Rights	<p>The Report represents a response to the Secretary of State for Justice's evidence to the Committee, which was the first public statement by the Government on its reasons for introducing a British Bill of Rights, the Government's own public consultation on the matter having been delayed. Overall the Committee was of the view that the case for a British Bill of Rights was not made clear by the Secretary of State's statement, that it appeared to be a very modest proposal that may not justify the constitutional upheaval that could follow, and that there was strong opposition from the devolved institutions to the introduction of a British Bill of Rights</p>
25 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution publishes 'The Union and Devolution'	<p>The House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution published its 10<sup>th</sup> report of the 2015-16 session on 'The Union and Devolution'. The Report emphasises the need for a more structured approach to devolution in the future, citing the piecemeal approach of the past as one reason behind the desire for independence in Scotland – stating that 'Devolution needs to be viewed through the lens of the Union, with appropriate consideration given to the needs of, and consequences for, the entire Union' (p.3).</p> <p>The Report also highlights the related, on-going difficulty surrounding the representation of England within the constitutional structure of the United Kingdom, particularly in relation to 'English Votes for English Laws' (EVEL). The Report is not in favour of an English Parliament equivalent to that of other devolved institutions.</p> <p>The Report expresses concern about <i>ad hoc</i> 'devolution deals' with local authorities, as they perpetuate the existing pattern of unstructured devolution.</p>
16 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	Jo Cox, MP for Batley & Spen, murdered	<p>Jo Cox, Labour MP for Batley &amp; Spen in West Yorkshire was murdered shortly after holding a constituency meeting in Birstall. A man was arrested and charged. Jo Cox had previously worked for Oxfam and had long advocated for the rights of refugees.</p> <p>Jo Cox was the first MP to be murdered since Ian Gow, Conservative MP for Eastbourne, was murdered on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1990 by the IRA. During the late 1970s and 1980s 4 MPs died during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Following Jo Cox' murder, campaigning in the EU Referendum was temporarily suspended, and Parliament reconvened from recess to remember Jo Cox.</p>

23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2016	United Kingdom and Gibraltar Referendum on Membership of the European Union	<p>By 52% to 48% of the vote, on a turnout of 71.8%, the United Kingdom and Gibraltar voted to leave the European Union. London, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar all voted to remain, but turnout was lower than expected in Scotland.</p> <p>The vote precipitated a number of other events of constitutional significance.</p>
24 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	Prime Minister David Cameron announces resignation	<p>Following the result of the EU Membership Referendum, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced his plan to resign ahead of the Conservative Party Conference in September 2016, pending a decision by the Conservative Party to select a new Party Leader and, therefore, Prime Minister.</p>
28 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	Leader of the Labour Party and Official Opposition loses no confidence vote	<p>Jeremy Corbyn, the Leader of the Labour Party and the Official Opposition in the House of Commons lost a vote of no confidence by Labour MPs 172 votes to 40. Additionally, 4 ballots were spoilt, and 13 MPs did not vote.</p> <p>Although an existential crisis in the Labour Party had been growing for some time, the no confidence vote was an incontrovertible demonstration of the apparent difference of opinion between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Labour Party members who elected Jeremy Corbyn less than 12 months before. The vote itself was precipitated by the sacking of Hilary Benn (26<sup>th</sup> June 2016), and a series of Shadow Cabinet resignations.</p> <p>There was no immediate formal leadership challenge, however the no confidence vote and Shadow Cabinet resignations which preceded it raise constitutional questions about the ability of the Labour Party to field a Government-in-Waiting.</p>
6 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	The Chilcot Report is published	<p>The Chilcot Inquiry (The Iraq Inquiry), was a public inquiry charged with investigating the United Kingdom's policy on Iraq from 2001-2009, and to identify how the United Kingdom might respond to similar situations in the future. In a statement given at the publication of the Report, Sir John Chilcot outlined the principal conclusions of the inquiry, as being that 'the UK chose to join the invasion of Iraq before the peaceful options for disarmament had been exhausted. Military action at that time was not a last resort.'</p> <p>The Report is some 2.6 million words long, contained in 12 volumes.</p>
11 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution publishes report on Investigatory Powers Bill	<p>The Committee's Report focuses on the constitutional issues arising from the current draft of the Investigatory Powers Bill, sometimes referred to as the 'Snooper's Charter', The crucial issues for the Committee concerned the authorisation and review mechanisms under the Bill, and the independence of the judicial component of these mechanisms.</p> <p>The Committee made the reasonable assumption that the independence of Judicial Commissioners, who, in conjunction with the Secretary of State for the Home Department authorised the gathering of communications data under the Bill, was 'vouchsafed' [7] by virtue of the requirement that they must hold, or have held, high judicial office. However, the Committee noted risks to the Judicial Commissioner's <i>perceived</i>, and possibly <i>substantive</i> independence due to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State's involvement in appointment, reappointment and disciplinary processes. Similar issues were raised in relation to the independence and powers of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal</p> <p>The Committee also argued that Henry VIII powers should only be available to expand the role of Judicial Commissioners in order to, for example, keep pace with technological change.</p>



13 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	Theresa May becomes Prime Minister	<p>Theresa May, Home Secretary under David Cameron, becomes Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Although not entirely unexpected, the result was interesting because Theresa May had formally backed the Remain side during the Referendum campaign.</p> <p>David Cameron tendered his resignation to the Queen earlier in the day. Theresa May's accession to the Office of Prime Minister followed a shorter-than-expected leadership contest that saw a number of contenders rapidly step aside (Stephen Crabb, Liam Fox, Michael Gove, Boris Johnson, Andrea Leadsom).</p> <p>Theresa May undertook a substantial reshuffle of the Cabinet in the days that followed.</p>
13 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	Judgment given in <i>R (on the application of the Public Law Project) v Lord Chancellor</i>	<p>Neutral citation: [2016] UKSC 39. The Supreme Court gave judgment in this case. The case concerned whether or not it was lawful for the Lord Chancellor to invoke Henry VIII powers (allowing the Government to amend or repeal primary legislation via secondary legislation) under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, to require that applicants for legal aid meet a residency test requirement.</p> <p>The Supreme Court agreed with the Public Law Project that the use of powers in this way was <i>ultra vires</i>. The powers were intended to allow amendment to the services offered, not to amend the class of persons entitled to access such services not connected with the nature of the services themselves.</p>
19 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	First legal challenge to EU Referendum Result launched	In CO/3281/2016 <i>The Queen on the application of Santos v Chancellor For The Duchy Lancaster</i> Dos Santos argues that it is for Parliament to pass legislation triggering Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon, which is the Treaty provision governing the process for secession from the European Union, and not for the Government.
3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2016	Judgment given by the Divisional Court in <i>Miller</i>	The Divisional Court of the Queen's Bench gave judgment in <i>R (on the application of Miller) v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union</i> [2016] EWHC 2768 (Admin) – the Article 50 'Brexit' case. The court, which comprised the Lord Chief Justice, the Master of the Rolls and Sales LJ, delivered a single judgment ruling that the government did not have a power under the treaty making royal prerogative to 'trigger' Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union, and that parliamentary authorisation would be required to obtain such a power.
9 <sup>th</sup> November 2016	Donald Trump elected President of the United States	The Republican Party's presidential candidate Donald Trump defeated the Democrats' Hillary Clinton in the US Presidential Election. While Hillary Clinton won the popular vote (i.e. she had the highest number of votes nationally), Donald Trump won the most Electoral College votes.
20 <sup>th</sup> January 2017	Donald Trump sworn in as President of the United States	Barack Obama's second term in office came to an end on 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2017, and Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45 <sup>th</sup> President of the United States.
24 <sup>th</sup> January 2017	Judgment given by the UK Supreme Court in <i>Miller</i>	The UK Supreme Court gave judgment in <i>R (on the application of Miller) v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union</i> . By a majority of 8:3 the Court ruled that the government did not have the power to trigger Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union. The case also addressed the Sewel Convention, but found that this was only a 'political restriction on the activity of the UK Parliament' (para. 145). The case was unusual because it saw an 11-member bench convened to hear the case.

19 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	UK Parliament votes to hold an early General Election	<p>On 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017, Theresa May, the Prime Minister, indicated that she intended to ask Parliament to agree to call an early General Election. Under the Fixed Term Parliament's Act a General Election was not due to be called again until May 2020. The Prime Minister and her Cabinet colleagues argued that they needed to secure a strong mandate (the Government appeared to have a commanding lead in the polls) in order to give them the best possible chance of securing a good 'Brexit' deal.</p> <p>The Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011 requires that Parliament vote by a supermajority (i.e. a majority of two-thirds or more) to call an early General Election. Parliament obliged by voting 522 – 13 in favour of an early election.</p>
14 <sup>th</sup> May 2017	Emmanuel Macron elected President of France	Emmanuel Macron defeated Marine Le Pen, of the Front Nationale, in a second round run off to become President of France.
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	General Election in the United Kingdom – Hung Parliament	<p>The results of the 2017 General Election produce a hung parliament, where no party has an overall majority. The results were as follows: Conservative 317 seats (John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons is a Conservative MP, but is neutral for the purposes of Commons votes); Labour 262 seats; Scottish National Party 35 seats; Liberal Democrats 12 seats; Democratic Unionist Party 10 seats; Sinn Féin 7 seats.</p> <p>By convention the incumbent government has the first opportunity to attempt to form a government. There were a number of possible configurations open to the Conservatives, 1) govern as a minority, 2) govern in a coalition, 3) secure a confidence and supply arrangement with one or more other parties. If no party is able to form a government it will be necessary to call another general election.</p>
14 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Grenfell Tower Fire	In the early hours of 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2017 Grenfell Tower, a 24-storey tower block in North Kensington, London caught fire. At least 80 people lost their lives in the fire which consumed the entire building. The Prime Minister announced that a public inquiry would be held into the fire. Sir Martin Moore-Bick a recently retired Court of Appeal judge was appointed on 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2017 to chair the inquiry.
19 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	'Brexit' negotiations begin	Negotiations on the terms of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union began in Brussels.
21 <sup>st</sup> June 2017	Parliament Resumes with Queen's Speech	Parliament reconvened. Rather than the parliamentary session being 1 year, the 2017 parliament's first session is set to run from 2017-2019 in order to accommodate the large volume of Brexit-related legislation contained in the Queen's Speech.
26 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Conservative Government reaches Confidence and Supply arrangement	<p>The Conservative government under Theresa May sought a confidence and supply arrangement with the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland. Having secured this agreement, the DUP will support the Government on no confidence votes, the Queen's Speech (in effect a confidence vote), the legislative programme relating to Brexit, and the budget.</p> <p>The deal involved the government allocating an additional £1Billion in new public funds to Northern Ireland and allowing £500Million of existing allocated funding to be spent with more flexibility</p>

30 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Kensington Council Leader resigns	The leader of Kensington Council Nicholas Paget-Brown resigned following strong criticism of how the Council had responded to the Grenfell Tower fire.
13 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	EU (Withdrawal) Bill 2017-2019 introduced	The EU (Withdrawal) Bill 2017-19, formerly known as the Great Repeal Bill, was introduced to Parliament. The Bill outlines how the United Kingdom's statutory framework will be amended to reflect the changes to it flowing from the UK's exit from the European Union, and the powers which will be granted to government to accomplish this. The Second Reading in the House of Commons is expected in September 2017.
14 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Sir Ian Burnett appointed new LCJ	Sir Ian Burnett will replace Lord Thomas as Lord Chief Justice from October 2017.
21 <sup>st</sup> July 2017	Lady Hale and Rabinder Singh J elevated	Lady Hale has been appointed to succeed Lord Neuberger as President of the UK Supreme Court. Rabinder Singh J will become the first non-white judge in the Court of Appeal.