

**VOTES FOR WOMEN WAS DISCUSSED ON MANY OCCASIONS IN PARLIAMENT BETWEEN 1867 AND 1928.**

The petition led to the first debate on votes for women. On 20 May 1867 Mill tried to amend the Second Reform Bill to replace the word 'man' with 'person'. The division was lost by 73 votes to 196, but Mill was delighted by the level of support from some MPs, including **Henry Fawcett**, which came from both sides of the House.

*'The petition, and the circumstances attendant on its preparation, have, to say the least, greatly weakened the chief practical argument which we have been accustomed to hear against any proposal to admit women to the electoral franchise—namely, that few, if any, women desire it.'*

**John Stuart Mill** speaking in the House of Commons, 17 July 1866

In 1890 a 'Survivors' Petition' signed by 78 of the original signatories, was presented to the House of Commons by **Edward Watkin MP**. It was one of more than 16,000 petitions presented to the House of Commons and House of Lords asking for votes for women between 1866 and 1918.

In 1897 various organisations came together to form the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). Under the leadership of **Millicent Garrett Fawcett**, the NUWSS undertook peaceful campaigning such as petitioning, lobbying and marching. From late 1905 this 'suffragist' activity ran alongside militant 'suffragette' campaigning by organisations including the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), led by **Emmeline Pankhurst** and others.



VOTE100

[www.parliament.uk/1866](http://www.parliament.uk/1866)  
[www.parliament.uk/vote100](http://www.parliament.uk/vote100)

Millicent Garrett Fawcett.  
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**VOTES FOR WOMEN:  
150 YEARS OF  
CAMPAIGNING**

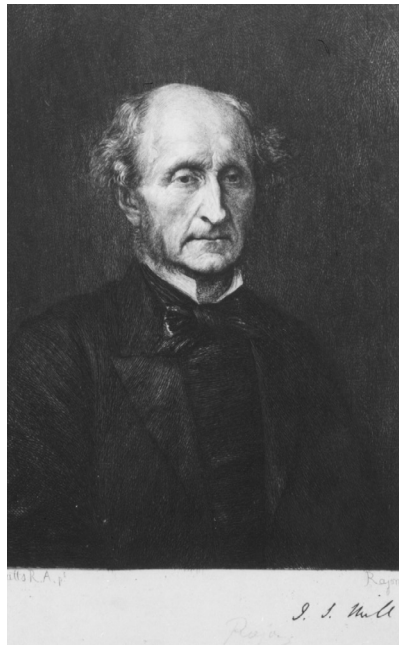
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**7TH JUNE 2016** MARKS THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE START OF THE ORGANISED CAMPAIGN FOR VOTES FOR WOMEN.

**SIGNATURES** WERE SOUGHT BY THE PETITION ORGANISERS FROM THEIR FAMILY CIRCLES AND FRIENDSHIP NETWORKS.

**JOHN STUART MILL MP** PRESENTED THE FIRST MASS WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON 7TH JUNE 1866.

Some people such as **Mary Wollstonecraft** advocated equal political rights for women in the 18th century. In 1832 **Henry Hunt MP** presented the first petition from an individual woman asking for the vote.



In 1865 the Kensington Society formed a small informal committee to draft a petition and gather signatures, led by women including **Barbara Bodichon**, **Emily Davies** and **Elizabeth Garrett**. The Liberal philosopher **John Stuart Mill MP** (1806-1873) agreed to present it.

*John Stuart Mill* by Paul Adolphe Rajon, Lithographer, after G F Watts.

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Women from a wide variety of backgrounds signed, from all over the UK and Ireland. Signatories included some prominent 19th century campaigners for women's rights, including **Josephine Butler**, **Mary Somerville** and **Priscilla Bright Maclaren**.

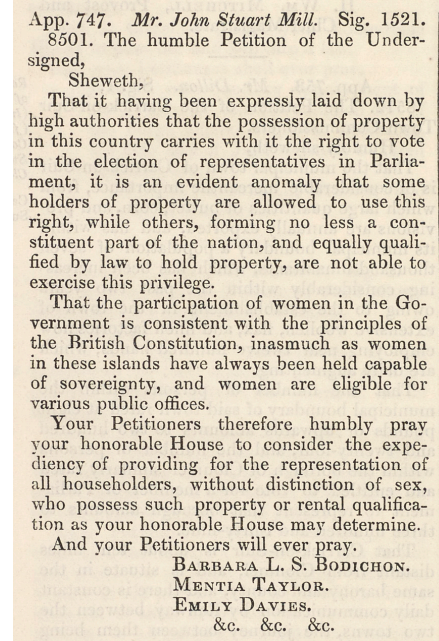


Top: *Priscilla Bright Maclaren*  
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Bottom: *Mary Somerville* by James Rannie Swinton

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The petition was brought to Parliament by **Emily Davies** and **Elizabeth Garrett**. Legend has it that to avoid attention on arrival in Westminster Hall, they concealed it under the stall of an apple seller.



The petition organisers recorded 1499 names, which were printed and circulated in a pamphlet. However the House of Commons Select Committee on Public Petitions counted and logged 1521 signatures. Presumably the extra 22 were last minute additions.

Appendix to the Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Public Petitions, 1866.

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