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REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

Report of the United Kingdom Division



REPORT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM DIVISION  
PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Events in eastern Europe and the former USSR have had a great impact on the work of the PCGN over the past two years. There has been a constant demand for names for use in mapping and for names in list form. Yugoslavia has imposed a considerable burden on the staff.

Much effort has been devoted to events in the former USSR. That has involved the monitoring of name changes and the political restructuring which has taken place.

Fortunately PCGN and BGN, many years ago, devised systems of romanization for Georgian, Armenian, Belorussian, Ukrainian, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Kazakh, Uzbek and Kirghiz. There was at hand, therefore, the means of preparing new romanizations to supplement those obtained previously by the romanization of Russian cyrillic.

Following Azerbaijan's adoption of their own version of the Roman alphabet, lists of names in the new system have been prepared. Developments in the other central Asian republics are being watched with interest. New romanizations and listings have also been prepared for Ukraine. Belarus and other republics have also received a great deal of attention.

In spite of all those demands, PCGN has not neglected its general interest in the geographical names of the world in general.

A new multi-script capability has enhanced the range and quality of the output. It has been of great benefit in the creation of data bases. Events of the past few years, including those mentioned above, have brought the PCGN more into the public consciousness and the need for specialist advice in the treatment of geographical names has been repeatedly demonstrated.

ORDNANCE SURVEY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Names on Large-Scale Maps

All 1:1250 and much of the 1:2500 mapping is now available in digital form ("Land-Line") and as graphic output ("Superplan") from the digital-base; it is planned that the 1:2500 and 1:10,000 mapping will all be available digitally by the end of 1995. Place names are included in the data-base with co-ordinates of the start of each name. Each name is given a code that categorizes it in terms of the type style required in the output and some names (e.g. street names) are placed in a category of their own. Information in the data-base for street names, house names and numbers is being compared with Post Code data and a data-base of full postal addresses (ADDRESS-POINT) is being

created. Street names and Department of Transport road numbers are linked to OSCAR, a data-base of road-centre lines.

Accents on Welsh and Gaelic names do not at present appear in the data-base, but they will be added in the near future.

### Gazetteer

The OS Gazetteer contains all the place names (over 250,000) shown on the 204 Landranger (1:50,000 scale) maps of Great Britain. The printed volume is at present in Edition 3, 1992. It is also available in microfiche, which is up-dated every year. In digital form it can be supplied on magnetic tape, floppy disk or cartridge, in three options - whole country; by 20 x 20 km tiles; by individual Landranger sheet.

### Names on 1:250,000 Maps

The 'positioned names' layer from the 1:250,000 digital data-base is available for the whole of Great Britain and also by 50 x 50 km tiles.

### Welsh Names on OS Mapping of Wales

Where space permits, that is to say particularly on the larger-scale maps, Welsh equivalents of English names are shown. Conventional signs leaflets in English and Welsh are available for most series. OS is currently reviewing the use of the Welsh language in the light of the Welsh Language Act 1993.

### Training Courses for Overseas Students

Various training courses are available for overseas students. They include the BTEC (Business and Technician Education Council) National Certificate in Geographic Information Systems.

### Northern Ireland

Great progress has been made in Northern Ireland over the past two years towards the creation of the Northern Ireland Geographic Information System (NIGIS). Throughout the previous decade the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI) had operated the digital mapping system which had replaced traditional methods previously employed. A fully-structured topographic data-base has been created which now provides coverage equivalent to more than half the population of the province. It includes major urban and rural areas derived from 1:1250 to 1:2500 scales. The rest of the province is covered by selected digital data from the 1:50,000 and the 1:250,000 series.

Ability to create a GIS depends upon the availability of an adequate coverage of digital topographic data; the compatibility of hardware; correlation with other data-bases and the development of exchange formats. OSNI has now adopted a transfer format and is therefore in a position to begin the process of interfacing with other data-bases.

Northern Ireland has a particular advantage in operating its NIGIS. The Department of the Environment now has responsibility for water, roads, planning, housing and other services. A wide range of functions can therefore be discussed and planned in a single Ministry.

Ultimately, the goal of NIGIS is the exploitation of information relevant to administration, census, planning, utilities, transportation, telecommunications, land registry and valuation, fire and rescue services, geology and soils, agriculture, manpower and employment, health and environmental matters.

The basic digital topographic data-base will be completed towards the end of the present decade. Textual information is entered as associated data linked to spatial data and is located by a 12-figure grid reference. Properties have their postal addresses attached, likewise as associated data. This has provided the facility to generate new products and services. A particularly interesting product is the ACEMAP (Address Centred Extract). This may well become a standard map product. In response to a request by grid reference or address, a map at a range of scales can be generated. Since the data-base contains fully edge-matched map sheets, the ACEMAP will be produced on its own special sheet lines centred on the designated location.

It will be evident from the above brief notes that a powerful management tool is planned.