

**Twenty-ninth session
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Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

Report of the Divisions

Report of the United Kingdom Division

Submitted by the United Kingdom Division*

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**United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
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REPORT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM DIVISION

Document prepared by the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain, UK, the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, UK, and the National Land Agency of Jamaica

The United Kingdom Division currently comprises representatives from the United Kingdom and Jamaica. This Division report includes a description of recent toponymic activities of the UK's Ordnance Survey and Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

United Kingdom

Ordnance Survey – Names Policy

There is no national names authority in the United Kingdom. Instead, the geographical names as portrayed on hard-copy and digital products of the national mapping agency – Ordnance Survey – are recognised as being the authoritative geographical names of Great Britain.

The collection of consistent, definitive and authoritative descriptive annotations and proper names/postal numbers of buildings, places and features forms part of the public task of Ordnance Survey.

Ordnance Survey published a new [Names Policy](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/policies/os-names-policy.pdf)¹ in June 2015. The policies for [Welsh](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/policies/os-welsh-names-policy.pdf)² and [Gaelic](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/policies/ordnance-survey-gaelic-names-policy-in-english.pdf)³ names were each also updated in 2015. Welsh names, in particular, have continued to generate interest and debate; specific issues are resolved in collaboration with the appropriate authorities, and the wider issues of names policy will be discussed at a series of meetings this year. The key principle of OS names policy is that it reflects current usage in the locality.

A names consolidation programme has reconciled place names held at 1:25,000- and 1:50,000-scale; thousands of discrepancies have been resolved. OS gazetteer information is now available as open data; OS Open Names lists definitive place names but also road numbers and postcodes – 2.5 million locations in all. The same data is available via an API; the OS Open Names API is a place, road and postcode verification tool that anyone can plug into a website or app completely free. There is considerable interest among UK Government and civil society in making full address data completely open, but achieving that still presents some challenges for the organisations involved.

¹ <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/policies/os-names-policy.pdf>

² <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/policies/os-welsh-names-policy.pdf>

³ <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/policies/ordnance-survey-gaelic-names-policy-in-english.pdf>

Place names invariably feature as core data in national and international initiatives in which OS is involved. These include the UK's nascent National Information Infrastructure, UN-GGIM and the European Location Framework.

UK Country Register

The United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office⁴ and UK Government Digital Service⁵ published an alpha version of a new Country Register⁶ in February 2016.

The aim of the register is to provide a canonical dataset that can be used by UK government digital services and potentially any private sector digital services which require country names data. The open dataset is available in a range of formats and can be linked to or downloaded for use.

This work is the first stage of a project to create a range of Registers⁷ which will be a key component of the UK's future digital infrastructure.

The register is a dataset of current country names in line with UK Government policy. It also includes a number of historical country names. Registers will shortly be published for Territories and UK countries and territories. The register includes ISO 3166 codes as well as short form country names and official state titles in line with Permanent Committee on Geographical Names policies.

Jamaica

- Located at Latitude 18° North, Longitude 77° West;
- Largest of the English-speaking Caribbean islands;
- Area – 11,424 square kilometres (4,411 square miles);
- East to West extent – 243 kilometres (146 miles);
- Greatest width from north to south – 80 kilometres (51 miles).

The island is divided into 3 major divisions called counties. These counties are subdivided into 14 administrative regions known as parishes. Figure1.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>

⁵ <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/>

⁶ <https://country.register.gov.uk/>

⁷ <http://www.openregister.org/>

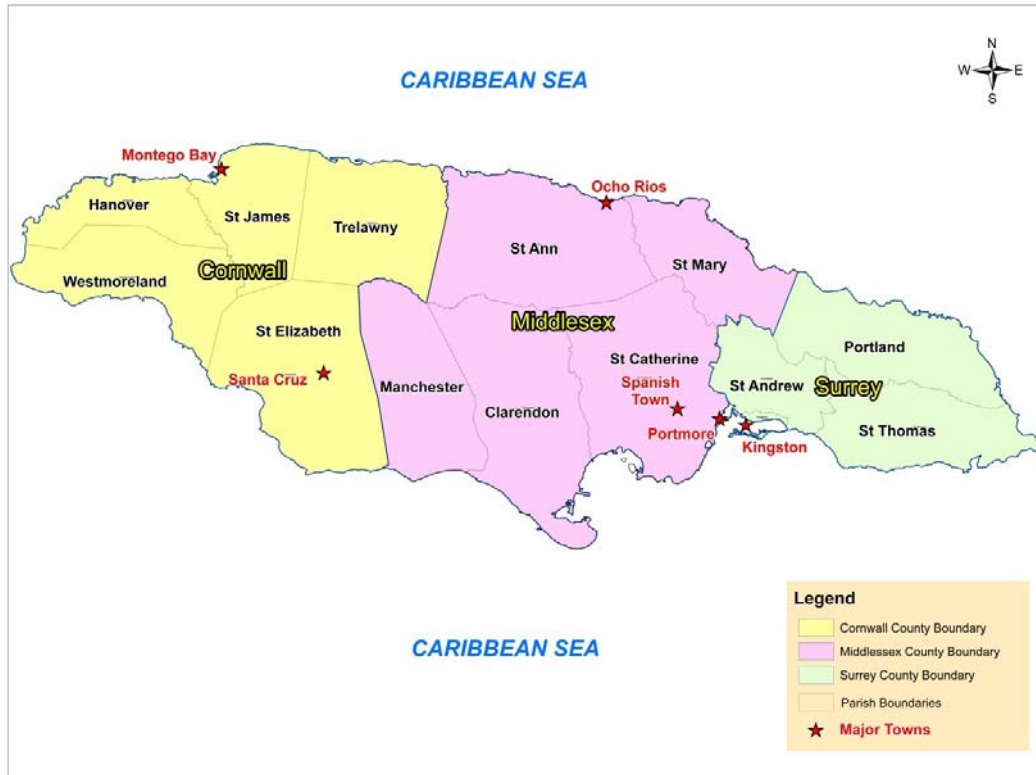


Figure 1– Jamaica County and Parish Boundaries

National Gazetteer Project

Purpose:

To create a database of all approved place names across the island, referenced to the Jamaica Datum 2001 (JAD 2001) co-ordinate system, which is aligned to WGS 84. The source material for this phase of the project is the 1:12,500 Topographic Map Series (1972) with approved names.

Application:

The gazetteer will become the primary reference document for official geographical names in Jamaica. It will be linked to the National Land Agency's geo-database and will comprise *eLandjamaica* and *iMapjamaica* in a single application. Go to www.nla.gov.jm for additional information.

Status:

- Data entry and geo-referencing of the island's geographical names in the database have been done on a parish by parish basis;
- All fourteen parishes have been completed;
- A total of 11,621 toponyms have been entered;
- Investigating utility to facilitate publishing the gazetteer in a webmap form.

International Geographical Names Day

Status:

- Recommended Government of Jamaica's support for the establishment of an International Geographical Names Day in 2017 to highlight the importance and relevance of UNGEGN and the standardization of geographical names.

Recommendation and Conclusion

- Re-activate the Jamaica Place Names Committee;
- Resume the Civic Address Project started in 2011.

It is important to record and maintain the integrity and cultural value of geographical names in Jamaica. It is also important to provide all properties in Jamaica with a civic address. This will make it easier to locate properties and delinquent property owners who owe property taxes, as well as to improve security of properties and residents.