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REPORT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM DIVISION

The United Kingdom Division is the most dispersed of all the Divisions and it is virtually impossible to organize divisional meetings. Nonetheless, exchange of information is arranged by way of periodical meetings connected with mapping programmes.

All the nations of the Division have a tradition of standardizing names by way of field collection in the course of mapping and maps are the medium by which names are both recorded and promulgated. The names and boundaries of administrative divisions are determined centrally but the names of all minor divisions, inhabited places and topographic features are ultimately names established by usage and custom amongst the local populations.

Frequently the question is raised of how the history and origins of names can be preserved in a system where standardization is achieved by a field collection process, bearing in mind that such a process must involve the supersession of names from time to time as local customs and administrative changes may dictate. Although successive map editions reflect the names current at the time, the record of both past and current names is preserved in the local administrative archives. In the case of the United Kingdom these may go back as far as the Domesday Book, which was the first attempt at registering land following the Norman Conquest of 1066.

In the United Kingdom, the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain has the statutory duty to depict boundaries on maps. For names, other than administrative names, field surveyors are responsible for collection of names and opinions are sought as to the true name not only from official bodies including local authorities but from members of the general public who may have special knowledge of the area, for example, local clergymen, land owners, historical societies, conservation groups and so on. Local usage and custom are the major factors in determining which names are finally adopted and in deciding the spelling to be used on maps, the object being to provide names which are deemed to be of most practical benefit to users, in other words the most useful names.

Records of the field collection are preserved in the original field books. These provide a record of the evidence on the basis of which the name appearing on the map (or maps) was finally made. These field books are deposited in the Public Record office and are thus available for historians and others who wish to consult them.

As has been said at previous meetings of the UNCEGN, the United Kingdom is a multi-lingual area and names in Wales and Scotland present special difficulties. Gaelic in Scotland and Welsh in Wales are of equal standing

with English. Whether either language is used in preference to English depends entirely on local usage. When English and the other language are of equal standing locally, both are given. In deciding on the field spelling of Gaelic or Welsh names the School of Scottish studies and the Board of Celtic Studies are consulted and those bodies are of particular importance where doubt as to the true spelling exists or where no written evidence is available locally for a given name. The final spelling may not always be pure, there may be orthographic inconsistencies, but it does conform to local usage. More refined names, on the other hand, could well be in conflict with local usage. An Ordnance Survey publication entitled "Place names on maps of Scotland and Wales" may be of interest. It contains a guide to pronunciation of Gaelic and Welsh and a glossary of terms in both languages and also a glossary of Scandinavian terms and the commonest anglicisations of Gaelic names.

Two major developments have taken place since the Athens Conference. As many present at this UNEGN meeting will know, a gazetteer of Great Britain was prepared more than a decade ago. This gazetteer is an index of the names given on the 1:250,000 map series. A new version of this gazetteer is now being prepared.

In addition, a decision has been made to prepare a gazetteer of the names appearing on the series at 1:50,000 scale. The precise nature of this gazetteer has yet to be decided but it is hoped that it will conform as far as possible to the specification laid down in the UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names.

Both gazetteers will be computer set. Just which equipment will be used for the 1:50,000 gazetteer will depend on the final specification for the contents.