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Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors

**Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors:
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ***

Revised and Enlarged Edition, 2009

* Prepared by the United Kingdom Permanent Committee on Geographical Names,
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1 Languages

1.1 General remarks

The English language is the only language relevant to the United Kingdom as a whole. In certain parts of the United Kingdom, other languages are locally relevant alongside English. These languages are Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish, Scots, and Irish – plus a number of more recently arrived languages such as Punjabi¹.

2 The English language in the United Kingdom

2.1 General remarks

English is a Germanic language taxonomically located within the Indo-European family of languages. Its origins stem from the Anglo-Saxon colonisations of Britain, which took place following the final withdrawal of the Romans, accomplished by AD 410. These colonisations, cemented over much of Britain from the 5th century AD onwards, involved the following peoples:

- Angles, originating from the Schleswig and Flensburg area in northern Germany and settling in Northumbria (= much of England north of the river Humber), Mercia (= much of the English Midlands) and East Anglia
- Saxons, originating from Old Saxony (roughly the territory in northern Germany between the lower courses of the rivers Weser and Elbe), and settling in Wessex (= approximately present-day Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire), Sussex and Essex
- Jutes, originating from Jutland (northern Schleswig in Germany and southern Jylland in Denmark), and settling in Kent and southern Hampshire.

The Anglo-Saxon colonisations from the 5th century established the language that has come to be known as Old English. This was subsequently influenced by the Scandinavian invasions of the 8th-9th centuries, and then following the Norman invasions of the 11th century it was also heavily influenced by Norman French, developing into what has become known as Middle English (the language used by Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th century). From the 15th and 16th centuries a grammatically simpler language began to emerge; this was the origin of today's Modern English. The impact of Modern English was enhanced by the advent of the printing press; Johannes Gutenberg's original mid-15th century German model was replicated in England by Thomas Caxton in (probably) 1476. The playwright William Shakespeare, writing just over 100 years later around the turn of the 17th century, wrote in this early variety of Modern English, and the Church of England's Authorised King James Bible of 1611 was also published in this style. Later, Samuel Johnson's 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language* was a key factor in accelerating the process of orthographical standardization. The keystone of Modern English is its Germanic roots and its incorporation of Germanic, Greek and Latin vocabulary. The principal overall characteristics of Modern English are its flexibility and its capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. For more on the English language see the Wikipedia article entitled *English language* available at the webpage http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language and also the website <http://www.englishlanguageguide.com>.

2.2 Alphabet

The alphabet of the English language consists of 26 letters; 21 letters representing consonant sounds and 5 letters representing vowel sounds.

A a	J j	S s
B b	K k	T t
C c	L l	U u
D d	M m	V v

¹ For Gaelic, see Sections 3 and 6.2. For Welsh see Sections 4 and 6.3. For the remaining languages see Section 5.1.

E e	N n	W w
F f	O o	X x
G g	P p	Y y
H h	Q q	Z z
I i	R r	

The five vowels in this inventory are: A a, E e, I i, O o, U u. The letter Y y may sometimes represent a semi-vowel rather than a consonant.

2.3 Spelling of English language geographical names

The orthography of the English language is standardized but can nonetheless be problematic. There are no fixed rules for the spelling of English language geographical names, except that individual words within a name will usually – but not always – begin with an upper-case letter. Spellings should be taken from the sources noted in Section 7 of this paper, particularly the sources in Sections 7.1 and 7.2.

2.4 Pronunciation of English language geographical names

The pronunciation of English language geographical names, and indeed of the English language in general, is not easy to indicate. The 26 letters of the alphabet are obliged to represent 44 different phonemes². Each name has its own pronunciation, and indeed there may be more than one acceptable pronunciation if local dialectal forms of English come into play. The spelling of a geographical name as found in the sources listed in Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of this paper may not be a wholly reliable guide as to its pronunciation.

3 The Gaelic language³

3.1 General remarks

Gaelic (*Gàidhlig*) is a Celtic language taxonomically located within the Indo-European family of languages. It forms part of the Goidelic branch of the Celtic languages, along with Irish and Manx. Descended from Old Irish, Gaelic has probably been spoken in Scotland since Roman times. From an initially widespread geographical and social distribution in Scotland Gaelic began to decline from the 13th-14th centuries, often the victim of the advance of Middle English into Scotland⁴. Regular conflicts with England, and the Highland Clearance programme of the 18th century, hastened the decline of the language. A rich oral Gaelic tradition survived, however, and the language did achieve some recognition when the Bible was first translated into Gaelic in 1767. At that juncture some 20% of the population of Scotland was recognised as being monolingual in Gaelic; that figure has steadily declined to zero. Despite more recent attempts at reviving the language the 2001 census showed that only about 1.2% of the population of Scotland (58,652 people) speak Gaelic well and fewer than 2% of the population had any familiarity with Gaelic at all⁵. The present geographical distribution of the language is weighted heavily towards western Scotland, with the greatest concentrations in the Outer Hebrides (Western Isles) and on Skye and Tiree. Attempts to halt the decline in the use of Gaelic have included granting the language official recognition through the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of April 2005⁶ and establishing the statutory *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*, designed to secure the status of the language⁷. Gaelic is today also

² See <http://www.englishlanguageguide.com/english/pronunciation>.

³ This section relates to Scottish Gaelic; for information on Irish Gaelic see Section 5.2.

⁴ For more on Middle English see Section 2.1. Note that Middle English as spoken in Scotland went on to develop as much into Scots (see Section 5.1) as into Modern English.

⁵ See <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/press/news2005/scotlands-census-2001-gaelic-report.html>.

⁶ See http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp_20050007_en_1#pb5-l1g10.

⁷ See <http://www.bord-na-gaidhlig.org.uk>.

promoted in education, in the media, and by the deployment of bilingual road signage. In 2001 the United Kingdom ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of Gaelic.

3.2 Alphabet

The alphabet of the Gaelic language consists of 23 letters; 13 letters representing consonant sounds and 10 letters representing vowel sounds.

A a	G g	Ò ò
À à	H h	P p
B b	I i	R r
C c	Ì ì	S s
D d	L l	T t
E e	M m	U u
È è	N n	Ù ù
F f	O o	

The ten vowels in this inventory are: A a, À à, E e, È è, I i, Ì ì, O o, Ò ò, U u, Ù ù. The grave accent indicates vowel length. The acute accent has in the past also occasionally been used on vowels but this is no longer approved practice for geographical names.

3.3 Spelling of Gaelic language geographical names

For the rules concerning the spelling of Gaelic language geographical names, please consult the very useful paper entitled *Introduction to Gaelic origins of place names in Britain*, which can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following webpage: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicintro.html>.

3.4 Pronunciation of Gaelic language geographical names

For the rules concerning the pronunciation of Gaelic language geographical names, please consult the very useful paper entitled *Introduction to Gaelic origins of place names in Britain*, which can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following webpage: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicintro.html>. Also of interest in this regard is the Wikipedia article entitled *Scottish Gaelic phonology* available at the webpage http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_Gaelic_phonology.

4 The Welsh language

4.1 General remarks

Welsh (*Cymraeg*) is a Celtic language taxonomically located within the Indo-European family of languages. It forms part of the Brythonic branch of the Celtic languages, along with Breton and Cornish⁸. It originated as Old Welsh in the 6th century AD, developed into Middle Welsh in the 12th century, and later gradually evolved into Modern Welsh – particularly with the publication in 1588 of William Morgan’s Welsh language Bible. The arrival of English workers during the Industrial Revolution, coupled with the inferior legal status of the Welsh language *vis-à-vis* English, caused a drop in the number of people speaking Welsh as their first language, a decrease which lasted through much of the 19th and 20th centuries. But from the late 20th century conscious efforts were made to revive Welsh, and in 1993 the Welsh Language Act gave the language official status and parity with English. The Act also established the Welsh Language Board (Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg), a body with statutory powers⁹. The

⁸ The term *Brythonic* is related to *Britannic*; see also Section 10.2.3.

⁹ The Board’s website is at <http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/Pages/Hafan.aspx>. See also Section 6.3.

number of Welsh speakers stabilised, helped by the fact that since 2000 the teaching of Welsh has been compulsory in schooling up to the age of 16. The 2001 census of the United Kingdom reported that about 20% of the population of Wales (some 600,000 people) was familiar with the Welsh language, with as many as 28% claiming some understanding of it¹⁰. The geographical distribution of Welsh is concentrated in the rural west of the country, especially in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Most road signs in Wales are now bilingual. In 2001 the United Kingdom ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of Welsh.

4.2 Alphabet

The alphabet of the Welsh language consists of 28 letters; 21 letters representing consonant sounds and 7 letters representing vowel sounds. Eight of the letters representing consonant sounds are digraphs.

A a	NG ng	R r
B b	H h	RH rh
C c	I i	S s
CH ch	L l	T t
D d	LL ll	TH th
DD dd	M m	U u
E e	N n	W w
F f	O o	Y y
FF ff	P p	
G g	PH ph	

The seven vowels in this inventory are: A a, E e, I i, O o, U u W w, Y y. A circumflex may be used on vowels; this indicates vowel length.

4.3 Spelling of Welsh language geographical names

For the rules concerning the spelling of Welsh language geographical names, please consult the very useful paper entitled *Introduction to Welsh origins of place names in Britain*, which can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following webpage: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/welshintro.html>.

4.4 Pronunciation of Welsh language geographical names

For the rules concerning the pronunciation of Welsh language geographical names, please consult the very useful paper entitled *Introduction to Welsh origins of place names in Britain*, which can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following webpage: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/welshintro.html>. Also of interest in this regard is the Wikipedia article entitled *Welsh phonology* available at the webpage http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welsh_phonology.

5 Other Languages

5.1 General remarks

Apart from English, Gaelic and Welsh, three other languages are also very well established in the United Kingdom and are currently recognised as living languages under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages:

- Cornish (found in Cornwall). This Celtic language (self-designation = *Kernewek* or *Kernowek*) has been resuscitated in recent decades and there are now perhaps 3000 people with rudimentary language skills at

¹⁰ See <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=447> and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/2755217.stm>.

least, some 300 of whom can use Cornish effectively for everyday purposes. In May 2008 a standard orthography for Cornish, called the Standard Written Form (SWF), was approved¹¹. Cornish gained recognition as a living language under the European Charter in 2002.

- Scots (found in Scotland, where it is sometimes termed Lowland Scots; also found in Northern Ireland, where it is termed Ulster Scots). This is a Germanic language, not to be confused with the Celtic language known as Gaelic. The number of speakers of Scots is very difficult to determine; a combined total of 100,000 in Scotland and Northern Ireland may be a reasonable estimate. Scots gained recognition as a living language under the European Charter in 2001¹².
- Irish or Irish Gaelic (self-designation = *Gaeilge*; found in Northern Ireland). This forms part of the Goidelic branch of the Celtic language and is closely related to Scottish Gaelic (see Section 3). It is the first official language of neighbouring Ireland, and according to the 2001 United Kingdom census it is also relevant to almost 170,000 people in Northern Ireland (= 10.4% of the province's population), of whom 75,000 have a good level of fluency. Since 1998 Irish has been promoted in education in Northern Ireland; it is an officially recognised minority language in the province and there is now a government commitment to introduce an Irish Language Act. In 2001 Irish gained recognition in Northern Ireland as a living language under the European Charter¹³.

Languages relating to more recent immigration into the United Kingdom, especially from the South Asian sub-continent during the past half-century or so, are also significant in some (particularly urban) communities. As an indicator, four such languages were spoken as a first language by more than 0.5% of the total number of school pupils in England in January 2008¹⁴:

- Punjabi 1.6% (102,570 pupils)
- Urdu 1.3% (85,250 pupils)
- Bengali 1.1% (70,320 pupils)
- Gujarati 0.6% (40,880 pupils).

6 Geographical Names: Standardization and Portrayal

6.1 General remarks

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 agencies – the Ordnance Survey (for Great Britain) and the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (for Northern Ireland) – are recognised as being the authoritative geographical names of the United Kingdom. Toponymic information is collected and updated by the Ordnance Survey as an integral element of its map product revision, and is achieved in consultation with local authorities, reliable organisations and expert individuals. Common local usage, preservation of historical form, and the current relevant language for the name are all factors taken into account. As noted in Sections 3 and 4, particular emphasis is placed on standardizing Welsh names in Wales and Gaelic names in the Gaelic-speaking areas of north-west Scotland, since Welsh and Gaelic are official languages in those respective areas. Note that the English language does not have official status anywhere in the United Kingdom, though it is certainly a national language throughout the United Kingdom and can also be regarded as a *de facto* official language throughout.

6.2 Geographical names in Scotland

¹¹ See the webpage <http://www.magakernow.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=37768&p=0> posted by the Cornish Language Partnership.

¹² For more information on the Scots language see *The Scots Language in education in Scotland* at: http://www1.faknaw.nl/mercator/regionale_dossiers/PDFs/scots_in_scotland.PDF.

¹³ For more information on Irish in Northern Ireland see the website <http://www.ultach.org/>.

¹⁴ See the webpage <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000786/Language081b.xls> posted by the UK Government's Department for Children, Schools and Families. The total number of school pupils in England in January 2008 was 6,549,300.

The Ordnance Survey operates a Gaelic Names Policy, dating from 2000, setting out how Gaelic names and bilingual English/Gaelic names should be shown on Ordnance Survey products (see <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicpolicy.html> for Gaelic and English language versions of this policy). The Ordnance Survey uses recognised authoritative advice and established conventions to determine the correct depiction of Gaelic place names, working principally with the Gaelic Names Liaison Committee (GNLC) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/1.html>).

The Gaelic Names Liaison Committee (GNLC) was established in 2001, bringing together bodies with an interest in the Gaelic orthography of place names in Scotland. With members drawn from a range of backgrounds and different institutions, the GNLC advised and assisted the Ordnance Survey with the implementation of its Gaelic Names Policy. It established a set of Orthographic Principles designed to ensure a consistency of policy application. These Principles, which were first published in 2001, were extensively revised and expanded in 2006 (see <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicprinciples.html>).

At the end of 2006, the GNLC was replaced by a successor partnership known as the Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba – Gaelic Place Names of Scotland (AÀA-GPNS). This partnership brings together bodies with an interest in the Gaelic orthography of place names in Scotland, including local authorities, the Ordnance Survey, academics, and the Scottish Place Name Society, as well as other bodies with an interest in Gaelic development. The AÀA-GPNS has adopted the 2006 Orthographic Principles developed by the GNLC, and has additionally adopted other GNLC policy documents including *Gaelic Street Names – a Standardised Approach* (June 2006)¹⁵.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority originally established a set of Gaelic Orthographic Conventions in 1981, designed to assist in the teaching of Gaelic in schools. These conventions were subsequently revised in 2005¹⁶. In particular, one major revision has involved the use of diacritical signs; whereas both grave and acute accents had been used until 2005, since that date the acute accent has no longer featured in Gaelic language place names on Ordnance Survey products.

The newly revised GNLC Orthographic Principles and SQA Orthographic Conventions will result in greater clarity and consistency in future work on the orthography of Gaelic place names. In particular, it will assist in one of the principal projects of the new AÀA-GPNS partnership; the production of a National Gazetteer of Gaelic Place Names. The Scottish Parliament's Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005 came into force in February 2006¹⁷ and a National Plan for Gaelic for that Parliament is scheduled for 2007. The National Plan recognises the important role that the depiction of place names has in ensuring the relevance and consistency of the Gaelic language, and supports the production of a National Gazetteer of Gaelic Place Names. The AÀA-GPNS sees itself as being the correct body to take this work forward, and Ordnance Survey is happy to support it in this role.

With regard to the Scots language, a very useful paper entitled *Introduction to Scots origins of place names in Britain* can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following webpage: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/scotsintro.html>.

6.3 Geographical names in Wales

¹⁵ See the website at <http://www.gaelicplacenames.org> for these policy documents and other information.

¹⁶ See the webpage <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/7339.html>.

¹⁷ See the webpage <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2006/02/13130418>.

The Ordnance Survey Welsh Language Scheme, approved in 2001, is concerned in part with Ordnance Survey policy for the use of Welsh language place names on Ordnance Survey products (see <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/aboutus/reports/wales/docs/welshlanguageschemefinal.pdf>). This Ordnance Survey policy runs in close association with the work of the Welsh Language Board (see <http://www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk>), a statutory organisation funded principally by means of grant aid from the National Assembly for Wales. The Board was established in December 1993 under the terms of the Welsh Language Act. Its main function is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, and since 2001 it has had responsibility for providing expert advice on the standard forms of Welsh language place names. To achieve this, the Board uses both historical evidence and the linguistic knowledge of the Standardisation of Place-names Team, which follows strict guidelines when standardizing place-names¹⁸. There is no legal force to the Board's advice and recommendations; local authorities hold the right to decide on the names of places and streets within their boundaries, though they will usually accept the Board's advice.

In August 2005 the Welsh Language Board invited the Ordnance Survey to consider revisiting and amending the Welsh Language Scheme in accordance with Section 16 of the Welsh Language Act. The scheme was duly revisited, with necessary amendments made, and was finally approved in November 2006. Since adopting the original Welsh Language Scheme, the Ordnance Survey has advanced its policy of showing more and more bilingual place names and feature descriptions on both large-scale and small-scale products. Ordnance Survey Landranger Maps and Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps for areas in Wales now have fully bilingual covers, and digital products such as the recently launched Ordnance Survey MasterMap Address Layer 2 are enabled to provide Welsh place name alternatives.

6.4 Geographical names in Northern Ireland

Standardized geographical names in Northern Ireland are found in the products of the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI: <http://www.osni.gov.uk/>), which has now been subsumed into Land & Property Services (see <http://www.lpsni.gov.uk/index/about-us.htm>), an executive agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel for Northern Ireland (see also Section 7.2).

7 Source Materials

7.1 Ordnance Survey

The Ordnance Survey (OS: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk>) is the official mapping organisation of Great Britain and its products carry standardized geographical names. The general OS catalogue can be seen online at: <http://leisure.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/leisure/catalogue.jsp?section=10120>

From the toponymic point of view the most relevant Ordnance Survey products include:

- OS 1:50,000 Scale Gazetteer, an electronic index keyed to the scale of 1:50,000 and available online at http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/OS_products/50kgazetteer/. It gives names and locational information, including administrative division, grid reference and latitude/longitude, through *specific search* and *wider search* options.
- OS Locator™, a fully searchable national gazetteer for use with the Ordnance Survey's range of medium-scale raster map data products. It has been compiled from a number of OS datasets and includes information from the roads database, which is part of the latest generation of sophisticated and detailed OS geographical data (see <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/products/oslocator/>).
- OS Explorer Map series at 1:25,000 scale

¹⁸ See the webpage <http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/English/services/Pages/Place-Names.aspx> (English) and its counterpart <http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/cymraeg/gwasanaethau/Pages/EnwauLleoedd.aspx> (Welsh).

- OS Landranger Map series at 1:50,000 scale

For a comprehensive listing of paper map products see the OS website at the following page:

<http://leisure.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/leisure/catalogue.jsp?section=10127&JServSessionIdrootordsvywat-sun-25=5qwy7de3z1.pR9yqRnTrQ5O/lbPpwOMbgTJqAfImkTxnlbPqBnzsgTxpMTPoNDJqAfNrBzRmleHqRjI/h8P/AXMn6TvpAbzqRjMrAjT/AbJ/BjFcx4Qch0K>

7.2 Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland

The Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI: <http://www.osni.gov.uk>) is responsible for mapping in Northern Ireland and its products carry standardized geographical names. Relevant OSNI products include

- OSNI pursuit map and navigation guide series at 1:25,000 scale
- OSNI Discoverer Map series at 1:50,000 scale

For a more comprehensive listing of products see the OS website at the following page:

<http://leisure.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/leisure/catalogue.jsp?section=10129&JServSessionIdrootordsvywat-sun-25=5qwy7de3z1.pR9yqRnTrQ5O/lbPpwOMbgTJqAfImkTxnlbPqBnzsgTxpMTPoNDJqAfNrBzRmleHqRjI/h8P/AXMn6TvpAbzqRjMrAjT/AbJ/BjFcx4Qch0K>

7.3 Other major recent source materials

- *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales*, Hywel Wyn Owen & Richard Morgan; Gomer Press, 2007; reprinted with minor corrections 2008; 590pp; ISBN 9781843239017. This very significant publication contains in the region of 2000 entries.
- *Scotland: An Encyclopedia of Places & Landscape*, David Munro & Bruce Gittings; Royal Scottish Geographical Society & HarperCollins, 2006; 520pp plus maps and map index; ISBN 9780004724669: see also <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz>. Comprising over 8000 entries, this important publication is the first comprehensive guide to the toponymy of Scotland for over a century.
- *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*, V Watts (ed); Cambridge University Press, 2004; 778pp; ISBN 9780521362092. This publication contains in the order of 20,000 entries.
- *Oxford Dictionary of British Place Names*, A D Mills; Oxford University Press, 2003; 560pp plus maps; ISBN 9780198527589. This publication contains some 15,000 entries.
- *Gazetteer of British Place Names*, posted online at <http://www.gazetteer.co.uk/index.htm> by the Association of British Counties. This electronic index contains over 50,000 entries.
- *A Key to English Place-Names*, showing the work of the English Place-Name Society and posted online at <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/english/ins/kepn/> by the Institute for Name-Studies.
- *Scottish Place-Name Society / Comann Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba*, see the website of the society at <http://www.spns.org.uk/>.

8 Glossary of appellatives, adjectives and other words relevant to geographical names

8.1 Gaelic glossary

A full glossary of Gaelic appellatives, adjectives and other words relevant to geographical names is too lengthy for inclusion in this document. Instead such a glossary can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following pages:

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicglossary-a-b.html>
<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicglossary-c.html>
<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicglossary-d-f.html>
<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicglossary-g-l.html>
<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicglossary-m-r.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/gaelicglossary-s-u.html>

8.2 Welsh glossary

A full glossary of Welsh appellatives, adjectives and other words relevant to geographical names is too lengthy for inclusion in this document. Instead such a glossary can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following pages:

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/welshglossary-a-b.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/welshglossary-c.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/welshglossary-d-f.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/welshglossary-g-i.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/welshglossary-l-o.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/welshglossary-p-s.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/welshglossary-t-y.html>

8.3 Scots glossary

A full glossary of Scots appellatives, adjectives and other words relevant to geographical names is too lengthy for inclusion in this document. Instead such a glossary can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following pages:

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/scotsglossary-a-d.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/scotsglossary-e-m.html>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freerun/didyouknow/placenames/scotsglossary-n-y.html>

9 Abbreviations encountered in official mapping

A full set of abbreviations encountered in official mapping of Great Britain is too lengthy for inclusion in this document. Instead such a set can be found on the website of the Ordnance Survey at the following page:

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/aboutus/reports/misc/abbreviations.html>

10 Geopolitical Terminology

10.1 Timeline

- By about the 11th century AD England and Scotland had each become a kingdom, each with a geographical extent recognisable today.
- In the period 1535 to 1542 Wales was annexed to the Kingdom of England, and the English monarch also became the ruler of Ireland.
- In 1603 King James VI of Scotland, of the House of Stuart, inherited the English crown and thereby became King James I of England, giving the two kingdoms a single monarch.
- In 1707 an Act of Union signalled a deeper unification of the two kingdoms. The single kingdom was called the *Kingdom of Great Britain*. It was noted in the Act as a “united kingdom” (though the word “united” was not part of the official term) and its people were called “British”.
- In 1801, by a new Act of Union, Ireland was joined to the union to form the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*.
- In 1922 the Irish Free State (later to become *Ireland*) was formed by 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland; as a result the 1801 union title was no longer applicable and since 1927 the union has been termed the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*.

10.2 Definitions

10.2.1 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (usually shortened to **United Kingdom**)

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy consisting of four constituent parts:

- 2 countries: England + Scotland
- 1 principality: Wales
- 1 province: Northern Ireland.

The *abbreviation* is **UK** or **U.K.**; the *code* (according to the ISO 3166 standard of the International Organization for Standardization) is **GB/GBR**. Since 1998, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have possessed a substantial measure of devolved government, by means of a parliament (in Scotland) or an assembly (in Wales & in Northern Ireland¹⁹). Note that the term “Ulster” is not a synonym for Northern Ireland; Ulster is one of four historic provinces of Ireland and has an extent broader than Northern Ireland alone.

10.2.2 Great Britain

Great Britain consists of England + Scotland + Wales. The term is exclusive of Northern Ireland and is therefore not a synonym for the term United Kingdom. Note that the word “Great” is not in any way intended as an indicator of self-styled “greatness”; it simply derives from the French term *Grande-Bretagne* (“Greater Brittany” or “Larger Brittany”), used since mediaeval times to distinguish the British Isles from *Bretagne* (“Brittany”, the region of north-western France).

10.2.3 British

This is the adjectival form of *Britain*, but the word is also frequently employed as the adjectival form of *United Kingdom*; thus “British government” is used at least as frequently as “United Kingdom government”, and “British citizen” is actually the correct official term for a citizen of the United Kingdom. As an adjective, therefore, the term *British* is frequently inclusive of Northern Ireland; it is only the one specific nominal term “Great Britain” which invariably excludes Northern Ireland. The term *British* has been used with something akin to its current meaning since the Act of Union in 1707²⁰, though the origins of the word date back much earlier. A Celtic word *Pritani* or *Priteni* may have denoted the inhabitants as far back as the 6th or 7th century BC, and this word may itself have been based on the 10th century BC Phoenician word *Baratanic* (= “islands of tin”). The form *Britannic*, presumably derived from *Baratanic*, may have been first used by the Greek philosopher Aristotle in 340 BC.

10.2.4 Crown Dependencies

There are 3 Crown Dependencies:

- Guernsey *full form* = Bailiwick of Guernsey
(administratively including Alderney, Brecqhou, Burhou, Herm, Jethou, Lihou, Little Sark, Sark); total population = approximately 62,000
- Jersey *full form* = Bailiwick of Jersey; total population = approximately 90,000
- Isle of Man *no full form*; total population = approximately 80,000

The legal/political status of these three entities dates from the early mediaeval era. They are direct fiefdoms of the Crown, with Her Majesty the Queen as Head of State, but they are not part of Great Britain or the United Kingdom; nor are they part of the European Union. Guernsey (with its associated islands) and Jersey together make up the *Channel Islands*, but this term relates to a geographical feature (the island grouping) and not to any legal/political entity.

11 Population and Area

11.1 England; Scotland; Wales; Northern Ireland

¹⁹ The Northern Ireland assembly was suspended between October 2002 and May 2007.

²⁰ See **Timeline**, Section 10.1; fourth bullet point.

The estimated total population of the United Kingdom in mid-2007 was approximately 60,975,000, inhabiting an area of roughly 95,000 square miles (244,000 square kilometres). These figures break down roughly as follows²¹:

England	51,092,000 inhabitants 51,000 sq ml / 130,000 sq km	(83.8% of total UK population) (53.7% of total UK area)
Scotland	5,144,000 inhabitants 31,000 sq ml / 79,000 sq km	(8.4% of total UK population) (32.6% of total UK area)
Wales	2,980,000 inhabitants 8,000 sq ml / 21,000 sq km	(4.9% of total UK population) (8.4% of total UK area)
Northern Ireland	1,759,000 inhabitants 5,000 sq ml / 14,000 sq km	(2.9% of total UK population) (5.3% of total UK area)

11.2 Cities and Towns

The following list shows the populations of all cities and towns with 150,000 inhabitants or more. The figures are 2009 estimates taken from the website <http://www.world-gazetteer.com> and rounded to the nearest thousand.

01	London	7,683,000
02	Birmingham	946,000
03	Glasgow	579,000
04	Liverpool	455,000
05	Edinburgh	449,000
06	Leeds	441,000
07	Sheffield	418,000
08	Manchester	396,000
09	Bristol	374,000
10	Cardiff	314,000
11	Leicester	295,000
12	Bradford	280,000
13	Coventry	271,000
14	Hull	263,000
15	Belfast	261,000
16	Plymouth	252,000
17	Stoke-on-Trent	248,000
18	Wolverhampton	247,000
19	Derby	245,000
20	Nottingham	238,000
21	Southampton	235,000
22	Portsmouth	202,000
23	Dudley	193,000
24	Luton	188,000
25	Northampton	186,000
26	Swansea	173,000
27	Norwich	172,000
28	Walsall	172,000
29	Sunderland	171,000
30	Newcastle upon Tyne	170,000
31	Aberdeen	167,000
32	Preston	166,000
33	Bournemouth	160,000
34	Swindon	158,000
35	Peterborough	153,000

²¹ The source for these figures is the UK Statistics Authority: see the webpage at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15106>.

36 Southend-on-Sea 150,000

Certain urban agglomerations are much bigger than the cities at their core, as attested by the following set of figures, which are 2009 estimates of urban agglomerations with over 1,000,000 inhabitants, taken from the website <http://www.world-gazetteer.com> and rounded to the nearest thousand.

London	13,220,000
Manchester & Liverpool	5,164,000
Birmingham	3,782,000
Leeds	1,996,000
Glasgow	1,629,000
Newcastle upon Tyne	1,481,000
Sheffield	1,279,000
Portsmouth & Southampton	1,191,000
Nottingham	1,056,000

12 Administrative Divisions

12.1 General Information

The United Kingdom consists of four constituent parts: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Three of these entities – Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – have since 1998 possessed devolved administrative structures²². The degree and level of devolution varies from one entity to another; a deliberate policy designed to reflect the distinctiveness and diversity of these three entities. Note that the process of devolution omits England entirely. There is consequently no common stratum of administrative unit encompassing the United Kingdom at this very high level, and England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should not be considered first-order administrative divisions in the conventional sense.

For a commonality of approach to the administrative structure across the United Kingdom, it is necessary to look below the level of the four major entities, and to consider instead the level of the local authorities. These divisions occur in several nomenclatural guises, but they nevertheless possess a commonality of function. It is this level which makes up the first-order level of administrative division across the United Kingdom. From every administrative point of view, “Alnwick, Northumberland” is far more useful and meaningful than “Alnwick, England”.

There are 229 first-order local authority units in the United Kingdom; they can be summarised as:

- **England:** 115 unitary authorities (which are single-tier authorities, not further sub-divided) + 34 two-tier authorities (usually termed Counties, and sub-divided into Districts)
- **Scotland:** 32 unitary (single-tier) authorities, termed Council Areas
- **Wales:** 22 unitary (single-tier) authorities, termed either County or County Borough
- **Northern Ireland:** 26 unitary (single-tier) authorities, usually termed Districts.

It will be seen that only England has a dual system, with both unitary and two-tier structures. The reason for this approach is that some areas which are small territorially nevertheless include populations of a size sufficiently large to merit their own first-order administration. Examples of this are Manchester and Southampton. But to extract Norwich, for example, from the large but lightly populated county of Norfolk would render that county unviable, so Norwich remains within and at the heart of a two-tier division.

²² See Section 10.2.1.

In the following list of 229 administrative divisions, note that the apparent inconsistency of style across the units²³ does not reflect any editorial error. These “discrepancies” arise because each local authority has the power to choose its own preferred title for itself, and the following list simply reflects that individual choice. There is no coordinating authority at the national level to iron out such “discrepancies”. Note too that administrative units containing the word “City” in their title may be larger in territorial extent than the actual populated places of the same name.

It is not consistently possible to name a single administrative centre for the units since the various agencies of authority (*eg* health, education, etc) of a given unit may be located in separate towns.

Maps of the administrative divisions can be seen on the website of the Ordnance Survey at

- <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freesite/outlinemaps/> where there are download options in portable document format (pdf) at:
- <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/images/userImages/misc/outlinemaps/outlineb.pdf> and also downloadable options in graphics interchange format (gif) at:
- <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/images/userImages/misc/outlinemaps/outlineb.gif>

There are other available options too. On occasion the spellings of administrative divisions in Ordnance Survey sources may differ slightly from the spellings in sources from the Office for National Statistics (ONS: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>). ONS sources provide official administrative names and are used for the spellings in the following lists.

12.2 England

There are 115 unitary authorities (which are single-tier authorities, not further sub-divided) + 34 two-tier authorities (usually termed Counties, and sub-divided into Districts²⁴). Greater London and the six former metropolitan counties (Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands, West Yorkshire) no longer exist as administrative divisions; they have been split as follows:

Greater London → 32 London Boroughs + 1 City Corporation
 6 Metropolitan Counties → 36 Metropolitan Districts

However, the titles of Greater London and the former metropolitan counties are still seen in some contexts, as are the names of the former counties of Middlesex (abolished in 1965) and Berkshire (abolished in 1998), which are still used in postal addresses.

Abbreviations: CC: the definition of this unit is a City Corporation
 LB: the definition of this unit is a London Borough
 MD: the definition of this unit is a Metropolitan District
 TT: the definition of this unit is a County (two-tier structure)
 UA: the definition of this unit is a Unitary Authority

Elements given in **bold type** are compulsory elements of the name.

Barking and Dagenham , London Borough of	LB
Barnet , London Borough of	LB
Barnsley , Borough of	MD
Bath and North East Somerset , District of	UA
Bedfordshire , County of	TT
Bexley , London Borough of	LB
Birmingham , City and Borough of	MD
Blackburn with Darwen , Borough of	UA
Blackpool , Borough of	UA
Bolton , Borough of	MD

²³ *e.g.* Aberdeen City; Birmingham (City of); Bristol, City of.

²⁴ Though the term “District” is also sometimes used to denote a Unitary Authority.

Bournemouth , Borough of	UA
Bracknell Forest , Borough of	UA
Bradford , City and Borough of	MD
Brent , London Borough of	LB
Brighton and Hove , Borough of	UA
Bristol, City of	UA ²⁵
Bromley , London Borough of	LB
Buckinghamshire , County of	TT
Bury , Borough of	MD
Calderdale , Borough of	MD
Cambridgeshire , County of	TT
Camden , London Borough of	LB
Cheshire , County of	TT
Cornwall , County of	TT ²⁶
Coventry , City and Borough of	MD
Croydon , London Borough of	LB
Cumbria , County of	TT
Darlington , Borough of	UA
Derby , City of	UA
Derbyshire , County of	TT
Devon , County of	TT
Doncaster , Borough of	MD
Dorset , County of	TT
Dudley , Borough of	MD
Durham , County	TT ²⁷
Ealing , London Borough of	LB
East Riding of Yorkshire , District of	UA
East Sussex , County of	TT
Enfield , London Borough of	LB
Essex , County of	TT
Gateshead , Borough of	MD
Gloucestershire , County of	TT
Greenwich, London Borough of	LB
Hackney , London Borough of	LB
Halton , Borough of	UA
Hammersmith and Fulham , London Borough of	LB
Hampshire , County of	TT
Haringey , London Borough of	LB
Harrow , London Borough of	LB
Hartlepool , Borough of	UA
Havering , London Borough of	LB
Herefordshire , County of	UA ²⁸
Hertfordshire , County of	TT
Hillingdon , London Borough of	LB
Hounslow , London Borough of	LB
Isle of Wight , County of	UA ²⁹
Islington , London Borough of	LB

²⁵ Strictly speaking, there is no permissible short form for this unit.

²⁶ The Isles of Scilly do not formally constitute part of Cornwall but are instead separately administered by a body known as the Council of the Isles of Scilly. In practice, however, the Isles of Scilly are normally associated within Cornwall; they were not a separate unit in the 1972 Local Government Act and are included within Cornwall by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

²⁷ Note that there is no word “of” in this name.

²⁸ Note that this unit, although termed a “County”, is in fact a Unitary Authority.

²⁹ Note that this unit, although termed a “County”, is in fact a Unitary Authority.

Kensington and Chelsea , Royal London Borough of	LB
Kent , County of	TT
Kingston upon Hull , City of	UA ³⁰
Kingston upon Thames , Royal London Borough of	LB
Kirklees , Borough of	MD
Knowsley , Borough of	MD
Lambeth , London Borough of	LB
Lancashire , County of	TT
Leeds , City and Borough of	MD
Leicester , City of	UA
Leicestershire , County of	TT
Lewisham , London Borough of	LB
Lincolnshire , County of	TT
Liverpool , City and Borough of	MD
London , City of	CC ³¹
Luton , Borough of	UA
Manchester , City and Borough of	MD
Medway , Borough of	UA ³²
Merton , London Borough of	LB
Middlesbrough , Borough of	UA
Milton Keynes , Borough of	UA
Newcastle upon Tyne , City and Borough of	MD
Newham , London Borough of	LB
Norfolk , County of	TT
Northamptonshire , County of	TT
North East Lincolnshire , District of	UA
North Lincolnshire , District of	UA
North Somerset , District of	UA
North Tyneside , Borough of	MD
Northumberland , County of	TT
North Yorkshire , County of	TT
Nottingham , City of	UA
Nottinghamshire , County of	TT
Oldham , Borough of	MD
Oxfordshire , County of	TT
Peterborough , City of	UA
Plymouth , City of	UA
Poole , Borough of	UA
Portsmouth , City of	UA
Reading , Borough of	UA
Redbridge , London Borough of	LB
Redcar and Cleveland , Borough of	UA
Richmond upon Thames , London Borough of	LB
Rochdale , Borough of	MD
Rotherham , Borough of	MD
Rutland , District of	UA
Salford , City and Borough of	MD
Sandwell , Borough of	MD
Sefton , Borough of	MD
Sheffield , City and Borough of	MD
Shropshire , County of	TT

³⁰ Strictly speaking, there is no permissible short form for this unit. The name of the principal town is Hull.

³¹ There is no permissible short form for this unit. Note also that it is uniquely defined as a “City Corporation” and statutorily is not a London Borough.

³² *not* The Medway Towns.

Slough , Borough of	UA
Solihull , Borough of	MD
Somerset , County of	TT
Southampton , City of	UA
Southend-on-Sea , Borough of	UA
South Gloucestershire , District of	UA
South Tyneside , Borough of	MD
Southwark , London Borough of	LB
Staffordshire , County of	TT
St. Helens , Borough of	MD
Stockport , Borough of	MD
Stockton-on-Tees , Borough of	UA
Stoke-on-Trent , City of	UA
Suffolk , County of	TT
Sunderland , City and Borough of	MD
Surrey , County of	TT
Sutton , London Borough of	LB
Swindon , Borough of	UA ³³
Tameside , Borough of	MD
Telford and Wrekin , District of	UA ³⁴
Thurrock , Borough of	UA
Torbay , Borough of	UA
Tower Hamlets , London Borough of	LB
Trafford , Borough of	MD
Wakefield , City and Borough of	MD
Walsall , Borough of	MD
Waltham Forest , London Borough of	LB
Wandsworth , London Borough of	LB
Warrington , Borough of	UA
Warwickshire , County of	TT
West Berkshire , District of	UA ³⁵
Westminster , City and London Borough of	LB
West Sussex , County of	TT
Wigan , Borough of	MD
Wiltshire , County of	TT
Windsor and Maidenhead , Royal Borough of	UA
Wirral , Borough of	MD
Wokingham , Borough of	UA
Wolverhampton , Borough of	MD
Worcestershire , County of	TT
York , City of	UA

12.3 Scotland

There are 32 unitary authorities, termed Council Areas, which are single-tier administrative structures with no sub-divisions. Strictly speaking, none of these units has any official form other than that listed below; *ie* the terms “City” and “City of” are a necessary part of the four names in which they occur.

Aberdeen City
Aberdeenshire
Angus

³³ *not* Thamesdown.

³⁴ *not* The Wrekin.

³⁵ *not* Newbury.

Caerdydd , Dinas a Sir	
Carmarthenshire , County of	C
Gaerfyrddin , Sir	
Ceredigion , County of	C ³⁷
Ceredigion , Sir	
Conwy , County Borough of	CB
Conwy , Bwrdeistref Sirol	
Denbighshire , County of	C
Ddinbych , Sir	
Flintshire , County of	C
Fflint , Sir y	
Gwynedd	C ³⁸
Gwynedd	
Isle of Anglesey	C ³⁹
Ynys Môn , Sir	
Merthyr Tydfil , County Borough of	CB
Merthyr Tudful , Bwrdeistref Sirol	
Monmouthshire , County of	C
Fynwy , Sir	
Neath Port Talbot , County Borough of	CB
Castell-nedd Port Talbot , Bwrdeistref Sirol	
Newport , City of	CB
Casnewydd , Bwrdeistref Sirol	
Pembrokeshire , County of	C
Benfro , Sir	
Powys , County of	C ⁴⁰
Powys , Sir	
Rhondda Cynon Taff , County Borough of	CB
Rhondda Cynon Taf , Bwrdeistref Sirol	
Swansea , City and County of	C
Abertawe , Dinas a Sir	
Torfaen , County Borough of	CB
Tor-faen , Bwrdeistref Sirol	
Vale of Glamorgan , The	CB ⁴¹
Bro Morgannwg	
Wrexham , County Borough of	CB
Wrecsam , Bwrdeistref Sirol	

12.5 Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is divided into 26 unitary (single-tier) authorities, all but two of which are termed Districts. The pre-1973 structure of 6 counties (Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Tyrone) is still frequently encountered but is not part of the current official administrative division structure. Elements given in **bold type** are compulsory elements of the name. Note that the number of Districts is scheduled to be reduced from 26 to 11 at some juncture during the year 2011.

Antrim District

³⁷ The name Ceredigion is used for the administrative unit in English and Welsh. Note that in the Welsh form use of the term “Sir” is not essential. The principal town is named Cardigan in English and Aberteifi in Welsh.

³⁸ No generic term.

³⁹ For the administrative unit, there is no generic term and the name is “Isle of Anglesey” in that sequence of wording.

⁴⁰ Note that in the Welsh form use of the term “Sir” is not essential.

⁴¹ No generic term.

Ards District
Armagh District
Ballymena District
Ballymoney District
Banbridge District
Belfast, City of
Carrickfergus District
Castlereagh District
Coleraine District
Cookstown District
Craigavon District
Derry, City of⁴²
Down District
Dungannon and South Tyrone District⁴³
Fermanagh District
Larne District
Limavady District
Lisburn District
Magherafelt District
Moyle District
Newry and Mourne District
Newtownabbey District
North Down District
Omagh District
Strabane District

⁴² Note that name of the principal town of this administrative unit is properly Londonderry.

⁴³ Formerly Dungannon District.