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Fourth United Nations Conference on the  
Standardization of Geographical Names  
Geneva, 24 August to 14 September 1982  
Items 7 (a) and 9 of the provisional agenda\*

NATIONAL GAZETTEERS

AUTOMATED DATA PROCESSING

Report on National Gazetteers

Paper presented by the United Kingdom

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\* E/CONF.74/1

The United Kingdom national report refers to the 1:50,000 gazetteer of Great Britain. As an aid to map production, and associated with the concept of digitizing the 1:50,000 series for automated production and maintenance, the basis for a 1:50,000 gazetteer was prepared. Much thought was given to the question of updating in the future the names file so created.

In principle the aim was to be able to list, if necessary, in alphabetical order all distinctive names on the 1:50,000 scale maps, with each entry showing:

- the name
- the first-order administrative division
- the feature code (where applicable)
- the 1:50,000 sheet number
- the National Grid reference to the nearest kilometre.

Names were taken from the latest 1:50,000 sheets. In the case of two overlapping sheets, only the names on the later edition were indexed. Administrative division and feature code are entered immediately after the name. A fairly simple feature coding is used:

Hills, etc	H
Forests	F
Water features	W
Towns and cities	T
Roman antiquities	R
Other antiquities	A
Other features	X

A map sheet number is included for each entry except in the case of sheet overlaps, in which case all sheets covering a grid reference are included in the entry. Because only names appearing on the latest editions of the sheets are indexed, names found only on earlier editions of an overlapping sheet are not included. Thus some names on certain sheets are not in the names files. Names of antiquities, of which there are some 5000, are listed separately. A glossary of terms connected with the antiquities complements the names lists.

The total number of names, including antiquities, is about 275,000. Publication was planned for 560 pages of A4 size, excluding all preliminary material and the introduction. Output is possible in the form of magnetic tape, printed form, and possibly also in microfiche.

Information can be provided in the following manner:

- (a) by country: England, Wales, Scotland
- (b) by major administrative division: county, etc.
- (c) by combination of East plus South, East plus West, West plus South, etc.
- (d) by 1:50,000 sheet
- (e) by any feature code or combination of feature codes
- (f) by any rectangular area.

The method of production consisted of:

- (a) inputting the co-ordinates of the map sheet corners into the computer
- (b) printing out each map sheet listing all kilometre grid squares
- (c) collating all names against the kilometre squares listing on the printout, together with the coding for feature and administrative division
- (d) the computer printout listing names, administrative division and feature code against kilometre square for checking and correcting collation and data input
- (e) a computer sort into alphabetical order, thus creating a gazetteer file.

It was originally intended to publish this index-gazetteer in 1981-82, but the publication has been deferred and the gazetteer for the time being will remain as a computer file ready to be published, maintained up to date, but above all available for map production, this being the primary reason for preparing the files. At the moment decisions need to be made on the final format for publication, but it is hoped the gazetteer will reach the public in 1983.

