

## Geography – Background Information – Civil Parishes and Islands

### Civil Parishes

Geography Branch first began plotting postcode boundaries in 1973. In addition to the creation of postcode boundaries, Geography Branch also assigned each postcode to an array of Scottish boundary datasets including civil parish boundaries.

From 1845 to 1930, civil parishes formed part of Scotland's local government system. The parishes, which had their origins in the ecclesiastical parishes of the Church of Scotland, often overlapped the then existing county boundaries, largely because they reflected earlier territorial divisions.

Parishes have had no direct administrative function in Scotland since 1930. In 1930, all parishes were grouped into elected district councils. These districts were abolished in 1975, and the new local authorities established in that year often cut across civil parish boundaries. In 1996, there was a further re-organisation of Scottish local government, and a number of civil parishes now lie in two or more council areas. There are 871 civil parishes in Scotland.

The civil parish boundary dataset is the responsibility of Geography Branch. The initial version of the boundaries was first created in the mid-1960s. The boundaries were plotted on to Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 maps using the written descriptions of the parishes.

In the late 1980s Geography Branch introduced a Geographic Information System (called 'GenaMap') to its working practices. At this point the manually-plotted civil parish boundaries were digitised using the GenaMap system.

In 2006, GenaMap was replaced by ESRI's ArcGIS product, and the civil parish boundaries were migrated to the new system. At this stage, the Ordnance Survey digital product MasterMap was made available as the background map for Geography Branch's digitising requirements.

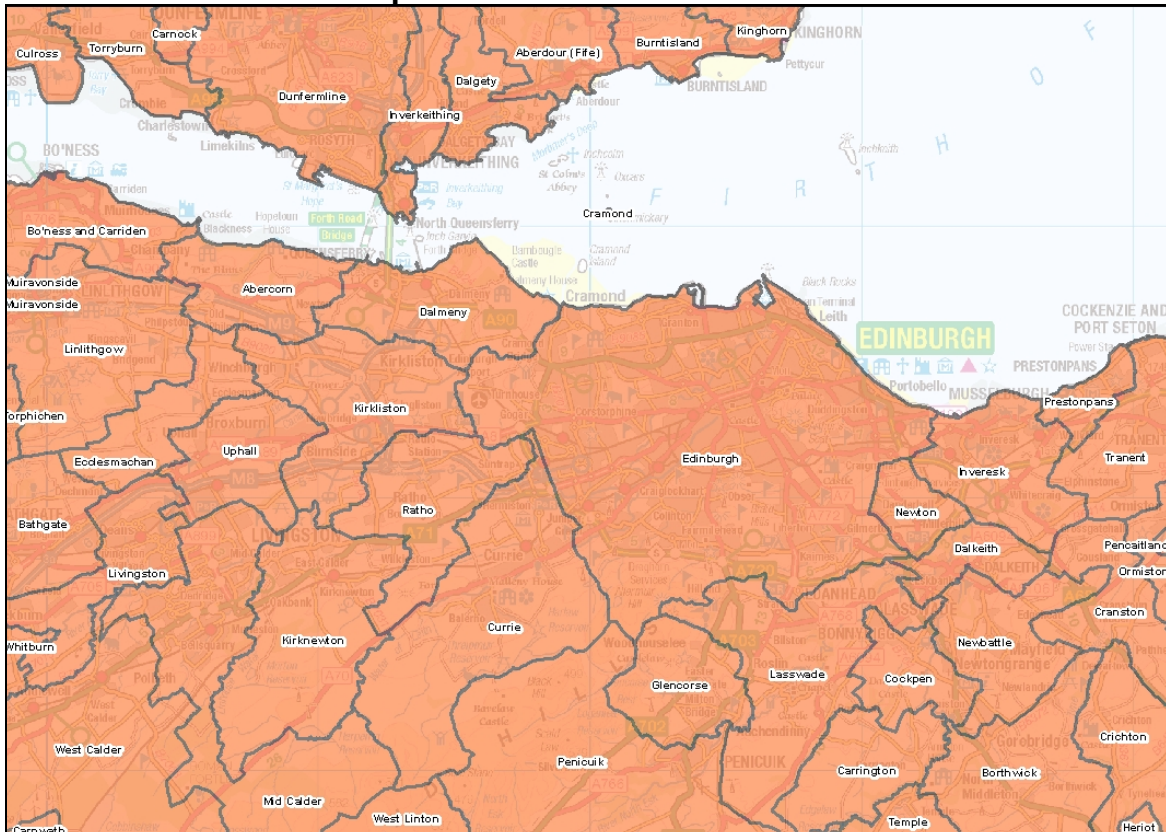
In March-April 2009 many of the coastal postcodes were edited to improve their alignment with MasterMap's coastal detail.

After improving the coastal postcode alignment there was a requirement to check that all the individual postcode Gridlink points fell within the extent of the civil parish boundaries. It was discovered that some of the points were outside the limits of the some of the coastal parishes.

This version of the civil parish boundaries was edited (some coastal postcodes only) in May 2009 to ensure that all postcodes' Gridlink points would fall within the limits of the civil parish boundaries.

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### Extract of Civil Parish map



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In terms of provenance, the vast majority of the civil parish boundaries date back to the mid-1960s with their original drawing onto OS 1:10,000 maps.

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### Islands

The geography of Scotland comprises the mainland plus many islands. Some of these islands are inhabited and through time their inhabited/uninhabited status can change.

The prime reason for identifying inhabited islands was to aid the delivery and collection of Census questionnaires.

If an island is inhabited, then Royal Mail will allocate postcodes to the island's addresses. Many of the larger islands, with relatively large populations, will have postcodes that cover only the island. However, some of the smaller inhabited islands have very few households and in some cases the postcode for these island addresses is the same as that of some households on the mainland or another island. In order to ensure that Census questionnaires are collected and delivered correctly, it is important that both parts of the postcode (the island addresses and the mainland addresses) are contained within the same Census Enumeration District. The identification of inhabited islands helps with the creation of meaningful Census Enumeration Districts.

In addition to the enumeration aspect of the census, there has always been an interest in the statistics associated with Scotland's inhabited islands and this dataset helps ensure that they are all identified.

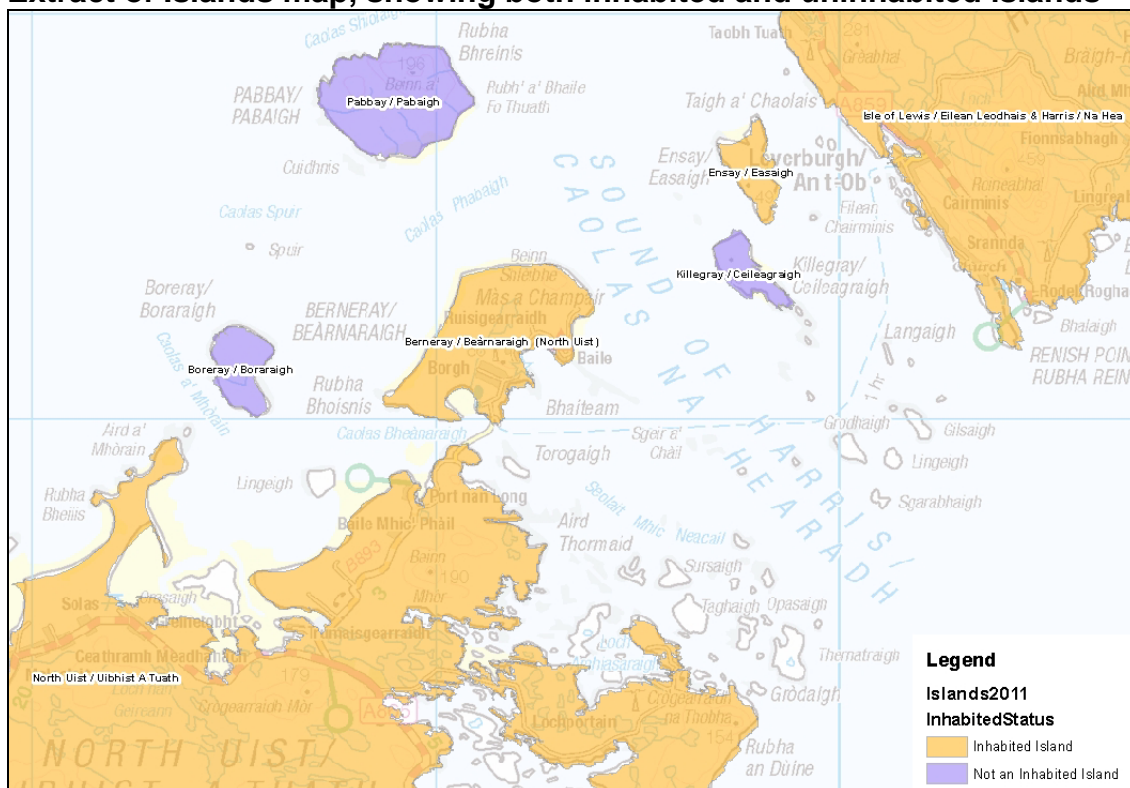
This 'Island' dataset was not rigorously maintained in the period between 2010 and 2012 and in January 2013 the dataset was re-established with the following revisions:

- 1) The dataset now only contains islands that are currently inhabited or have been inhabited in the past. All islands that have never been inhabited have been removed from the dataset. The inhabited status of the islands has been updated to agree with the postcodes as at January 2011.
- 2) The island outlines now agree with the detail of OS BoundaryLine.
  - The Bell Rock has been placed in the correct location using 250K raster as the source.
  - Dubh Artach has been placed in the correct location using 250K raster as the source.
- 3) There are now 159 islands in the dataset, whereas previously there were 160. The reason for the decrease of one, is that an area of land between the island of Inchbraoch (also known as Rossie), near Montrose and the mainland was reclaimed and as a result the area of Inchbraoch is now considered part of the mainland.
- 4) The islands have been named to agree with the Ordnance Survey mapping backgrounds. Where there are islands with the same name, a separate identifier has been added to help distinguish between them - for example, there are 2 islands in the Outer Hebrides called Grimsay: to help define them a 'North' and 'South' have been added..

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- 5) On the previous version of the dataset, an island was incorrectly identified as 'Flannan'. In this version the island has been correctly named as 'Eilean Mor (Flannen Islands)'.
  
- 6) There has been a slight change to one of the existing codes. On the previous version of the dataset, code 015 referred to 'Bound Skerry (and Grunay)' and code 260 referred to 'Grunay'. After investigation it was established that the relevant postcode applied only to 'Grunay'. It was also established that 'Bound Skerry' has never been inhabited and has therefore been deleted from the dataset. In this current version of the dataset, the code 015 has been allocated to 'Grunay' only.

### Extract of Islands map, showing both inhabited and uninhabited islands



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