

The National Grid as a Reference System and Map Index

The Reference System

Ordnance Survey maps are published with grid lines which divide them into squares. The main grid lines used for reference purposes are 100 kilometres apart and the squares they form are identified by the letters shown in the diagram below. These squares are further sub-divided on the maps by grid lines at 10 kilometre, 1 kilometre or smaller intervals depending on the scale. The grid lines are numbered on all Ordnance Survey maps and provide a single reference system for the whole of Great Britain.

A footnote on this one-inch map explains how to give a grid reference correct to 100 metres.

Use of Grid as Map Index

The grid on the one-inch maps can be used as an index to the 1/25000 National Grid Series. Most of these maps are at present published in the Provisional Series which covers the whole of Great Britain except for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. They are, however, gradually being replaced by the new Second Series which is based on modern surveys and will eventually cover the whole country. The sheets in the Provisional Series are delineated on the one-inch maps by the accented 10 kilometre grid lines and are numbered in accordance with the National Grid reference of the south-west corner of the 10 kilometre square. The example below shows how the sheet numbers are determined.

Example 1/25000 sheet TQ 17 (shown on One-inch sheet 170)

TQ Grid letters from box at foot of One-inch sheet 170 or diagram below.

1 First figure of grid line 10 shown in the north or south margin of map.

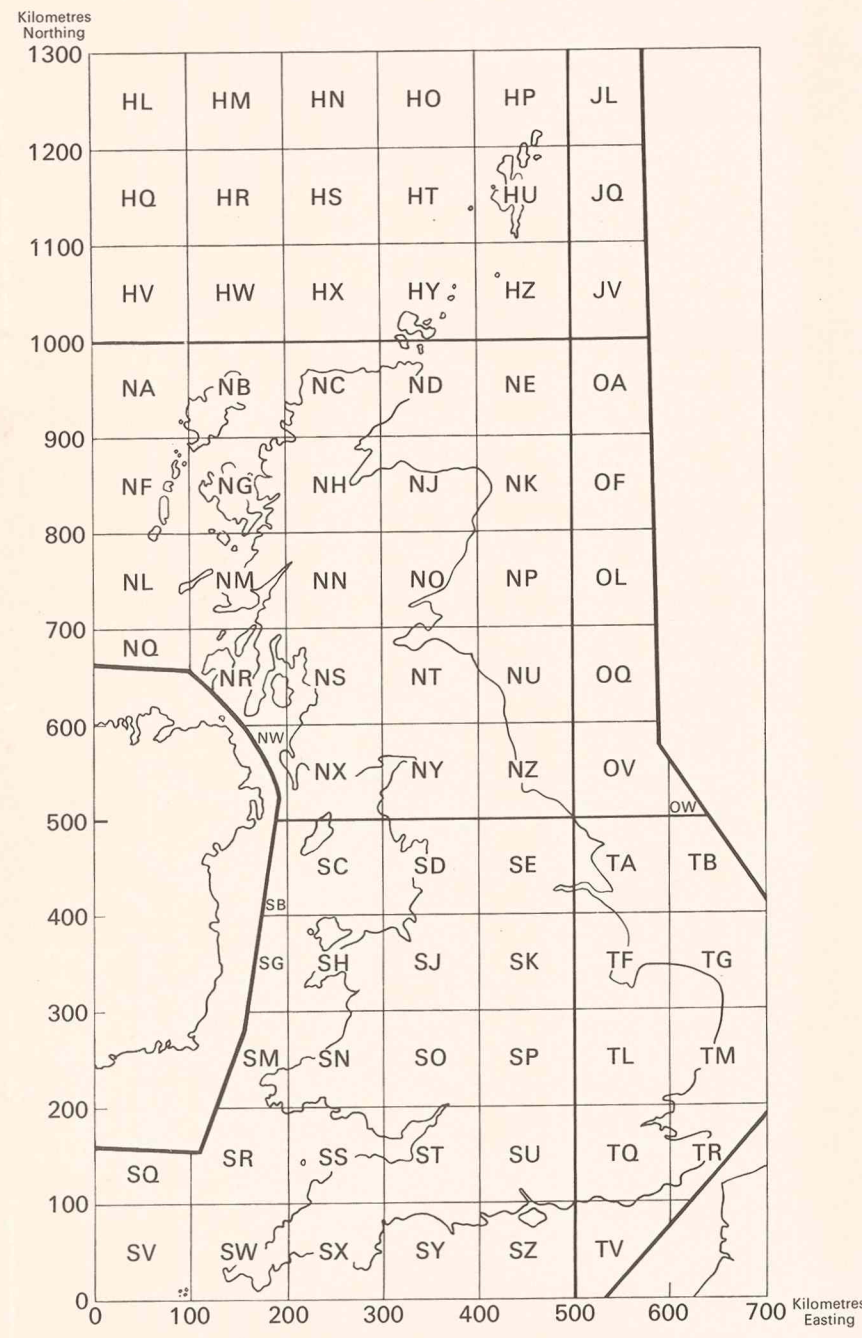
7 First figure of grid line 70 shown in the east or west margin of map.

Most sheets in the new Second Series cover an area 20 kilometres east to west and 10 kilometres north to south but there are variations along the coast. The sheet numbers are determined as described above but as each sheet covers twice the area of a Provisional Series sheet, the numbers of both 10 kilometre squares covering the map must be quoted e.g. TQ 07/17. Sheets in this series are paired in such a way that the first figure of the sheet number is usually an even one e.g. TQ 20/30, SP 03/10 etc.

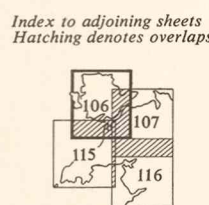
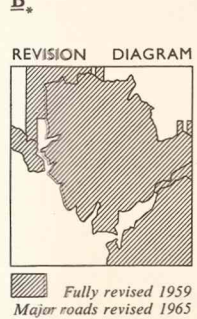
An index showing the sheets published in the Second Series will be sent on request to The Director General, Ordnance Survey, Romsey Road, Maybush, Southampton SO9 4DH.

The National Grid and Reference system is explained in a booklet entitled 'An Introduction to the Projection for Ordnance Survey Maps and the National Reference System' obtainable from H.M. Stationery Office, 49 High Holborn, W.C.1, other Government Bookshops or through any bookseller.

Diagram showing 100 km. squares and the letters used to designate them



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Contours in lakes are given in fathoms and are taken from the soundings of Admiralty surveys

Difference from Grid North	
(1) True North	2° 10' E N W Corner
(2) 1° 41' E N E	2° 08' E S W
(3) 1° 39' E S E	

decreasing by about 1" in six years

