Historic County Boundaries

*The historic counties dataset has been produced by Ordnance Survey in collaboration with the Department of Communities and Local Government and represents those counties based on historic records /mapping circa 1888 and using the primary sources of the Local Government (England and Wales) Act 1888, the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1889 and the Sheriffs Act 1887.*

The historic counties dataset shows the county boundaries in place in 1888 in England and Wales and those established a year later in Scotland. The alignments of the counties for England and Wales are derived from mapping sourced from the National Archives and dating from 1890. The most recent available mapping dates for Scotland are from 1940.

The content of the relevant legislation is outlined below.

**Sheriffs Act 1887**

This Act consolidated the Law relating to the office of the Sheriff in England, including their appointment and functions and repealed certain enactments, relating to Sheriffs which ceased to be in force or have become unnecessary. It defined counties for such purposes.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES) ACT 1888: 51 & 52 Vict C41** (as enacted)

*This Act is generally known as the Local Government Act 1888.*

This Act changed the style of local governance in England and Wales and created elected county councils to take over the administrative functions of the magistrates of the Quarter Sessions courts, that ten large cities should be "counties of themselves" for the purposes of local government and that each county was to be divided into urban and rural districts, based on existing sanitary districts governed by a district council.

List of counties and county boroughs created in 1889

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ENGLAND** |  |  |
| Historic county | Administrative county | County boroughs |
| Bedfordshire | Bedfordshire |   |
| Berkshire | Berkshire | Reading |
| Buckinghamshire | Buckinghamshire |   |
| Cambridgeshire | Cambridgeshire |   |
|   | Isle of Ely |   |
| Cheshire | Cheshire | Birkenhead, Chester, Stockport (part) |
| Cornwall | Cornwall |   |
| Cumberland | Cumberland | Carlisle |
| Derbyshire | Derbyshire | Derby |
| Devon | Devon | Devonport, Exeter, Plymouth |
| Dorset | Dorset |   |
| Durham | Durham | Gateshead, South Shields, Sunderland |
| Essex | Essex | West Ham |
| Gloucestershire | Gloucestershire | Bristol (part), Gloucester |
| Hampshire | Hampshire † | Portsmouth, Southampton |
| Herefordshire | Herefordshire |   |
| Hertfordshire | Hertfordshire |   |
| Huntingdonshire | Huntingdonshire |   |
| Kent | Kent | Canterbury |
| Lancashire | Lancashire | Barrow, Blackburn, Bolton, Bootle cum Linacre, Burnley, Bury, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Preston, Rochdale, St Helens, Salford, Stockport (part), Wigan |
| Leicestershire | Leicestershire | Leicester |
| Lincolnshire | Lincolnshire, Parts of Holland |   |
|   | Lincolnshire, Parts of Kesteven |   |
|   | Lincolnshire, Parts of Lindsey | Lincoln |
| London | London | City of London: remained a separate county, but returned members to the London County Council, which exercised some powers within the City. |
| Middlesex | Middlesex |   |
| Monmouthshire | Monmouthshire | Newport‡ |
| Norfolk | Norfolk | Norwich, Great Yarmouth (part) |
| Northamptonshire | Northamptonshire | Northampton |
|   | Soke of Peterborough |   |
| Northumberland | Northumberland | Newcastle upon Tyne |
| Nottinghamshire | Nottinghamshire | Nottingham |
| Oxfordshire | Oxfordshire | Oxford |
| Rutland | Rutland |   |
| Shropshire | Shropshire |   |
| Somerset | Somerset | Bath, Bristol (part) |
| Staffordshire | Staffordshire | Hanley, Walsall, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton |
| Suffolk | East Suffolk | Ipswich, Great Yarmouth (part) |
|   | West Suffolk |   |
| Surrey | Surrey | Croydon |
| Sussex | East Sussex | Brighton, Hastings |
|   | West Sussex |   |
| Warwickshire | Warwickshire | Birmingham, Coventry |
| Westmorland | Westmorland |   |
| Wiltshire | Wiltshire |   |
| Worcestershire | Worcestershire | Dudley, Worcester |
| Yorkshire | Yorkshire, East Riding | Kingston-upon-Hull, York (part) |
|   | Yorkshire, North Riding | Middlesbrough, York (part) |
|   | Yorkshire, West Riding | Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds, Sheffield, York (part) |
|  |  |  |
| *† From 1 April 1890 the Isle of Wight was separated from the County of Hampshire to form an Administrative County.*  |
| *‡ Newport became a county borough in 1891* |  |

|  |  |  |
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| **WALES** |  |  |
| Geographic county | Administrative county | County boroughs |
| Anglesey | Anglesey |   |
| Brecknockshire | Brecknockshire |   |
| Carnarvonshire | Carnarvonshire |   |
| Cardiganshire | Cardiganshire |   |
| Carmarthenshire | Carmarthenshire |   |
| Denbighshire | Denbighshire |   |
| Flintshire | Flintshire |   |
| Glamorgan | Glamorgan | Cardiff, Swansea |
| Merioneth | Merioneth |   |
| Montgomeryshire | Montgomeryshire |   |
| Pembrokeshire | Pembrokeshire |   |
| Radnorshire | Radnorshire |   |

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1889: 52 & 53 Vict C50** (as enacted)

The Act provided that a county council should be established in each county, consisting of elected councillors. The county was to be divided into electoral divisions, made up of groupings of parishes, each returning one councillor. In addition police burghs in the county were also regarded as electoral divisions, though the councillors for these areas were co-opted by the members of the burgh's town council.

The chairman of each county council, elected by the members, was given the title “Convenor of the county”.

List of counties created in 1890

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| **SCOTLAND**  |
|  |
| Administrative county 1890 |
| Caithness |
| Sutherland |
| Ross and Cromarty |
| Inverness-shire |
| Nairnshire |
| County of Moray (also known as Elginshire until 1918) |
| Banffshire |
| Aberdeenshire |
| Kincardineshire |
| Angus (Forfarshire until 1928) |
| Perthshire |
| Argyll |
| County of Bute |
| Ayrshire |
| Renfrewshire |
| Dunbartonshire |
| Stirlingshire |
| Clackmannanshire |
| Kinross-shire |
| Fife |
| East Lothian (Haddingtonshire until 1921) |
| Midlothian (County of Edinburgh until 1890) |
| West Lothian (Linlithgowshire until 1924) |
| Lanarkshire |
| Peeblesshire |
| Selkirkshire |
| Berwickshire |
| Roxburghshire |
| Dumfriesshire |
| Kirkcudbrightshire |
| Wigtownshire |
| Zetland (Shetland) |
| Orkney |