

# London postal district

Post town

The London postal district is the area in England of 241 square miles (625 km<sup>2</sup>)

The General Post Office under the control of the Postmaster General directed Sir Rowland Hill to devise the area in 1856 and throughout its history it has been subject to reorganisation and division into increasingly smaller postal units, with the early loss of two compass points and a minor retraction in 1866. It was integrated by the Post Office into the national postcode system of the United Kingdom during the early 1970s and corresponds to the E, EC, N, NW, SE, SW, W and WC postcode areas. The postal district has also been known as the London postal area. The County of London was much smaller, at 117 square miles (300 km<sup>2</sup>), but Greater London is much larger at 607 square miles (1,570 km<sup>2</sup>).

History [ edit ]

Origins [ edit ]

Map of the original London postal district in 1857

The Post Office in St. Martin's Le Grand

By the 1850s, the rapid growth of the metropolitan area meant it became too large to operate efficiently as a single post town.[1] A Post Office inquiry into the problem had been set up in 1837 and a House of Commons committee was initiated in 1843.[2] In 1854 Charles Canning, the Postmaster General, set up a committee at the Post Office in St. Martin's Le Grand to investigate how London could best be divided for the purposes of directing mail. In 1856, of the 470 million items of mail sent in the United Kingdom during the year, approximately one fifth (100 million) were for delivery in London and half of these (50 million items) also originated there.[2]

The General Post Office under the control of the Postmaster General devised the area in 1856. Sir Rowland Hill[3] produced an almost perfectly circular area of 12 miles (19 km) radius from the central post office at St. Martin's Le Grand in central London.[3] As originally devised, it extended from Waltham Cross in the north to Carshalton in the south and from Romford in the east to Sunbury in the west six counties at the time if including the City of London.[2] Within the district it was divided into two central areas and eight compass points which operated much like separate post towns. Each was named "London" with a suffix (EC, W)

Each had a separate head office.[3] The system was introduced during 1857[1] and completed on 1 January 1858 [4]

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