

5. THE LAKE DISTRICT: OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

- 5.1 The assessment of significance in Section 4 confirms that there is a substantial case for the outstanding and international significance of the Lake District in each of the themes that have been examined. They all show clusters of national and international importance that together combine to make a strong case for its universal value. In terms of the definition provided in the UNESCO *Operational Guidelines*, the Lake District is an outstanding example of a cultural landscape that represents 'the combined works of nature and man' and illustrates 'the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by [its] natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal' (UNESCO 1999).
- 5.2 A monument or landscape nominated for inclusion as a cultural property in the World Heritage List is judged to be of outstanding universal value for the purposes of the Convention when it meets one or more of the criteria set out in the *Operational Guidelines* and the test of authenticity (UNESCO 1999, 6). The Lake District can be appropriately considered under three of the criteria for cultural properties, as indicated below. The relevant assessment themes are given in parenthesis.
- Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design (themes 3 & 4);*
- Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared (themes 2, 3 & 4);*
- Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (theme 4).*
- 5.3 The strongest case is clearly for the first two of these criteria. The third is less clear cut. It should be born in mind that, although other European cultural landscapes with literary and artistic associations have been successfully proposed for inscription (such as the Loire Valley and Upper Middle Rhine most recently), either they have not used criterion vi. or they have not been accepted for inscription under that criterion. The Lake District's outstanding significance in this area could be considered as satisfactorily accommodated under criterion iii. in terms of the 'interchange of human values'.
- 5.4 In terms of cultural landscape, two of the categories (UNESCO 1999, 9) are clearly relevant for the Lake District:
- *Category (ii): the organically evolved landscape...results from an initial social, economic, administrative and / or religious imperative and has developed its present form by association with and in response*

to its natural environment... A continuing landscape is one that retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and which the evolutionary process is still in progress. At the same time it exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution over time (themes 2 and 3);

- *Category (iii): the associative landscape. The inclusion of such landscapes on the World Heritage List is justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than the material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent (theme 4).*

5.5 In terms of the natural value of the landscape, IUCN will be concerned principally in their assessment with the following criteria (IUCN 2001):

1. Conservation of natural and semi natural ecosystems, and of wild species of fauna and flora and in particular whether the cultural landscape is an outstanding example of how traditional land use patterns can contribute to protecting ecosystems, species and genetic diversity and creating habitats of importance to biodiversity (partly evidenced in theme 1);

2. Conservation of biodiversity within farming systems and in particular whether the cultural landscape is an outstanding example of how traditional farm systems can e.g. develop / conserve a wide range of varieties of domesticated livestock or of cultivated crops (not evidenced outstandingly in current practice);

3. Sustainable land use and in particular whether the land use practices are an outstanding example of

- *how to respect the productive capability of land,*
- *conserve quality and quantity of soil,*
- *manage and safeguard water quality*
- *manage streams and rivers to reduce damaging floods and runoff*
- *maintain plant cover*
- *restore vegetation, soils and sources of water*

(not strongly evidenced in current practices);

4. Enhancement of scenic beauty, that is whether the cultural landscape has outstanding scenic qualities deriving as much from the contrast and/or interaction between the works of nature and humanity as from the intrinsic quality of the natural features themselves (themes 1 & 2).

5.6 The Lake District's significance is weakest in terms of the first three of the IUCN evaluation criteria. However, IUCN will also be 'looking for evidence that the integrity of the site is well protected and that there are effective management policies in place that can retain or restore the essential qualities if the cultural landscape'. There is scope therefore to strengthen the position in this area by demonstrating that the mechanisms have been put in place, or are being developed, to protect and restore the habitats and biodiversity that have characterised the historic cultural landscape where these have become vulnerable to modern land use practices. The comments made by IUCN on the earlier submission (see

above 1.9) will also be a consideration when they revisit the proposal.

- 5.7** The development of indicators can assist in managing change and monitoring the quality of natural and cultural aspects of key significances. This will play an important role in developing management policies to meet the IUCN requirements and the general requirement for protection and management mechanisms for cultural properties (UNESCO 1999, 6-7). This is discussed further in the next section.

Castlerrigg Stone Circle

