

Press release: UK puts forward Jodrell Bank Observatory as 2019 World Heritage nomination

Jodrell Bank Observatory has been chosen as the UK's nomination for World Heritage site status in 2019, Heritage Minister Michael Ellis announced today.

The Observatory, part of the University of Manchester, is home to the Grade I Listed Lovell Telescope and is a site of global importance in the history of radio astronomy.

Founded in 1945, it is the earliest radio astronomy observatory in the world still in existence and pioneered the exploration of the universe using radio waves.

The UK currently has 31 World Heritage Sites, with The Lake District having been inscribed in 2017.

In order to be inscribed as a World Heritage Site, nominations must show that they possess Outstanding Universal Value, which transcends borders.

The nomination will now be formally assessed by the International Council of Sites and Monuments before the World Heritage Committee decides whether it will join the likes of The Great Barrier Reef, the Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China as a designated World Heritage Site.

Jodrell Bank is the only site in the world that includes evidence of every stage of the post-1945 development of radio astronomy. As well as the Lovell Telescope, it also includes the Grade I Listed Mark II Telescope and the Park Royal building, which was the control room for the Transit Telescope, whose detection of radio waves from the Andromeda Galaxy confirmed that the Universe extends beyond our own galaxy.

Michael Ellis, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, said:

"Jodrell Bank played a central role in transforming our understanding of the Universe and is therefore a site of global importance.

"The nomination process for UNESCO is rightly thorough but I believe Jodrell Bank deserves to be recognised.

"The diverse heritage of the UK is world renowned and the observatory would be a worthy addition to our list of World Heritage Sites."

Professor Teresa Anderson, Director of Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre said:

"The Jodrell Bank Observatory, and Lovell Telescope in particular, have become icons of science and engineering around the world and we're delighted

to reach this milestone. We have been preparing the case for nomination for inclusion of Jodrell Bank on the World Heritage list for several years now and we look forward to showcasing its rich scientific heritage on the international stage.”

Professor Tim O’Brien, Associate Director of the Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics, said:

“Jodrell Bank really is an iconic site and institution, not just here in the northwest of England but to people around the world.

“It is the one remaining site, worldwide which has been a working observatory from the very first days of radio astronomy to the present day. It’s important that we protect its rich heritage as we celebrate its current and future work.”

Last year the Government announced it will award £4 million to Jodrell Bank to help fund its new interpretation centre project, promoting the historically significant scientific work.