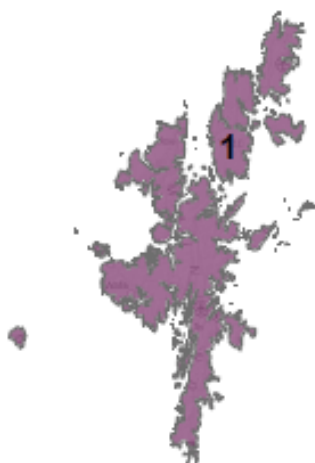


Descriptions 1 - 10			
1	Shetland and Fair Isle	2	Orkney
3	Lewis	4	North Coast
5	Caithness	6	Assynt
7	Sutherland	8	Flow Country
9	Sutherland Kyles and Coast	10	Harris

## 1 Shetland



### Description

An elongated group of islands, whose character is accentuated by the north-south trend of the hills and ridges. The dramatic coastlines are highly varied, with fjords, arches, stacks, beaches and tombolos (sand bars). The seas are busy with boat and ferry traffic. The coast is where most of the settlement is located, including the distinctive capital of Lerwick with its narrow stone-flagged streets. The islands are mostly tree-less while seabirds throng the coasts and cliffs. Frequent winds sweep over landscapes with long hours of summer light and winter darkness, and a strong sense of Nordic culture. The landscape is rich in exceptionally well preserved archaeological remains. This includes a high proportion of nationally important sites, such as, at Mousa, the best preserved broch in Scotland, and extensive Norse remains in Unst

### Key technical information sources:

LCA: Shetland Isles

NHF – Shetland 2002 (1)

HLA

Naismith – *Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp 204-206

### Selected creative associations

#### Music

St Ninian's Isle (Aly Bain);

Foula, Papa Stour (Boys of the Lough)

## 2 Orkney



### Description

A group of diverse islands centred around a larger “mainland”. The southern islands encompass the renowned anchorage of Scapa Flow. Most of the land is low-lying, with fertile green farmland, sandy beaches and rocky headlands. Hoy, with its high moorland hills and towering cliffs, provides a strong contrast. Orkney is famed for its outstanding archaeological and historical interest, ranging from Stone Age to Second World War remains. Skara Brae, Maes Howe and the Ring of Brodgar are all dramatically sited in the Mainland landscape. More recent settlement is characterised by dispersed crofting settlements, farms and mill complexes. The remains of WWII infrastructure throughout the islands reflect their war-time strategic significance. The main towns of Kirkwall and Stromness are small, neat, and memorable, characterised by narrow streets with distinctive civic, residential and ecclesiastic architecture.

### Key technical information sources:

LCA: Orkney Islands

NHF: Orkney & North Caithness (2)

HLA – Orkney

Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp 204-206

### Selected creative associations

#### Poetry

Orkney Lyrics (Ian Hamilton Finlay)

Orkney / This Life (Andrew Greig)

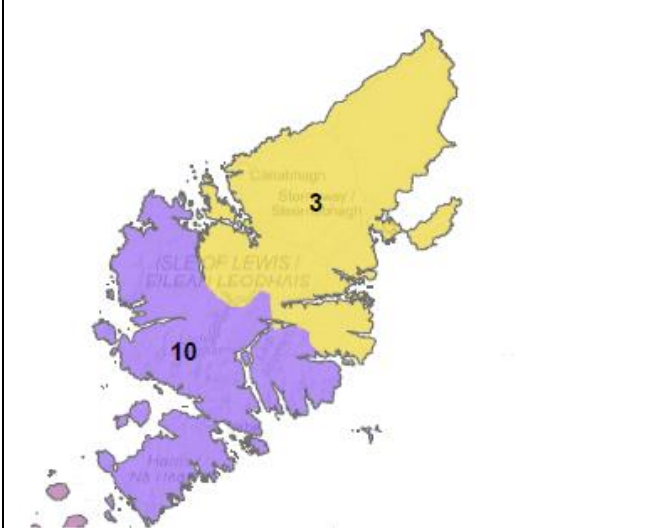
#### Novels / writings

The Orkneyinga Saga (traditional)

Greenvoe (George Mackay Brown)

Magnus Merrimar (Eric Linklater)

## 3 Lewis



### Description

Extensive peatlands stretch across the horizon under wide, constantly changing skies. Water is inescapable, in the scatter of lochans and burns across the peatlands, or the sea lochs, cliffs and sandy bays and machair of the coastline. The sense of history is strong here. Important surviving examples of the past include the outstanding blackhouse at Arnol and the township at Garein, and the extraordinary Later Neolithic ceremonial complex centred on the Callanish Stones, built of great slabs of Lewisian gneiss. The experience of landscape is also influenced by the Gaelic language. Stornoway, with its bustling harbour and narrow streets, is the only town in the Western Isles. Traditional settlements are mostly on the coast, reflecting the importance of the sea in people's lives. Elsewhere, dispersed steadings and crofting townships huddle defensively from the unforgiving environment within the shelter offered by landform.

### Key technical information sources

LCA: Western Isles

NHF: Coll, Tiree and the Western Isles (3)

HLA:

Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp204-206

### Selected creative associations

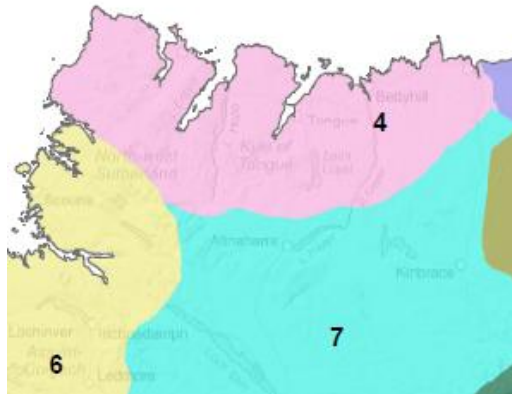
#### Music

The Stones of Callanish (Les Barker), folk / traditional

#### Paintings

The Great Stones of Callanish (Sir George Harvey)

## 4 North Coast



### Description

At the northern edge of the UK mainland, this coastline is characterised by the striking views across both land and open sea. A number of distinctive mountains form the backcloth to this area, which is characterised by a rhythmic pattern of low-lying straths, glens, lochs and bays that penetrate the more elevated, wide open expanses of peatland. Within these sheltered areas, small distinctive crofting and harbour settlements create isolated pockets of contrasting colour and pattern and a focus for activity. To the keen eye, the remains of prehistoric settlement can be seen in the landscape, from ancient field boundaries to hut circles and brochs.

### Key technical information sources

LCA: Caithness and Sutherland

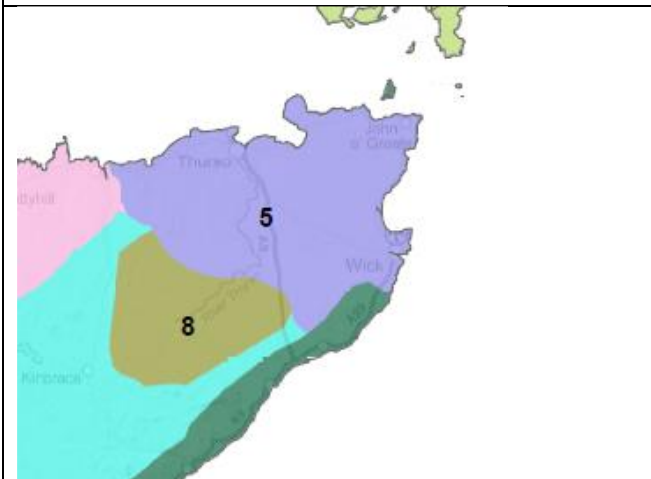
NHF: North West Seaboard (4), The Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland (5)

HLA: XX

Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp195-200,  
200-203

### Selected creative associations

## 5 Caithness



### Description

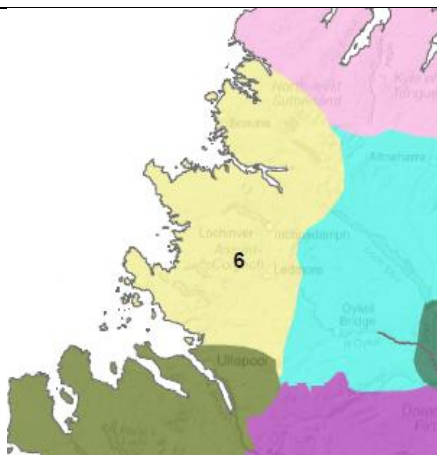
A wide open landscape of gently rolling pastures with flagstone field boundaries and occasional pockets of bog and wood. There are extensive views inland to distant hills, in which the sky is often dominant. The coastal towns of Wick and Thurso encircle sheltered bays, while scattered farms and small villages are linked by a network of small roads. Chambered cairns and Iron Age brochs bear witness to the attraction of this area to prehistoric people. The more recent remains on the coast of large scale farms and mills in indicate the progressive approach to agricultural improvement here in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, linked to overseas trade. Dounreay nuclear power station forms a prominent landmark. The rocky coast includes impressive cliffs that mark the most northern tip of mainland Scotland.

### Key technical information sources

LCA: Caithness and Sutherland  
 NHF: Orkney and Northern Caithness (2)  
 HLA: XX  
 Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp 200-203

### Selected creative associations

## 6 Assynt



### Description

A distinctive mountainous area, characterised by isolated peaks that rise steeply from the moorland and bounded by larger grey mountain masses to the east. The 'cnoc and lochan' moorland consists of a jumble of rocky heather knolls, rough grassland and lochans, hiding small pockets of woodland. To the west, the coastline is varied, with small bays and sandy beaches, hidden amongst rocky cliffs and headlands, and many small islands and skerries lying just offshore. Crannogs are visible on the lochs, chambered cairns are scattered along the straths and the remains of sheilings are visible on several slopes. Assynt is sparsely populated, with the small village of Lochinver and dispersed crofting townships on the coast. A few, mostly single-track roads windingly connect these settlements.

### Key technical information sources

LCA: Caithness and Sutherland

NHF: North West Seaboard (4)

HLA: XX

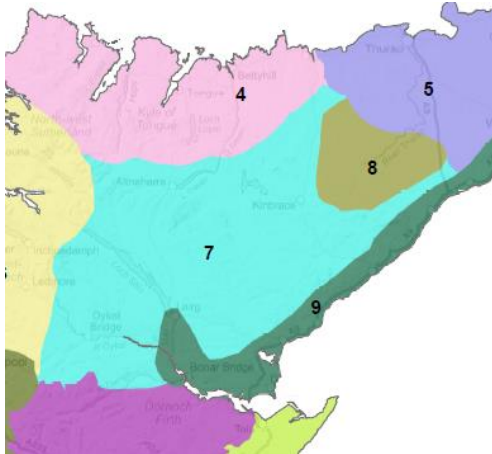
Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp 195-200

### Selected creative associations

#### Poetry

A Man in Assynt (Norman MacCaig)

## 7 Sutherland



### Description

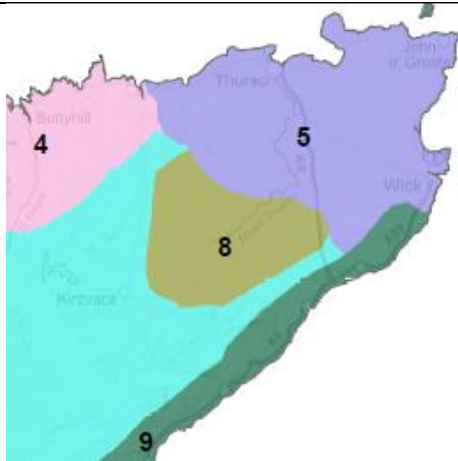
Extensive open peatlands and hills give this area a sense of immense space and remoteness. Meandering straths inject brighter vegetation and contain some prominent farm and estate buildings. The remains of prehistoric settlement are present across the area, from ancient field boundaries to hut circles and brochs. Ruins of more recent settlements provide a reminder of the clearances. A distinctive regional architecture is found in the wide array of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings on the Sutherland Estates. A sparse network of mainly single-track roads offers panoramic views as they cross the peatlands. Some extensive forestry plantations and hydro-electric reservoirs, dams and power lines tend to be very prominent in this landscape.

### Key technical information sources

LCA: Caithness and Sutherland  
 NHF: The Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland (5)  
 HLA: XX  
 Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp 188-191,  
 195-200

### Selected creative associations

## 8 Flow Country



### Description

This extensive area of low-lying peatland stretches as far as the eye can see, interrupted only by the occasional forestry plantation and views to a series of isolated mountains and distant wind farms. The simple composition of rough vegetation and lochans tends to belie the diverse sounds, patterns and colours of the peatlands. Big and often fast-changing skies move overhead, strongly influencing the experience of the area. With roads only at the margins making access difficult, and the visible remains of past human activity limited, the interior of this area has a strong sense of solitude and wildness.

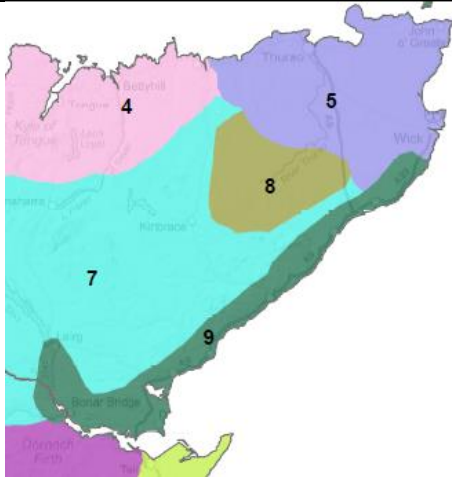
### Key technical information sources

LCA: Caithness and Sutherland  
 NHF: The Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland (5)  
 HLA: XX  
 Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp 200-203

### Selected creative associations



## 9 Sutherland Kyles and Coast



### Description

A well-populated coastline, comprising with scattered crofts and small villages amongst small fields and woods, bounded to the west by steeply rising moorland hills. The Dornoch Firth and Kyle of Sutherland penetrate deep into the hills of Ross and Sutherland, carrying a maritime influence far from the open sea. Structures from Iron Age brochs and souterrains to early modern townships are evident in the landscape, though today settlement is mainly confined to the narrow shelf where rivers meet the sea. The string of fine coastal villages and harbours includes Dornoch with its 13<sup>th</sup> century cathedral. The main road and railway are squeezed between the hills and the sea. Rocky cliffs and open sandy bays, some backed by golf courses, provide extensive seaward views.

### Key technical information sources

LCA: Caithness and Sutherland

NHF: The Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland (5)  
[Moray Firth (21) small part]

HLA: XX

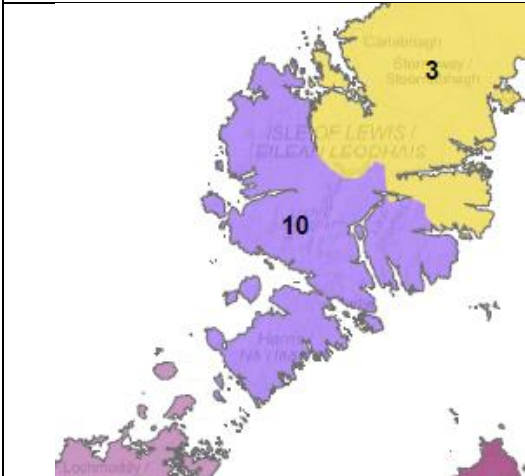
Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp 188-191

### Selected creative associations

#### Novels

The Silver Darlings (Neil Gunn)

## 10 Harris



### Description

A rugged and remote mountainous area, rising dramatically from sea level to preside over the lower lying islands to the north and south. The ridges of the Uig Hills and the Clisham soar above steep-sided glens, their barren rocky slopes appearing to plunge directly into the sea. The east coast is deeply dissected with innumerable inlets, bays and islets. Largely inaccessible, the coastline has high sea cliffs that enclose sheltered harbours. There are also extensive sandy beaches along the Atlantic coast. Remains of prehistoric settlement are visible, while the planned town of Leverburgh tells a more recent story in the island's history. The port of Tarbert is the principal settlement. The medieval church of St Clements at Rodel reflects the religious significance of the West Coast Isles.

### Key technical information sources

LCA: Western Isles

NHF: Coll, Tiree and the Western Isles (3)

HLA: XX

Naismith -  
*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* pp 206-207

### Selected creative associations

#### Film / TV

Location for part of "2001 A Space Odyssey" (Stanley Kubrick)