

An aerial photograph of a Scottish village, likely Inverurie, showing a mix of green fields, brown harvested fields, and a cluster of buildings including a prominent church with a spire. The foreground is dominated by a dense forest of evergreen trees. A large, semi-transparent circular graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Visit
Scotland | *Alba*

The Outlander Effect

October 2025

Slàinte mhath!

Outlander

The Outlander franchise, created by author Diana Gabaldon, comprises novels and short stories, many of which have been adapted into a historical drama television series, prominently featuring Scotland's rich history and striking landscapes. The first book, Outlander, (known as Cross Stitch in the UK) was published in 1991. Since the television adaptation premiered in 2014, the series has significantly influenced tourism in Scotland, with its impact expected to endure for years to come.



What is Outlander?

The Outlander franchise is a series of novels and short stories by author Diana Gabaldon which feature elements of historical fiction, romance, adventure, fantasy and time travel. The novels were first published in 1991 and later adapted into a historical drama television series by Sony Pictures in 2014. There are eight seasons of Outlander and a prequel titled "Blood of My Blood," connecting the existing characters through the stories of their parents in the early 1700s and 1900s.

What is the show about?

Outlander follows the story of Claire Randall, a married combat nurse from 1945 who is mysteriously swept back in time to 1743, where she is immediately thrown into an unknown world in which her life is threatened. When she is forced to marry Jamie Fraser, a chivalrous and romantic young Scottish warrior, a passionate relationship is ignited that tears Claire's heart between two vastly different men in two irreconcilable lives.

Why is it relevant to Scotland?

Scotland's history and landscape play an integral role in both the stories and television show. From historic ruins and castles to landscapes and lochs, Outlander has featured and filmed at a number of locations across Scotland. Fans of the show have been inspired to travel, explore and experience iconic locations, from both literature and screen, thus creating the Outlander Effect.

What is screen tourism?

Screen tourism is an important trend within the tourism industry where visitors travel to a location which has been featured in a film or TV series. Some destinations might have been used as a filming locations, whilst others could be used as inspiration. Screen tourism represents an opportunity for different ways for consumers to experience visitor destinations.

The production in itself promotes the destination and may be distributed internationally, with successful productions having a consumer reach into the millions. Defining the target market for screen tourism can be challenging, as some productions can have a broad reach, whereas others may be more niche. Nonetheless, niche or specific TV shows may attract a more dedicated fanbase.



Screen Tourism in the UK

VisitBritain published a report in 2024 looking at the influence of screen tourism on international travel across the UK. This report looks at the role film and TV played in previous trips and for future “UK considerers” (respondents who have not yet taken a leisure trip in the UK in the last 10 years but would consider doing so in future).

For many travellers, TV and film play a key role in inspiring trips, acting as a prompt to visit. Often it is found that screen tourism is more popular amongst younger visitors, however the market can vary greatly depending on the media.

43%

of International travelers globally have a strong interest in visiting a literary, music, film and TV location on their next leisure trip.

9 in 10

potential visitors to the UK would be interested in visiting a film or TV location and 7 in 10 UK leisure visitors have already visited these locations in the past 10 years.

1 in 4

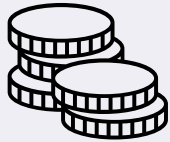
of "UK Considerers" agree visiting film and TV locations would have some level of influence when choosing a UK leisure trip in the future.

1 in 6

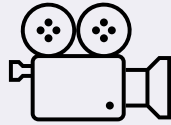
UK leisure visitors were inspired to travel outside of London to visit a filming location.

Screen Tourism in Scotland

Screen tourism is as popular as ever in Scotland. In our [Trends for 2025: the experience economy](#) paper, screen tourism, or set jetting as it has been dubbed, was identified as an ongoing trend amongst consumers. With the increase in media consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with travellers increasingly seeking experiences rather than material items from trips, there has been an increased demand to visit locations in person.



In 2023, screen tourism was estimated to have a value of £161 million in Scotland.



Outlander isn't the only popular title amongst travellers, Scotland is also host to blockbusters such as the Harry Potter series, The Da Vinci Code and Avengers: Infinity War / Endgame which continue to inspire visitors.

Ian W Walker of Edinburgh based private guided sightseeing tours, Borders Journeys, said on the influence Screen Tourism has on Scottish Tourism businesses:

“Outlander has by far attracted the bulk bookings in recent years with clients fascinated to discover more about Scotland’s rich history as well as visiting film locations. This fascination has also led to a growing interest into their own Scottish ancestry as well as immersing themselves in the history, heritage and culture of their ancestors.”

The Outlaw King, Mary, Queen of Scots as well as Braveheart and Rob Roy have all influenced clients to visit Scotland with many looking to learn more about the history behind the films. The Crown and Downton Abbey have also influenced visits to many of Scotland’s iconic castles and historic houses. Several recent blockbuster films shot in Glasgow have led to an increase in requests to visit the city, while there is a continued interest in Harry Potter film locations.”

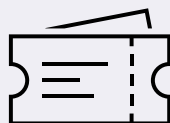
Film, TV and literature is an influential factor for visitors to Scotland



1 in 5 Visitors were inspired by film, TV and books featuring Scotland when choosing Scotland as a destination.



36% of European visitors were inspired by film, TV and books featuring Scotland when choosing Scotland as a destination.



37% of long-haul visitors were inspired by film, TV and books featuring Scotland when choosing Scotland as a destination.

Film, TV and literature inspired to visit historic locations

Those who were inspired by **film, TV and literature** when choosing Scotland were more likely to visit a historical building whilst on their trip:



62%

visited a historic house, palace or stately home



78%

visited a castle or fort



59%

visited a museum or art gallery



65%

visited a cathedral, church, abbey or other place of worship

Outlander as a source of inspiration

When it came to visitors deciding whether to take a trip to Scotland, the Scotland Visitor Survey found that Outlander was a consistent source of inspiration. Around one in ten of all visitors (11%) reported being inspired by a TV programme featuring Scotland, rising to 22% for long haul visitors.

Outlander was one of the most common responses, remaining the most likely to be mentioned regardless of whether visitors were asked about TV shows, films or literature as an inspiration source.



Thinking back to the moment when you were considering your destination for this holiday or short break, which, if any, of these sources of inspiration helped you decide on Scotland?

How do we witness the Outlander Effect?

Every year people travel from all over the world to visit Scotland's scenery and landscape, some of whom are Outlander enthusiasts. Outlander has been broadcast in various countries across the globe, from China to the US. The first season of the show was broadcast to over 87 territories, providing a massive appeal for visitors to come to Scotland. The show is intertwined and inspired by Scottish culture and history, engaging potential visitors to learn more about Scotland's past. Outlander might also act as a prompt for potential visitors to explore their ancestral roots.

We can witness the Outlander Effect through several means such as feedback from visitor attractions, tour guides and businesses; visitor enquiries about specific locations and online searches; as well as looking at visitor numbers to different attractions and locations.

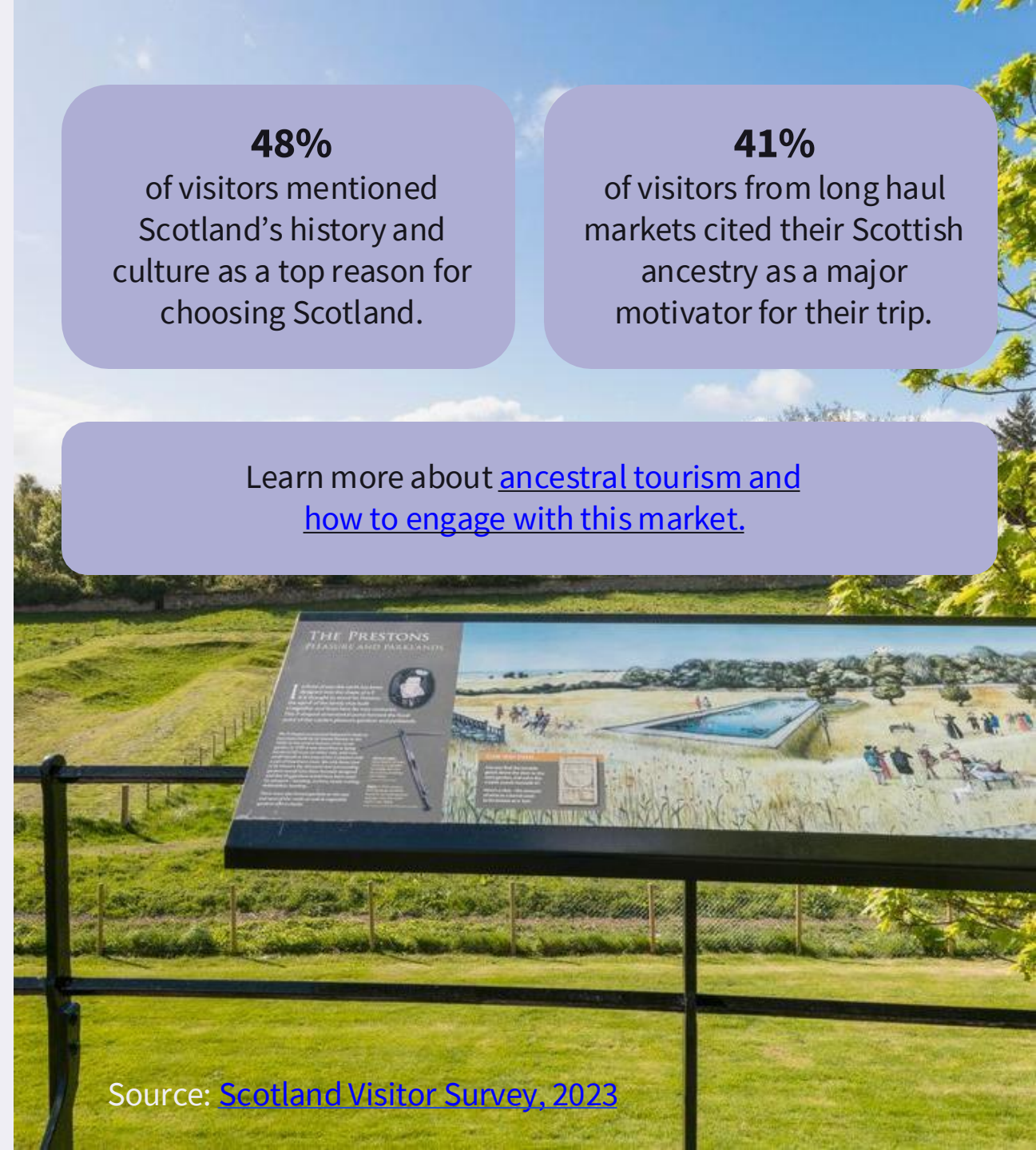
48%

of visitors mentioned Scotland's history and culture as a top reason for choosing Scotland.

41%

of visitors from long haul markets cited their Scottish ancestry as a major motivator for their trip.

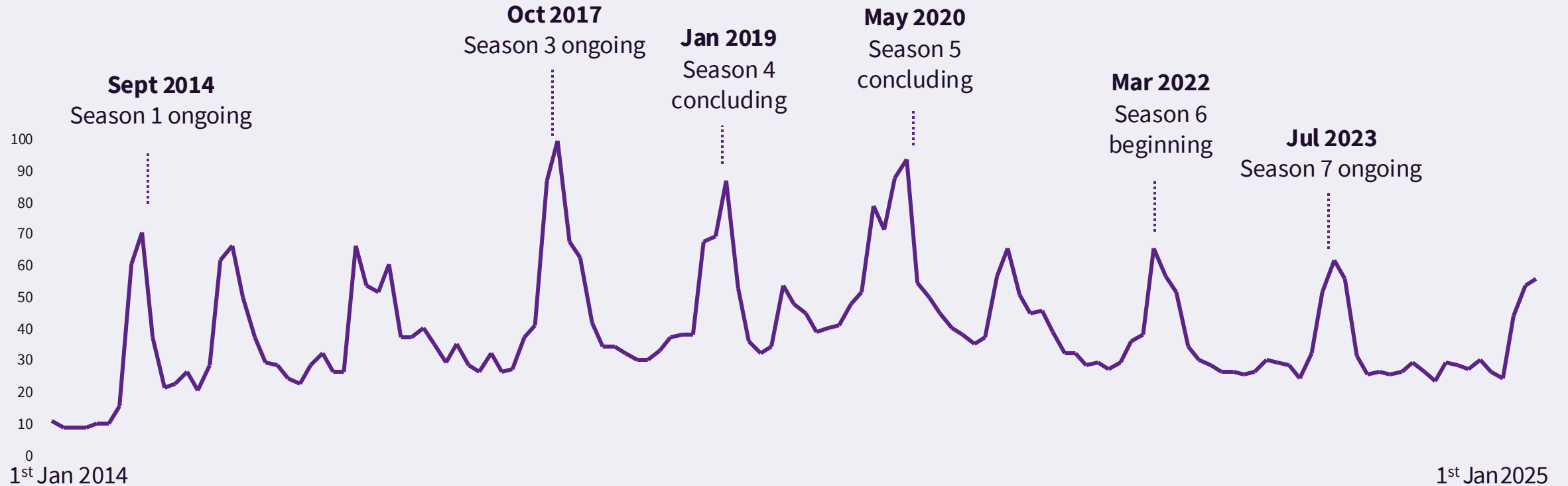
Learn more about [ancestral tourism and how to engage with this market.](#)



Google Searches for Outlander from 2014-2025

From 2014 all the way through to 2025, Outlander searches on Google continue to have peaks coinciding with new releases. Google Trends looks at the popularity of various search terms which use the Google Search function. We can see the popularity

of the series through those searching for Outlander related content, highlighting that the show continues to drive interest over the years.



Note: The values on the graph do not represent absolute search volume. Instead they are normalized, then indexed on a scale from 1-100. Each point on the graph is divided by the highest point, 100. Numbers represent search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time. A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term. Source: [Google Trends](#)

Who is visiting our Outlander pages?

Our consumer website visitscotland.com has several pages related to Outlander.

What Outlander pages are most popular?

Two of the most popular Outlander pages on visitscotland.com are [Outlander filming locations](#) and a [12 day Outlander Itinerary](#).

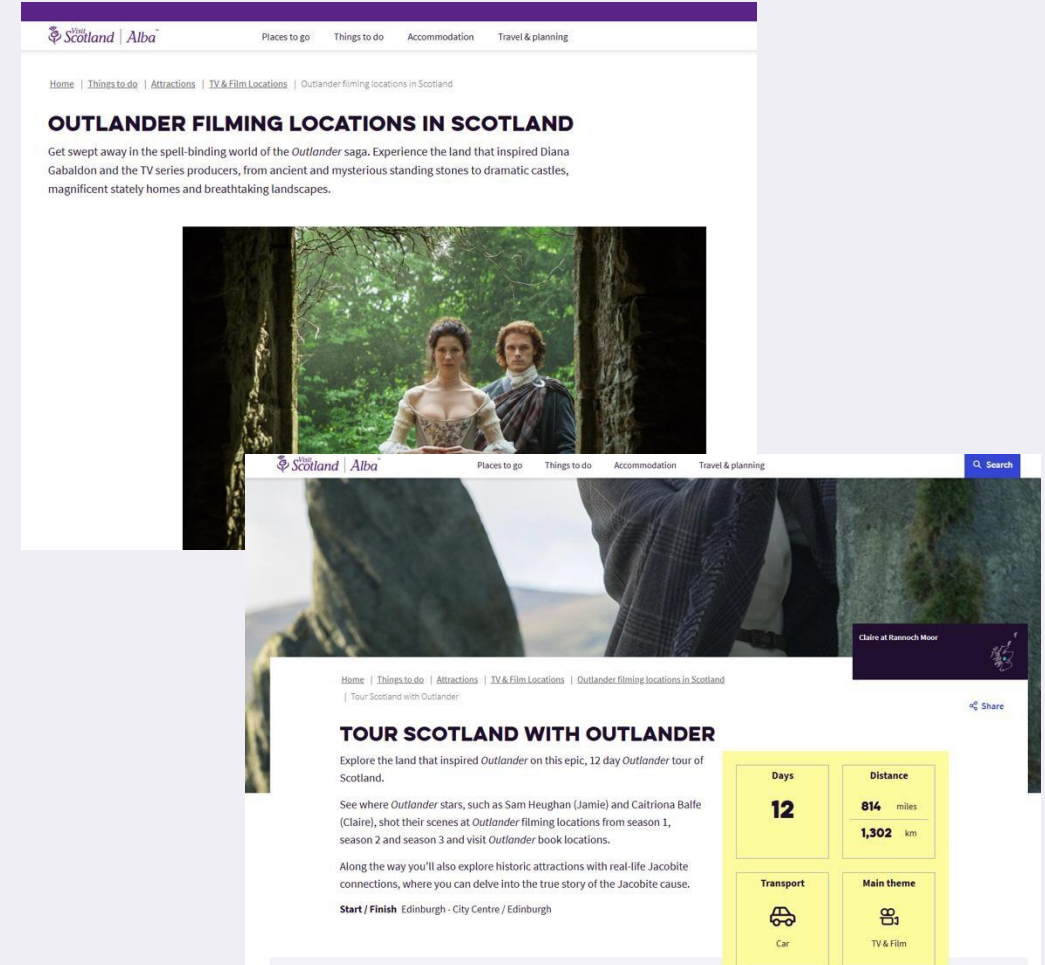
Together they gathered over 55,000 pages view between March 2024-March 2025. These pages combined have garnered over 9 million impressions* in Google search results.

Who is viewing Outlander related content?

The top visitors to our Outlander pages are from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia and Canada.

How did site visitors find the Outlander pages?

The majority of visitors to the Outlander pages landed there by organic search.



*Impressions refers to the number of times a page is seen in Google search results

What has been the impact of Outlander on visitor attractions?

Whether visitor attractions are used directly as filming locations for the show or they are located nearby, they gain value from the Outlander Effect, which continues to distribute benefits to the visitor economy across the country.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES)

Manages many of the heritage sites used as Outlander filming locations. It recognises Scotland's historic sites are a catalyst for economic growth. At key sites which were used as filming locations for Outlander, such as Aberdour Castle, Blackness Castle and Glasgow Cathedral, it has made additions to the interpretive content, often through the inclusion of permanent signage and graphics featuring stills from the filming.

At Doune Castle, new stops have been added to the audio guide narrated by Sam Heughan, recalling his experiences filming at the site, with hopes to add new interpretive content in the future. Reporting its 2024 performance, HES sites featured in the TV show continued to see huge growth in numbers that year, with Blackness Castle reaching over 77,000 visitors, while Doune Castle also saw over 119,000 visitors.

What has been the impact of Outlander on visitor attractions?

The Scottish Railway Preservation Society

Is dedicated to the advancement of Scottish railway heritage and the delivery of an exceptional experience to national and international visitors through its operation of the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway and the Museum of Scottish Railways. A working heritage railway, the site boasts the largest collection of railway locomotives, carriages, wagons, equipment, and artefacts

outside the National Railway Museum. The Society attracts a wide range of visitors, most travelling around 90 minutes to the attraction, but following the Outlander broadcasts the railway has seen a notable increase in the number of international visitors journeying to the site to engage with the visitor experience. The station and railway are also in several media productions outside of Outlander, and though they might be disguised to suit a specific storyline, the charm and beauty of the railway remains front and centre.

Outlander attractions survey

Visitor Attractions were invited to participate in a survey on the impact of Outlander and Screen Tourism, investigating the relationship an attraction had with Outlander and the impact of this on business.

The *Outlander Effect* is clearly evident among Visitor Attractions directly involved with the production.

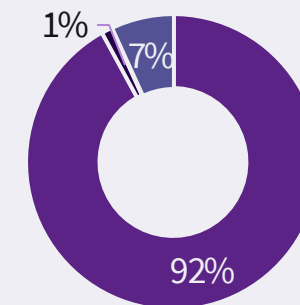
Among the Outlander filming location attractions, the majority have seen increased visitor numbers, developed new products and themed events and had interest from other productions. Most Visitor Attractions agreed that screen tourism is beneficial and something that if the opportunity presented should be capitalised on.

15% of visitor attractions considered themselves a filming location for Outlander.

27% said they were located near an Outlander filming location, but were not one themselves.

Of those who were not an Outlander location, **52%** said their location had been used as a filming location for other media productions.

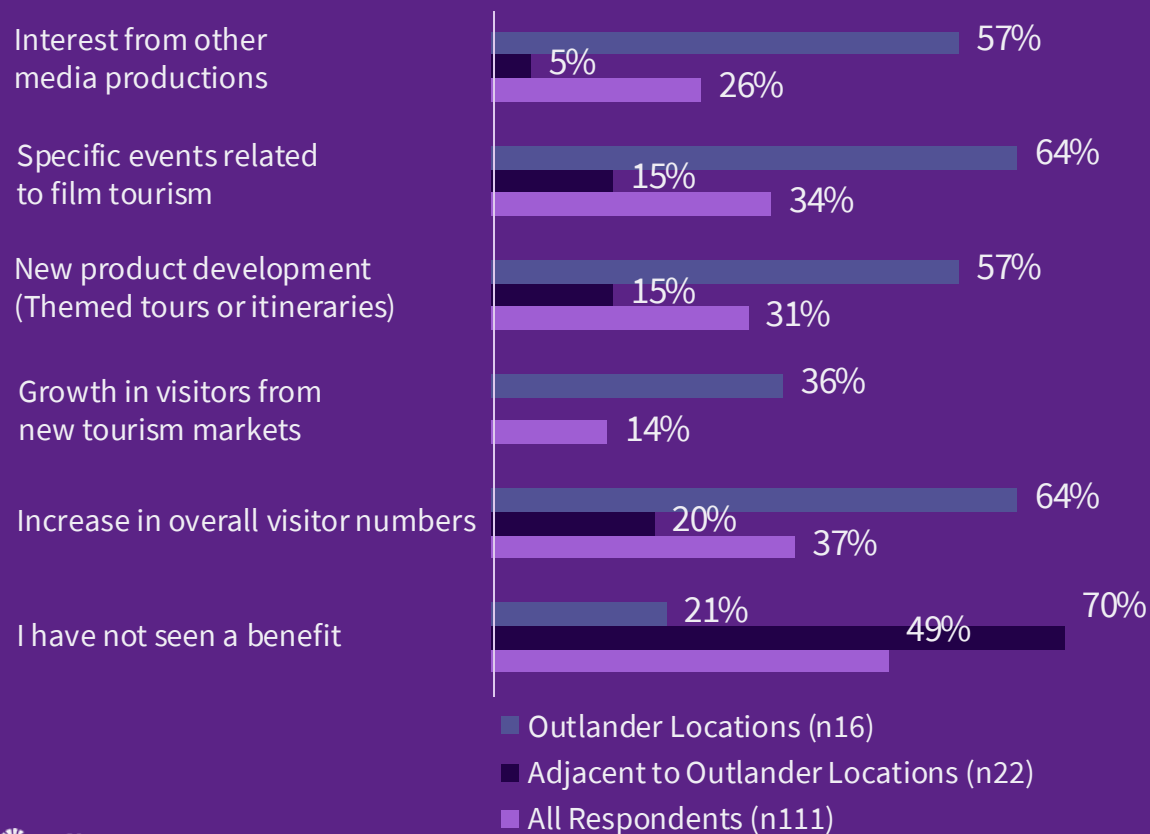
Do you consider film tourism positive or negative for the Scottish visitor economy? (All respondents)



■ Positive ■ Negative ■ Don't know

Outlander attractions survey

What impact has Outlander or screen tourism had on your business?



57%

of Outlander Locations developed new product to meet visitor needs including tours and itineraries.

64%

of Outlander Locations saw an increase in overall visitor numbers they related to screen tourism.

36%

of Outlander locations saw growth from new tourism markets associations with Outlander and screen tourism.

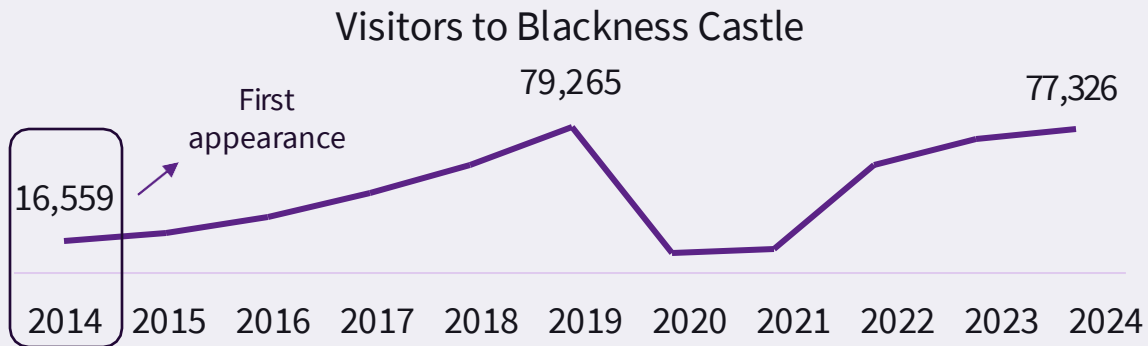
70%

of visitor attractions adjacent to Outlander locations saw no benefit of Outlander or broader screen tourism, indicating there is scope to further broaden the appeal to visitors.

A closer look at...

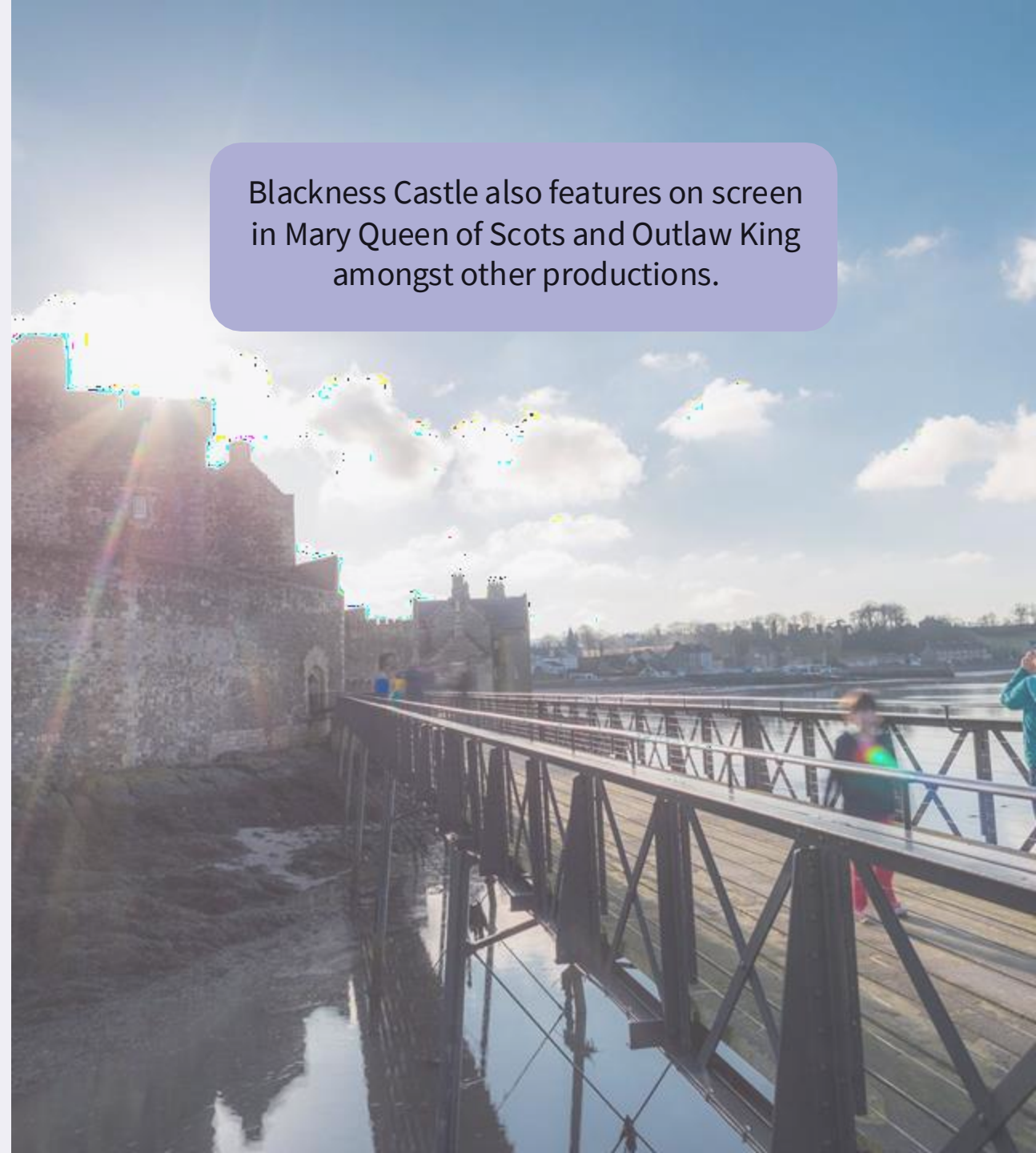
Blackness Castle

Located on the Southern shore of the Firth of Forth in Falkirk, Blackness Castle stood in for Fort William in the first season of *Outlander*. The castle itself was built in the 15th century for one of Scotland's most powerful families – the Crichtons. *Outlander* fans have continued to flock to Blackness Castle since its first appearance in the show in 2014, with the attraction seeing a 378.7% increase in visitors between 2014 and 2019. Even after the Covid-19 dip, the castle has continued to see a steady influx of visitors.



Source: The Visitor Attraction Monitor,
The Moffat Centre

Blackness Castle also features on screen in *Mary Queen of Scots* and *Outlaw King* amongst other productions.



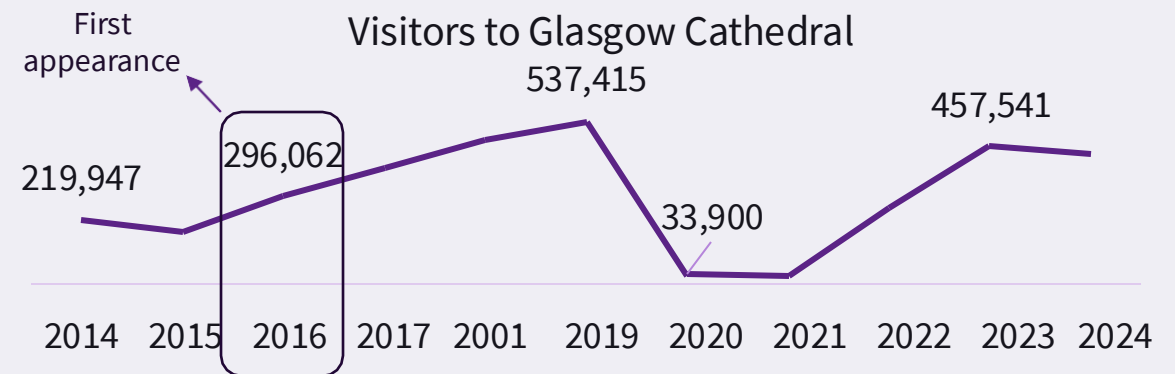
The city of Glasgow is a popular filming location appearing in The Batman, World War Z and Indiana Jones, to name a few.

The Scotland Visitor Survey 2023 highlighted that 29% of visitors to Glasgow were inspired to travel to Scotland by film, TV or literature*.

*This question asked respondents about their inspiration for travelling to Scotland, not to specific regions.

A closer look at... Glasgow Cathedral

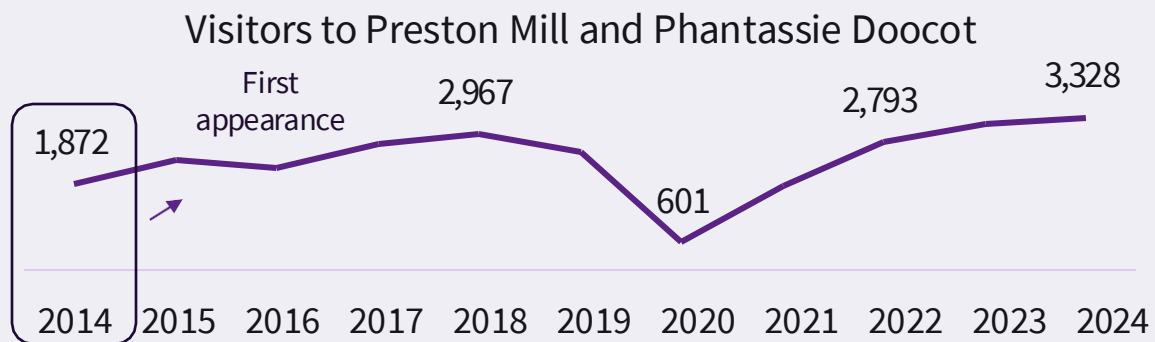
Standing as one of the oldest buildings in the city, Glasgow Cathedral was built in the 1100s and remains one of the most intact medieval cathedrals on the Scottish mainland. The cathedral's crypt appears in Outlander as L'Hopital Des Anges in Paris, where Claire volunteers to work. Visitors to the cathedral were already on an upwards trajectory when the location featured in season two of the show and continued to climb by 81.5% from 2016-2019.



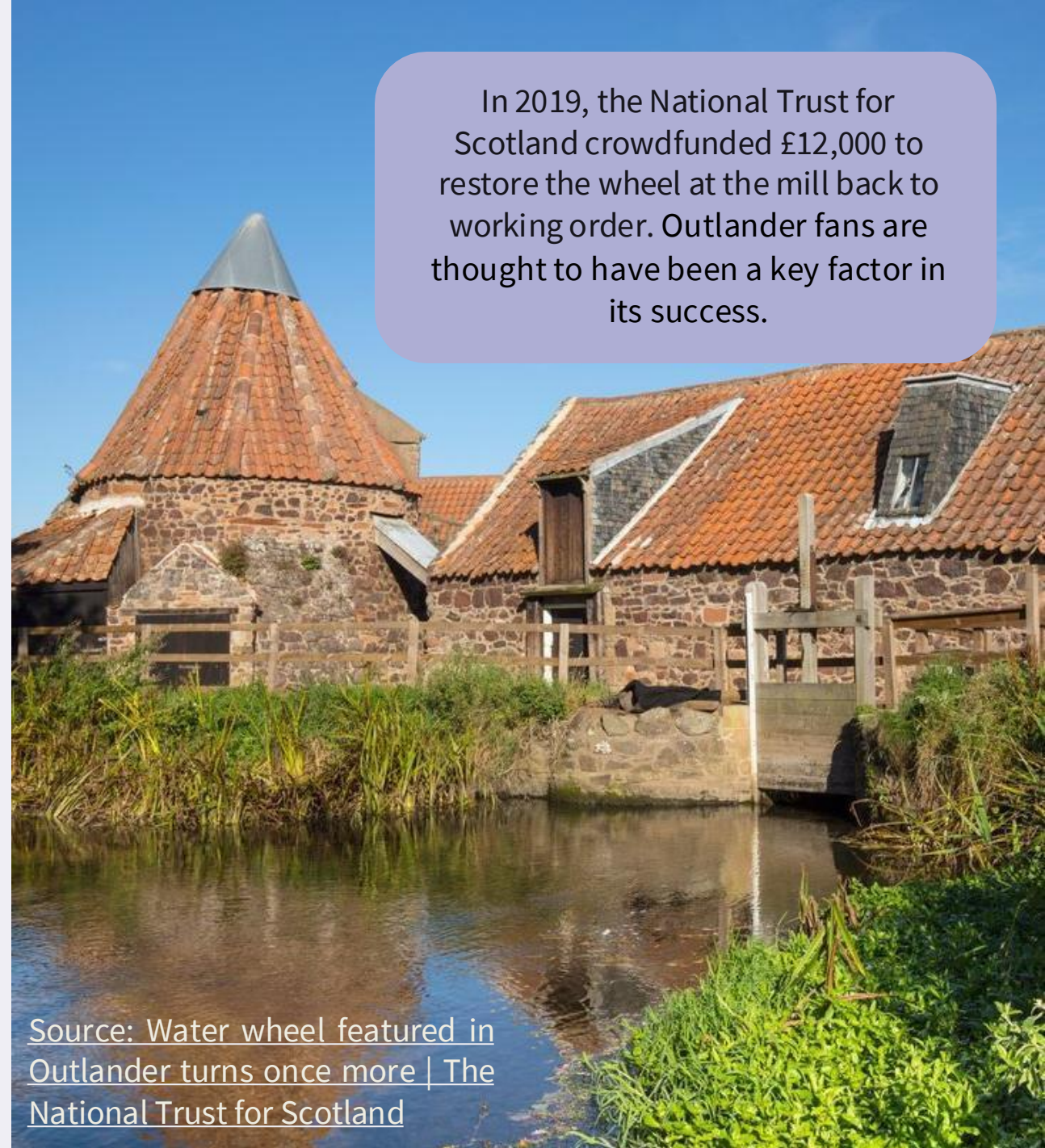
Source: The Visitor Attraction Monitor, The Moffat Centre

A closer look at... Preston Mill and Phantassie Doocot

This 18th century water mill was used commercially until 1959 – located in East Lothian, it was the region’s last working water mill. Preston Mill was featured in the first season of Outlander as Lallybroch Mill. Since its first appearance in the show, the mill has seen an increase in visitors, with 3,328 visitors to the site in 2024.



Source: The Visitor Attraction Monitor, The Moffat Centre



In 2019, the National Trust for Scotland crowdfunded £12,000 to restore the wheel at the mill back to working order. Outlander fans are thought to have been a key factor in its success.

Case Study

The Tour Operator

Emma Filgas, founder of the award-winning historic tour guide, Mary's Meanders, tells us how Outlander has changed the business.

What is your experience in tourism?

We originally started out as a walking tour company focusing on Linlithgow and Mary Queen of Scots. Outlander came along at an early stage of our company (2014) and we realised this was going to be big and seized the opportunity. Mary's Meanders was one of the first businesses to offer filming location tours.

How did you see the business opportunity for your product?

We spotted the filming taking place around our town and after a bit of research showed there was huge potential due to the size of the fan base. We developed our tour in consultation with the UK based fan club.

Who are your clients, where do they come from?

The majority of our clients are females, ages 45 + from America, Canada, Australia, Germany and Scandinavia.

Case Study – The Tour Operator

What do you see as the advantages of Film/Screen tourism?

It's been over 10 years since Outlander first appeared on our screens, and it continues to bring thousands of visitors to Scotland every year. Film and screen tourism has proven to be a powerful driver for Scottish tourism, and the new prequel series Blood of My Blood is already generating enquiries from visitors keen to explore its filming locations. Screen tourism often acts as a gateway: a viewer's interest is sparked by a location they see on screen, but once

here, many extend their stay to walk in the footsteps of beloved characters and then go on to discover Scotland in greater depth.

Describe a memorable moments on a tour with the fans.

The only way to describe an Outlander tour – whether it lasts a single day or a full week – is joyful. Our guests are always thrilled to arrive at each location, often reciting the dialogue word for word from the scenes filmed there. One of our favourite memories is of a particularly

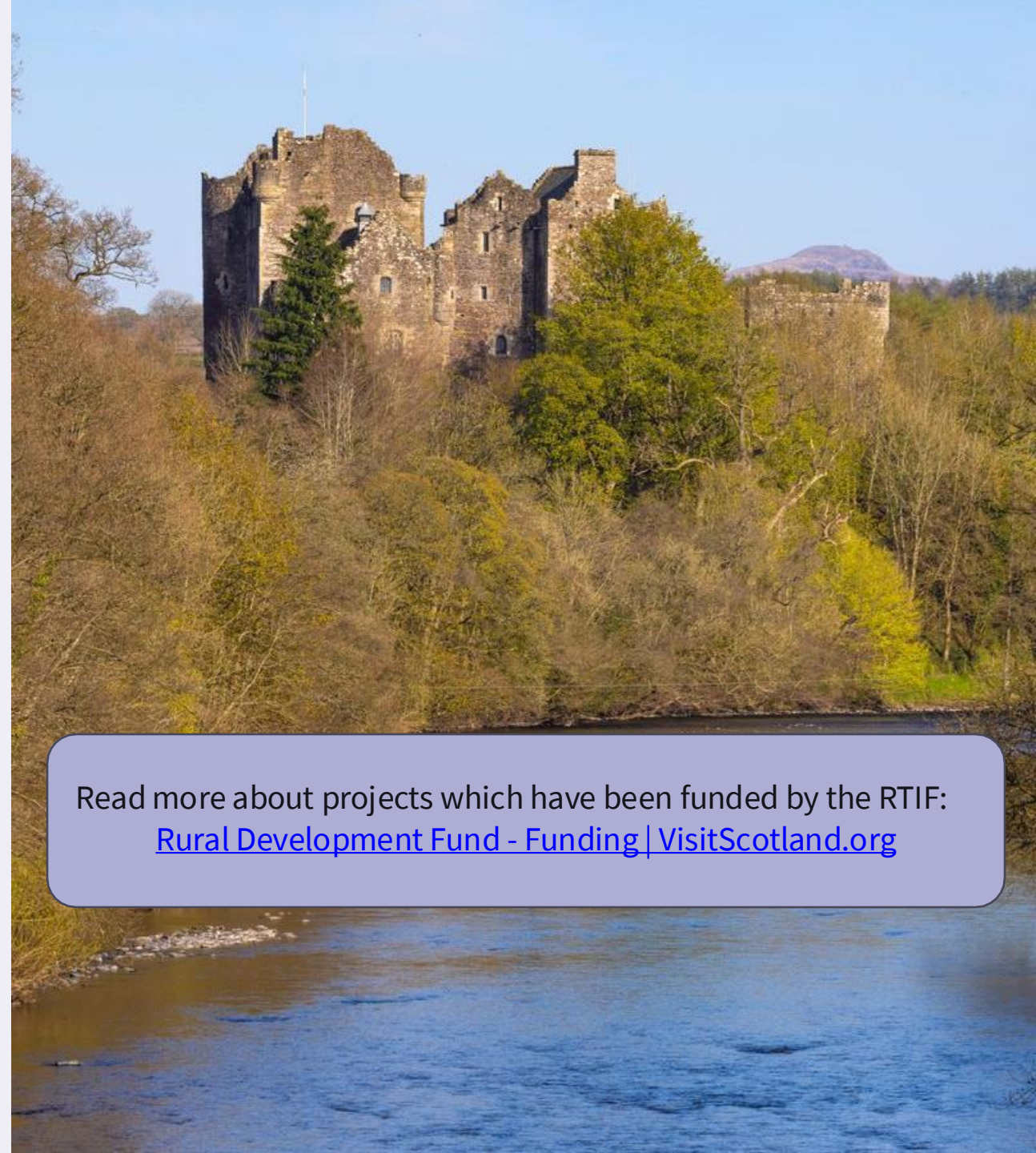
musical group of tour guests made up of solo travellers, couples, and friends. Each day of the tour they would sing together, filling the bus with laughter and harmony. Strangers at the beginning of the week, united by a love of a TV show, they left as true friends. In fact, they still chat daily in the WhatsApp group we created for them – a beautiful reminder of the connections and memories that can be made on tour.

The Outlander Effect and sustainability

The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) was established in 2018 with the aim to improve the visitor experience in rural parts of Scotland. It aims to address pressure on local infrastructure or negative impacts on communities by:

- Taking a strategic approach to supporting the provision of extra facilities to meet visitor needs
- Dispersing visitors from hotspot areas
- Creating lower impact visits

Some Outlander locations have already received funding from the RTIF. In Doune, funding went towards refurbishing the village toilets, extending the path network between the Castle and village as well as developing the wider travel infrastructure.



Read more about projects which have been funded by the RTIF:
[Rural Development Fund - Funding | VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitScotland.org.uk/rural-development-fund-funding)

The lasting effect of screen tourism

TV shows and movies such as **Outlander** have proven to have a lasting appeal to visitors. Screen tourism itself is a trend with longevity, with filming locations continuing to draw fans in years after production.

Braveheart recently celebrated its 30th anniversary and continues to inspire visitors. After the release of Braveheart in 1995, the National Wallace Monument in Stirling reported visitor numbers leapt from 80,000 a year to nearly 200,000 in 1996. For the 10-year period from 1996 to

2005 the average annual number of visitors to the National Wallace Monument was 135,000, which was the number also seen most recently in 2024. In an online survey completed by 774 visitors, 14.75% stated that their decision to visit the Monument was influenced by the film Braveheart.

Dan Brown's 2003 novel, **The Da Vinci Code**, had a huge effect on Rosslyn Chapel. Visitor numbers increased by 72 per cent, from 68,603 in 2004 to 118,151 in 2005. In 2006, following the release of the film directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks, visitor numbers

reached 175,053. This enabled a far-reaching conservation project at the Chapel to be completed and the future of the building, which was founded in 1446, to be secured. The Chapel holds a display in its visitor centre on its links to The Da Vinci Code, including a letter from Tom Hanks to The Countess of Rosslyn. In 2024, the Rosslyn Chapel Trust published research into the impact of The Da Vinci Code to mark the 21st anniversary of the novel's publication.



There are several TV shows and movies which have left a lasting impact on visitors:

- Local Hero: 40th anniversary in 2023
- Shetland: 10th anniversary in 2023
- Outlander: 10th anniversary in 2024
- Braveheart: 30th anniversary in 2025
- Monty Python and the Holy Grail: 50th anniversary in 2025
- Rob Roy: 30th anniversary in 2025

Shanks Research Consultancy carried out the [research](#) with 6,677 Chapel visitors between March 2023 and March 2024, which found that 49% of visitors said Dan Brown's novel and the film influenced their decision to visit the historic site, while 72% of them had read the book and seen the film.

Another show which has been running for more than a decade is **Shetland** (2013), a British crime drama series based on the island of Shetland. The Shetland Islands Visitor Survey 2024

highlighted that of leisure visitors who were inspired to choose Shetland for their trip, 42% were inspired by TV programmes. Of the programmes mentioned, the show Shetland was mentioned by almost all visitors as a source of inspiration (92%).

It is clear whether it is new productions sparking the interest of visitors or legacies that continue on from the likes of Outlander, Braveheart and Monty Python, screen tourism is a trend that is here to stay.

Appendix

Visitor Attraction Monitor

Owned and distributed by the Moffat Centre, the Visitor Attraction Monitor reports yearly figures to attractions across Scotland. The table below shows visitors to a selection of Outlander attractions from 2014-2024. Figures highlighted in bold show when the attraction first featured in the TV series. Many attractions across Scotland have seen an increase in the number of visitors over the years, and for some, well after their appearance in the show.



Year	Aberdour Castle	Arniston House	Blackness Castle	Bo'ness & Kinneill Railway	Craigmillar Castle	Culloden Visitor Centre	Culross Palace	Dean Castle*	Doune Castle	Glasgow Cathedral	Glencoe Visitor Centre**	Linlithgow Palace	Newhailes House	Preston Mill & Phantassie Doocot	Scottish Fisheries Museum
2014	13,184	711	16,559	68,329	20,971	98,780	10,669	22,806	47,069	219,947	130,006	63,274	4,831	1,872	12,648
2015	14,107	533	21,556	73,830	21,098	117,814	11,556	24,767	68,518	182,205	133,444	66,324	5,351	2,383	11,745
2016	15,392	590	30,053	69,085	23,221	141,776	13,112	21,778	90,279	296,062	199,327	74,428	5,425	2,217	11,431
2017	19,381	676	42,810	65,634	20,877	180,875	16,022	13,541	124,341	389,101	165,303	86,596	5,388	2,748	11,764
2018	27,507	400	58,388	67,038	35,473	200,646	24,445	0	142,091	482,783	213,343	94,718	68,360	2,967	10,633
2019	24,768	829	79,265	60,822	40,634	209,011	25,209	0	152,987	537,415	436,924	103,312	65,395	2,590	10,689
2020	4,384	114	10,212	2,014	7,100	182,496	0	0	15,549	33,900	93,547	12,128	7,383	601	1,693
2021	9,255	229	12,663	22,880	11,876	57,778	10,733	0	3,171	33,788	129,829	2,489	65,470	1,835	2,856
2022	302	495	58,168	42,823	28,958	149,003	21,894	0	55,484	256,001	344,896	7,583	272,737	2,793	6,014
2023	13,013	732	72,299	50,367	34,882	262,199	24,329	53,844	109,511	457,541	319,500	53,463	278,624	3,173	7,147
2024	14,844	617	77,326	45,521	38,554	374,443	25,841	59,747	119,392	432,682	359,653	84,549	304,111	3,328	9,133
2014-2024 % change	12.59%	-13.22%	366.97%	-33.38%	10.53%	279.07%	142.21%	161.98%	153.65%	96.72%	176.64%	33.62%	6194.99%	77.78%	-27.79%

*Dean Castle temporarily closed from 2018; **Glencoe Visitor Centre has reopened after a major upgrade and is now a free visitor site.