



# VisitBritain and British Film Commission sign Memorandum of Understanding to boost screen tourism across the UK

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At FOCUS London today (6 December 2023), the British Film Commission and VisitBritain signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the intention of boosting screen tourism throughout the UK's nations and regions.

Set-jetting is a booming trend in travel. According to Expedia Group, more than half of international travellers said TV shows and films inspire their travel plans. Inbound tourists spent an estimated £892.6 million in film-related screen tourism in the UK in 2019 alone according to the British Film Institute (BFI), making screen tourism an increasingly valuable part of the UK's global tourism offer.\*

The UK film and TV industry continues to attract major international productions with its world class production offer. With first-class studios available throughout the UK's nations and regions, cutting-edge VFX facilities, unique locations and a talented crew base, the UK has hosted many world-renowned film and TV franchises, contributing billions of pounds to the UK economy. Earlier this year, the BFI's Research and Statistics Unit reported combined spend by film and high-end television production during 2022 reached £6.27 billion. In 2022 the British Film Commission provided bespoke support to many major film and HETV titles such as Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power Season 2 (Amazon), Lift (Netflix), Black Cake (Hulu), Napoleon (Apple TV+), The Crown Season 6 (Netflix), The Boys in the Boat (MGM), Fast X (Universal) and

Wicked (Universal).

Film tourism offers the valuable opportunity to spotlight regional destinations to drive tourism. For example, Castle Howard in North Yorkshire reported that the number of visitors aged 18-24 to its website increased by more than 3400% after Bridgerton was released. According to the West Midlands Growth Company, Birmingham's visitor numbers increased by 26% between 2013, when the first Peaky Blinders season aired on the BBC, and 2018. Sex Education, filmed in Wales, has encouraged a whole new audience to fall in love with the beautiful Wye Valley and Londonderry's Tower Museum welcomed a record number of monthly visitors following the launch of an exhibition based on hit TV show Derry Girls. VisitScotland's research shows that up to 18% of inbound visitors from its top international markets visit a film or TV location during their trips to Scotland.

Iconic film and TV franchises such as James Bond, Paddington, Harry Potter, Star Wars, Outlander and The Crown have also consistently chosen UK locations and studios to house their productions. With Film and TV continuing to influence travel worldwide, the British Film Commission and VisitBritain's new partnership builds on the potential of screen tourism.

Today's MoU strengthens the British Film Commission and VisitBritain's mutual aims of boosting economic growth. On one hand, building on the positive perceptions of Britain as a visitor destination, supplementing the British Film Commission's role in attracting inward investment. Equally, the UK's sustained capacity to host major film and TV productions bolsters the range and depth of screen related visitor experiences and locations across the nations and regions, complementing VisitBritain's support of the visitor economy.

**VisitBritain CEO Patricia Yates said:**

"VisitBritain's research shows that films and TV are powerful motivators for travel. With almost a third of potential visitors to Britain keen to visit locations used in filming and seen-on-screen, film tourism is a valuable and growing part of our global tourism offer.

We are delighted to partner with the British Film Commission to harness this growth, working together to put Britain's screen tourism offer centre stage alongside our international GREAT Britain campaigns.

Putting the spotlight on film-and-TV-inspired experiences you can only have in Britain encourages more visitors to come and explore our amazing destinations for themselves, driving immediacy to visit and boosting tourism across the nations and regions, benefitting local economies."

**Adrian Wootton OBE, Chief Executive of the British Film Commission, said:**

"Much as the UK's history, dynamism and unique cultural mix have inspired spellbinding films and TV shows, so too have these productions led visitors from all over the world to spend time in the UK.

The UK's film and TV industry has consistently attracted the world's largest productions with our diverse range of filming locations and talented crew base. From Bridgerton and All Creatures Great and Small to Harry Potter and Rye Lane, the UK is home to countless, iconic film and TV franchises and screen tourism provides a unique and exciting opportunity to showcase welcoming destinations throughout the UK's nations and regions.

I look forward to working closely with VisitBritain to spotlight the exceptional range of our film and TV industry, boosting local economies throughout the UK in the process."

British Film Commission and VisitBritain will present a panel at FOCUS London on Wednesday 6 December. **Succession Planning: The rise of Set-Jetting and the ins and outs of Screen**

**Tourism** explores what makes a location such a draw for film-makers and discerning tourists alike, including how best to ensure visits are sustainable. The panel takes place 11:30am – 12:15pm.