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**Film Tourism:**  
**What is it, and how  
can you maximise the  
benefits?**



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## Introduction

Film and TV production in the UK is on the rise. Production in 2014 was up a massive 35% from the year before to the highest ever recorded level. The vast majority of this growth has been spurred on by inward investment from international productions.

Supported by a competitive tax credit regime for film and television drama, even more productions are expected to film here in the coming years, meaning that audiences around the world will see more of the UK's rich and varied locations on screen than ever before.

This film tourism toolkit provides guidance and case studies for potential film locations on how to maximise the potential of film tourism.

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Alnwick Castle

## The Tourism Opportunity

Film and TV productions can be a powerful way to add profile to a nation's tourism offer, both at home and abroad - they can help to showcase a country's natural and cultural assets; inform, inspire and influence travel decisions and help to market and grow local visitor economies.

Creative England, in association with VisitEngland and Olsberg SPI, recently produced a new report to identify the value of film and television tourism to England and explore how local areas can capitalise on this growing phenomenon.



Victoria Baths, Manchester  
© Mark Payne

## Key Findings

- International core screen tourism in England (outside of London) was worth between **£100 million-£140 million** in 2014.
- All eight locations at which surveys were carried were found to be attracting international or domestic visitors who said they would not have travelled there if they had not seen the associated film or television drama.
- **36.1%** of all international tourists and **11.6%** of all domestic tourists surveyed on site at the eight locations can be defined as core screen tourists – i.e. a film or TV production was the primary motivator for their visit.
- The value of these visits is significant, with the best-performing sites attracting day-spend value from international visitors of up to **£1.6 million** a year. Combined with the day-visit value of domestic core screen tourists, the best performing site saw **£4.3 million** total screen tourism spend annually.
- It should be noted that the value only covers the specific screen tourism locations used; not the general influence of screen exposure on the appeal of the UK internationally as a whole.

# CASE STUDY:

## Kudos's Broadchurch at West Bay in Dorset

Eight-part drama, Broadchurch, aired on ITV in spring 2013. Broadchurch was shot across the South West in Clevedon, North Somerset, Yate in South Gloucestershire, and West Bay and Bridport in West Dorset. Creative England estimates that a television production of this scale could have spent up to £1 million in the South West on services such as local hotels, restaurants and facilities. But the impact of production extends beyond this:

Hill Road in Clevedon was used to double as the fictional Dorset town of Broadchurch and market stalls were erected as part of the set. These 'stalls' immediately attracted shoppers, inspiring traders in the road to pursue establishing an indoor food and craft market. A government grant of £9,000 has since been awarded to help get the project off the ground.

In West Dorset, Literary Lyme has traditionally offered Jane Austen and Mary Anning guided walking tours of Lyme Regis and the Jurassic Coast. They have now introduced Broadchurch tours around West Bay and Bridport, so visitors can see the police station, newsagents, cliffs and more!

Local businesses have seen an increase in sales and the official tourism site for Dorset ran a number of Broadchurch competitions, with prizes ranging from DVDs to holidays – including a stay at The Bull Hotel, where the cast and crew were housed. Some 77% of businesses reported an increase in customer numbers in 2013 and of these 47% thought that this was either definitely or probably due to Broadchurch.

www.visit-dorset.com achieved record-breaking numbers in March, with the site attracting up to 200 hits per minute during the Broadchurch broadcasts. The site garnered over 100,000 unique visitors, a threefold increase on March 2012 figures. Enquiries about the area have also seen an increase, with many curious about filming locations ordering copies of the West Dorset Holiday Guide.

**“Broadchurch has provided West Dorset District Council’s tourism team with an incredible opportunity to benefit from high profile TV coverage.**

**“Series 1 and 2 of the drama generated a staggering amount of interest in the area and the tourism team worked hard to make the most of this opportunity through a range of off and on-line marketing initiatives. West Dorset District Council are in full support of Creative England’s Film Friendly Partnership and work proactively with Creative England to encourage filming in the region.”**

Jessica Matthews, Tourism Marketing Officer,  
West Dorset District Council



## Screen exposure as a driver for visitor numbers

### The Creative England/Olsberg research demonstrates a range of screen tourism drivers:

1. Naturally, popular and long-running productions drew the highest proportion of core screen tourists, including the Harry Potter film franchise and Downton Abbey.
2. Period drama proved to be a strong draw – but productions associated with other genres also attracted visitors. This includes family fare, fantasy and sci-fi. Productions with darker themes were also able to attract screen tourists.
3. Several of the top-performing sites featured clearly recognisable – even iconic – locations such as Castle Howard, which featured in *Brideshead Revisited* and Alnwick Castle, which had featured as Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the first two Harry Potter films.
4. Other sites attracted high levels of screen tourism with a number of locations. West Bay and Bampton, for example, both included a number of buildings and locations that had been featured on screen in *Broadchurch* and *Downton Abbey*.
5. Heritage buildings proved to be popular, particularly if they had been showcased prominently on screen.
6. Natural landscapes also drive screen tourists. A number of respondents singled out the cliffs at West Bay, which had been featured prominently in *Broadchurch*, as a particular attraction.
7. Locations do not necessarily have to ‘play’ themselves on screen to attract visitors. Alnwick, Bampton, Castle Howard, Lyme Park and West Bay were all ‘actors’ – and all attracted screen tourists despite doubling for other places.
8. Popular locations also tended to be within regions or locales that have existing appeal to international visitors, eg Bampton in the Cotswolds.
9. Some screen tourists do not even need to have seen a film or television drama before travelling there. Some respondents were drawn to Puzzlewood by *Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens*, while the film was still in production. Screen tourism effects can be seen very rapidly, dependent on the draw of the production.
10. The age of the associated screen product is not necessarily a barrier. With digital distribution, the life of productions – and therefore their potential to induce tourism – can be open-ended.



# Maximising Screen Tourism

**In order to maximise screen tourism, the following issues need to be considered:**

## 1. What makes for a popular show?

There is no easy answer, but a few factors can be inferred:

- Long-running, successful film franchises or television series that have an existing audience base.
- Adaptations of popular literary works whether classics or modern works.
- Projects that feature the location in a high-profile, visually-impactful way.
- A location's connection with story, whether as the backdrop for key plot points or dramatic elements. It is this link, rather than the simple attractiveness of a location, that can attract screen tourists.
- A setting or story that intersects with other key strengths of the UK's general tourism offer, including cultural heritage, built heritage, contemporary culture and countryside.
- The presence of high-profile stars in a production is not essential for generating screen tourism, but can certainly help with audience visibility – and is therefore a pointer to tourism potential.
- The presence of a major production company, financier, or distributor. This points to the likelihood that the project has been well developed, will be produced with quality and have access to key international distribution channels.

## 2. What do screen tourists want?

Locations should consider how the needs of such tourists might differ from other market segments to ensure an excellent visitor experience is delivered.

Screen tourists often want more knowledge about specific locations and the production itself e.g. what actually filmed and where. While visitors may know the screen product very well the physical geography of a location can sometimes be very different to how it appears on screen. Guides, maps or trails available in a wide variety of formats, including digital, can be helpful in addressing this.

It is also helpful to consider how to ensure any upturn in screen tourism can be used to encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more at film locations. Popular, family shows might consider offering family entertainment e.g. a Quidditch activity on broomsticks at Alnwick Castle (Harry Potter); and the opportunity to dress up as an Edwardian person at Lyme Park (Pride & Prejudice) and have a photograph taken. Increasing dwell time in this way can also benefit the wider offer at the location, including the use of facilities such as restaurants, cafes and shops.

However, increasing dwell time and spend can be difficult due to the time-pressed nature of some visits, particularly those on coach tours that may only give tourists a short time at the location. It is helpful to understand the profile of visitors and how they are accessing the location to ensure opportunities can be targeted effectively.

Chatsworth House, Derbyshire  
© VisitEngland, Chatsworth House Trust



Cromer Pier, Norfolk  
© VisitEngland, Iain Lewis





### 3. What do locations need to bear in mind?

Locations should consider incorporating film and television exposure into their marketing and PR campaigns from an early stage and develop strategies that maximise the value that screen productions can bring to local economies by working with their local Destination Organisation.

When filming takes place, the production's Location Manager is often likely to be able to provide an idea of when the film or TV drama is to be broadcast or released. They can also provide a quote about their experience of filming there to add into any press or marketing planned around the project. It is worth noting that all such press releases about the production will need to be cleared with the production's broadcaster or publicist before being released.

Key information to bear in mind is as follows:


1. What was filmed at the location?
2. Where did filming take place?
3. Is this open to public visitors?
4. How does the location feature in the film/TV drama?
5. Who is the production aimed at (this will inform how any attendant PR by the destination is targeted, and how information about the production is disseminated)
6. What is the TX date/release date of the production?
7. Is it part of a series?
8. Will it have international release and, if so, does that differ from the UK release date?

Some production companies will allow visitors to watch the filming as long as they are very quiet and do not disturb the process. This can often be seen as a real benefit by the visitor and more than compensates for any disruption. The location will need to ensure the reason for the disruption is clearly communicated to all visitors and should stress the benefits of the filming activity to the property or location - as well as thanking the visitors for their patience and understanding.

After the release or transmission of the production, locations should give consideration as to how to build the potential visitor interest, which could involve providing information on the history of filming in the immediate area and links to other filming locations nearby and their wider tourism offer.



Goblin Queen and Dragon,  
Alnwick Castle



**“The benefits to Black Country Living Museum from filming projects have been huge in recent times, including widening brand reach to new audiences, encouraging people to visit and repeat visit and providing excellent opportunities for PR and social media content. As such, on site filming now forms a large part of our marketing strategy and I only expect it to gain momentum as we take on more projects.”**

Laura Wakelin, Deputy Chief Executive (Communications & Marketing),  
Black Country Living Museum

© BBC

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## **CASE STUDY:** Tiger Aspect’s Peaky Blinders at the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

Having film crews on site at Black Country Living Museum is not something new but it is something that has become a much more familiar sight over the last couple of years. A key focus in our new strategic plan 2015-20 is to grow and diversify our income streams in order to become a sustainable self-reliant organisation and hiring the Museum as a filming location is just one of the ways that we are fulfilling that aim. Though, I have to say, it’s not always easy!

First of all, just dealing with the number of requests can be very time consuming. These can be anything from a student wanting to film part of a University or college project to a Location Manager looking for scenes in which to set part of a Hollywood film and believe it or not, all need to be treated in the same way in terms of the processes you need to go through. Obviously, we aren’t able to accept all requests but sometimes, just making the decision as to whether it’s a project we want to take on can involve several conversations, emails and meetings.

I have to say, it is rare that we say no at the initial enquiry stage unless we know that we don’t have the resource to commit; it’s good to either meet the individual or production company and get an idea of their requirements before making that decision. If at that stage we feel as though the filming isn’t right for us either in terms of script content or timescales then we will say no. First and foremost, we are a Museum of the highest quality open for the enjoyment and education of our visitors and so any filming projects undertaken must not impact on this to the extent where the visitor experience becomes a secondary concern.

Once we’ve committed to a filming project, I make sure a list of do’s and don’ts are communicated to the Location Manager right from the outset. Many of these are constants but some do change once we’ve sussed out the nature of the project and the likely impact it will have on site. Of course we also request thorough documentation from the crew, including proof of public liability insurance, relevant/necessary risk assessments, and a detailed filming and set-up schedule, amongst others. Once we’re both happy with everything we then mutually sign a contract.

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If this paperwork's not in place and you've not been strict in requesting it you can find that the impact on the Museum can be huge. There are numerous challenges of having a film crew on site anyway, but if you're not prepared, problems can begin to spiral out of control. For us, minimising the impact on visitors is one of the biggest challenges but managing the treatment of the Museum's historic objects is as equally demanding. It is essential to find out in advance exactly where the crew wish to film and which objects will be affected, then involve the relevant colleagues to mitigate the risks in those areas. As with most things, effective communication – both inside your organisation and externally with the film crew and visitors – will help overcome even the greatest challenges.

One of the most frequent questions I get asked is “what’s it like for the Museum to have celebrities filming on site?” and I have to say that whilst it’s exciting in principle (especially when it’s Cillian Murphy!), it does require a lot of careful planning to ensure that we are fulfilling our side of the agreement with regards to restrictions around press and photography. It’s also important to manage staff expectations – the set is a closed one and we have to ensure that it is kept that way at all times. We often see fans visiting during the filming if word does get out and so communicating with them in the right way and managing their expectations is also important.

People are also very keen to know what the benefits are of having filming on site and I can say without a doubt that there are many! Not only does it bring in income - which we can reinvest into the Museum -, it also generates national exposure, both in terms of press coverage and social media during the filming and in the run up to the programme air date. We’ve recently done a media monitoring exercise which showed us that press coverage alone during the recent *Peaky Blinders* filming last October had an Advertising Value Equivalent of £100k. More importantly however is that filming (and the set dressing that comes with it) generally shows the Museum at its very best to a national and sometimes international audience. That kind of exposure is very difficult to put a figure on and recent filming has undoubtedly had a positive impact on visitor numbers, though it is difficult to measure the extent of this. We tend to track the impact of the filming in raising awareness of the Museum anecdotally by talking to our staff, visitors and from reading what people say about us on social media and review sites such as TripAdvisor. More overtly, in recent times we’ve actually watched groups of people visit the Museum dressed as the *Peaky Blinders*, which gave us a hint that filming has a positive effect on our visitor numbers!

Finally, following the popularity of *Peaky Blinders* and capitalising on BCLM being named by the producers and writers as “the home of *Peaky Blinders*”, we have recently decided to run a themed *Peaky Blinders* evening later this year. I’m delighted to say that it sold out in less than 24 hours and so we’ve recently added another *Peaky Blinders* Night to our programme which sold out in even less time. I think it’s fair to say that the efforts we’ve put into filming projects at the Museum over the past couple of years are really starting to pay off for us!

**- Laura Wakelin, Deputy Chief Executive (Communications & Marketing), Black Country Living Museum**



## Managing Expectations


It is wise for any potential film location to consider all of the options and potential issues that can arise when seeking to maximise tourism benefits.

Not every TV show or production is going to generate the same levels of interest as Harry Potter or Downton Abbey, particularly with international audiences and therefore visitors. It is important to understand as much as possible about the potential audience for the show in advance to help tailor and consider approaches to developing the film tourism offer.

Even for successful productions there are issues for locations to consider. Given the multiple locations used by many productions, it may be the case that one iconic location receives the bulk of attention, drawing attention – and screen tourists – away from other locations that might have been featured on screen. For example, Broadchurch screen tourism appears to have been largely centred on West Bay – even though key locations were filmed elsewhere, including in Clevedon in Somerset. A coordinated approach is required that joins-up the screen and wider tourism offer across multiple locations and encourages visitors to experience more of what is on offer.

In addition, the screen tourism interest may be unpredictable. Producers are interested in visually impactful, original locations and these may not always be the best locations in terms of maximising any subsequent tourists. This means that if screen tourism does begin to flow from a production, locations may not be in a position to maximise the benefits. It may not be possible (or desirable) to charge entry, develop a shop or café, or install related activities.

Infrastructure is also a key consideration. While parking and transport capacity issues can be an issue e.g.: the village of Goathland in North Yorkshire saw tourist visits rise from a steady 200,000 prior to 1991 to more than 1.2 million, with the TV series Heartbeat considered to be the primary factor. As a result the community has pointed to issues with crowding and car-parking. These challenges can be planned for through working closely with the local authority.



Broughton Castle, Oxfordshire, where  
Shakespeare in Love was filmed  
© VisitEngland, VisitOxfordshire

## The benefits of close links between screen and tourism bodies

Closer links at local level between Local Authorities, Destination Organisations and regional Creative England representatives can help to help attract more productions to local areas and boost screen tourism opportunities.

Screen and tourism agencies have high levels of market knowledge and insight into their respective sectors and the sharing of this knowledge should be encouraged. For example, with very high production levels in the UK there is a clear need for locations. An exchange of information between screen and tourism agencies can help alert productions to new and relevant locations, while locations can also be kept aware of any forthcoming screen opportunities.

The expertise of both sectors should also be harnessed to meet visitor needs for better screen tourism materials at some sites, including digital guides. For example, screen agencies may have access to film-making or on-screen talent that could be utilised in the creation of high quality materials and content regarding locations and the production of the film or TV drama.

Working with local tourism bodies could help tailor such material to relevant tourist demographics, and ensure it is widely distributed to visitors. This would also enable the creation of materials that could function as regional itineraries – helping tourists understand other film and TV locations that may be easily accessible from a site.

Screen and tourism agencies can also help to identify ways to measure the impact and value of screen tourism to the locations and regions in which they are situated.

# What did you think?

**We ran a series of open events in the autumn of 2015 to share our research findings with interested parties across the country. We asked for attendees' feedback on a number of points and here is a summary of the feedback we received from a variety of film locations and tourism attractions. Please see below for individual examples of feedback.**

## **In summary, you told us that:**

- You wanted to see case studies of successful productions (see above), and also need advice on the process, particularly including contracting and impact on the local area. Please feel free to contact your local Creative England representative who should be able to answer any queries you might have.
- Among those who had hosted a production, almost half (2 out of 5) found the set-up and pre-production process challenging – and almost all visitor attractions (6 out of 7) who took part said it was challenging. Workload and additional requests were the key issues, with key learnings for the future being co-operation across organisations involved, and flexibility
- Visitor reaction to filming ranged from mixed, but mostly positive to very positive, with some locations using it as a 'sell' or setting up viewing areas to engage visitors with the production
- Advice and support from Creative England, local film offices and other film professionals was seen as key for a good production experience
- 69% of locations saw additional visitors after the production, with 28% seeing a large number of additional visitors. Around half (48%) had prepared for these additional visitors, largely with visitor information, PR & marketing, and infrastructure improvements
- Most locations promoted their link to the production, largely via social media and on their website
- Around half (51%) of locations who had hosted a production felt they needed support and guidance on capitalising on the benefits of filming, particularly needing help with negotiating with production companies, promotional materials from the production and promotion across a destination rather than for a single location

## **We asked you what you learnt from your experience of production set-up :**

*Ensuring that the amounts quoted are going to cover the costs, as you need to be flexible which can have an impact on other income streams.*

Sian Fraser, York Conferences

*Involve key partners from the beginning and be flexible*

Jude Leitch, Northumberland Tourism

*You need a good partnership and effective working with local authorities and key attractions and land owners*

Malcolm Bell, VisitCornwall

*Biggest factor is learn to be flexible with them crews and also make sure your site is fully respected.*

Helen O'Kane, Puzzlewood

*Excellent communications skills between all parties (consultation) is crucial. Local Authorities such as Manchester have their own unique logistical issues.*

Stephen Upton, Manchester City Council



## **We asked you what you learnt to be aware of at production set-up phase, things you hadn't been prepared for:**

*Remember to add 1 hour before and after filming timings given for set-up and strike.*

Shelagh Bebington, Arley Hall & Gardens

*Lack of ability to influence choices - the film company often knows what they want and won't be moved!*

Jude Leitch, Northumberland Tourism

## **We also asked how you managed to balance the needs of visitors with those of the production:**

*I think it is about being open and honest about what you are both able to do upfront, so that all parties get the best out of the situation.*

Sian Fraser, York Conferences

*Additional security supplied to crew - ensure they are polite and spend time speaking to visitors. Set up viewing areas to avoid scrabbling all over the place to see. Always explain filming onsite prior to taking any money.*

Helen O'Kane, Puzzlewood

*We offered discounted admission due to some of the rooms being closed.*

Vikki Stronge, Haddon Hall & Estate

*During a production that involved road closures to both cars and pedestrians at various points during the day, a council officer was on site to deal with any queries. No complaints from visitors that are known during any productions.*

Angela Dixon, East Riding of Yorkshire Council

*Depending on the production we aim to keep disruption to a minimum for visitors and businesses. We use social media to advise on closed sets and equally whether they were able to see filming take place. All this needs to be managed closely and after filming, that's when it can be capitalised upon.*

Nicola Atanassova, Visit Blackpool





## What additional support or information would be helpful during the production?:

*A summary of the production time line would be useful.*

Craig Nattress, Ryedale District Council

*Advice from Creative England has been great. I think knowing how to pitch venue hire price is very difficult, but we have learnt to price based on what it restricts us selling to others.*

Sian Fraser, York Conferences

## What was your visitors' reaction to filming taking place?:

*It's how we 'sell' the property to visitors during this time which is important. We are always positive and tell visitors they are visiting a film set as well as a stately home.*

Shelagh Bebington, Arley Hall & Gardens

## Assuming the film or TV production would generate additional visitors, what practical steps did you take to prepare for this?:

*We made sure that information on experiences/places featured in the production were easy to find on our website. Also contacted all the locations and made sure they were prepared.*

Jude Leitch, Northumberland Tourism

*Occasional extra staff, extra car parking. Extra film related marketing and targeted social media. Exhibitions, film tours, all of our guides are trained with knowledge of the filming that has taken place.*

Vikki Stronge, Haddon Hall & Estate

## What visitor experience preparations did you make for for additional visitors?:

*We staged a temporary exhibition about the film which has now been running for more than a year and continues to attract more than 80% of our visitors.*

*During filming, production companies are generally not ready to promote the film / programme yet, so on site promotion is extremely difficult if not altogether unlikely to be achievable.*

Katherine Lynch, Bletchley Park



## What additional support or information would you like to help prepare you for this phenomenon?:

*How to deal with the visitors; ideas of what they are looking for; how to get them to stay for longer or come back again*

Richard Milkins, Cheshire East Council

*Understanding how we can price competitively and how to deal with the company after the event. We were asked not to photograph the filming, which of course we respected, but the film company did not meet its side of the bargain and send us information after the event.*

Ann Middleton, Didcot Railway Centre

## And what information or support do you feel would help you capitalise on filming at your destination?:

*I think if some venues could get together and offer packages. It is hard for us to set really competitive rates sometimes, because as a University it is unlikely we are going to become a tourist destination, but it might have wider impact on the city. Some sort of way we can work together to the benefit of the area.*

Sian Fraser, York Conferences

*More information on how to let the film company allow the use of stills in promotional material. How to negotiate this in contracts etc.*

Vikki Stronge, Haddon Hall & Estate



© Walt Disney Studios



## Conclusions

**The English tourism industry now has an unprecedented opportunity to capitalise on the profile boost that film and TV productions can bring to a local area. With improvements to the tax break recently announced, the UK can expect high levels of TV and film production to continue.**

**Hosting the production of a film or television drama can lead to a significant subsequent uplift in visitor numbers - seeing real-life film locations can be a primary reason for tourists to travel and screen tourism effects can be long-lasting.**

**Closer engagement and information sharing between Creative England, VisitEngland, local councils, Destination Organisations and other Film Friendly Partners before, during and after filming takes place on location across the country can both bolster the tourism offer in this area and capitalise on its impact.**



# About Creative England

Creative England invests in and supports creative ideas, talent and businesses in film, TV, games and digital media. We aim to grow the brightest, the best, and those with the most promise so that individuals and businesses can achieve their full creative and commercial potential. We help identify future opportunities to grow the economy and generate jobs.

Creative England's Production Services team provides a free film office service to productions filming in England, outside London, to create investment, jobs and profile. Working in partnership with the British Film Commission to promote England internationally, Creative England is the one-stop shop for locations, studios, facilities and crew.

From sourcing locations to negotiating film permissions, our experts connect film and programme makers to the people, places and facilities that make England an amazing place to film. In the last two years we've helped 1,936 productions to film on location in the English regions, bringing over £171 million to local economies and 10,000 days of work for local crews.

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