



'Beneath the storyline': analysing the role and importance of film in the preservation and development of Scottish heritage sites

Rosa Schiavone, Stijn Reijnders & Amanda Brandellero

To cite this article: Rosa Schiavone, Stijn Reijnders & Amanda Brandellero (2022) 'Beneath the storyline': analysing the role and importance of film in the preservation and development of Scottish heritage sites, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 28:10, 1107-1120, DOI: [10.1080/13527258.2022.2131876](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2022.2131876)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2022.2131876>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 11 Oct 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 117



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



'Beneath the storyline': analysing the role and importance of film in the preservation and development of Scottish heritage sites

Rosa Schiavone , Stijn Reijnders and Amanda Brandellero 

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the increasing role and importance of popular culture for the management of cultural heritage sites in Scotland. In particular, it examines how heritage professionals deal with the growing number of location filming requests and new film tourist flows in the wake of these popular film and television productions. Based on a series of in-depth interviews with fifteen heritage professionals from different management levels and diverse sites across Scotland, we identify three main approaches, each with their own consequences, for presenting and preserving Scottish heritage: the utilitarian approach, the critical-representational approach, and the integrative approach. We conclude that the Scottish heritage sector is increasingly aware of the impact of popular culture, and willing to utilise those associations to increase the attractiveness of their heritage sites. Moreover, associations with popular culture offer ways to improve the inclusive character of contemporary heritage management.

ARTICLE HISTORY



Received 21 October 2021
Accepted 28 September 2022

KEYWORDS

Cultural heritage; Popular culture; Film; Tourism; Scotland; Heritage sites

Introduction

Heritage sites in Scotland have become popular filming locations for many Hollywood feature films and international television series.¹ Consequently, they now serve as popular destinations for film tourism, a type of tourism where visitors are inspired to travel due to a location's connection to a film or television series (Connell 2012; Beeton 2016). In the wake of these media productions and new flows of tourism, popular culture has become an important resource in the contemporary usages, management, and promotion of Scottish heritage sites. In the Scottish context, this 'popularisation of heritage' has proven to be economically lucrative. Heritage institutions such as Historic Environment Scotland (HES), a public body concerned with the promotion, preservation, and management of Scotland's historic locations, are progressively embedding popular culture in promotional strategies and policies. The 'Braveheart effect', 'Downton effect', and 'Outlander effect'—originally coined to refer to the large influx of visitors and accompanying economic gains to Scottish local areas where *Braveheart* (1995), *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015), and *Outlander* (2014–) respectively were filmed²—are terms now widely applied to contemporary heritage sites featuring in film and television productions. This research examines the ongoing relationship between popular culture, film tourism, and cultural heritage, specifically its implications for the management of local heritage sites. It investigates the following research question: *How do professionals working in the Scottish heritage industry articulate the role and importance of popular fiction in the preservation, development, and promotion of heritage sites?* Through in-depth interviews with

CONTACT Rosa Schiavone  schiavone@eshcc.eur.nl  Erasmus University Rotterdam, Burgemeester Oudlaan 50, 3062 PA Rotterdam, The Netherlands

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

heritage workers, it examines the role of film, television, and tourism in preserving, developing, and promoting Scottish heritage sites. Additionally, it explores heritage workers' motivations and justifications that lie behind these practices and the implications for the stories that are communicated to audiences.

This research contributes to studies that explore the transformative potential of popular culture and tourism in shaping local heritage and histories. Prior research indicates that discourses of heritage are constantly changing and position heritage as an ongoing process that reflects, responds to, and shapes tendencies in society (West 2010; Muzaini and Minca 2018). Other works have observed the growing interconnections between heritage, screen, and literary tourism (Martin-Jones 2014; Agarwal and Shaw 2017); the nexus of these is believed to be increasingly important in co-creating heritage in contemporary times. Such tendencies point towards heritage practices becoming more multi-focal, with a clear focus on keeping heritage relevant for today's society (Muzaini and Minca 2018).

Building on the work examining the overlaps between heritage and film tourism, the current article provides a further look into the practices of heritage professionals that directly deal with the increasing association of heritage sites with film and television, and the influx of film tourism. Traditional historical heritage sites that have been used in film and television productions offer a unique vantage point from which to observe multi-focality in practice, and for understanding how heritage professionals mediate between, and tend to, disparate interests in an increasingly mediated world. As many participants would argue, 2020 and 2021 have been difficult years for the heritage sector, not the least because of the shutdown of many museums and heritage sites due to COVID-19-related measures. Moreover, these were also years of reflection, in light of civil right movements like Black Lives Matter, social discord caused by the Brexit, increasing attention to identity politics, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Scottish heritage sites continue developing alongside these societal changes and have undoubtedly been impacted. In view of these social changes and current debates on heritage and film tourism, this paper presents how Scottish heritage sites are developing in their focus on keeping heritage relevant.

Theory

Scotland has a long history as a destination for film tourism (Martin-Jones 2014), and continues to attract visitors due to its association with films or television series (Connell 2012; Beeton 2016; Reijnders 2011). Prior research has examined connections between film tourism and heritage tourism, noting many overlaps and increased intertwining between these industries. For example, Agarwal and Shaw (2017) explore the increasing overlaps between heritage, screen, and literary tourism, arguing that all three forms of tourism share the 'co-creation, (re)representation and commodification of people, places and events' (Agarwal and Shaw 2017, 61) as well as 'the portrayal of the past [which promulgates] nostalgia and backward-looking thinking' (Agarwal and Shaw 2017, 61). Similarly, Martin-Jones (2014) argues that film tourism in Scotland can be understood as a facet of heritage tourism. The author finds that cinematic constructions of Scotland's distinctive history and national heritage heavily appeal to, and resonate with, heritage tourists and diasporas.

Conceptualisations of what precisely heritage entails constantly develop 'according to the contemporary societal context of transforming power relationships and emerging nascent national (and other) identities' (Harvey 2001, 335). Heritage involves the inclusion of features of culture that are expressive and reflective of the past, the present, and the continuity of nations and societies (Brandellero and Janssen 2014). It simultaneously excludes other elements deemed not crucial or representative enough. Previous debates in heritage studies centred around the presupposed stark contrast between two models of heritage. In this dichotomy, Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) investigates power dynamics and describes official institutionalised discourses of history (Smith 2006), whereas Heritage from Below (HFB) focuses on 'heritage as a process understood, practiced and experienced on the ground by [...] non-elites' (Muzaini and Minca 2018, 1). As they forewarn

the romanticising of HFB alternatives, Muzaini and Minca (2018) argue that ultimately ‘every form of heritage valorisation, from the top down to the bottom up, is inherently selective and responds, in various degree, to the position of the respective promoters and advocates’ (Muzaini and Minca 2018, 3). Likewise, McCrone, Morris, and Kiely (1995) effectively argue how several agents in the Scottish heritage industry are shaping Scotland as a brand, in ways tied to their respective political and national agendas. These ideas offer a perspective of heritage in which HFB and AHD are not necessarily antithetical, but rather complementary; a perspective that is multi-focal, representing a multiplicity of people, groups, and intentions. This article follows this perspective and focuses on traditional heritage sites that are often presented by the local management in an AHD-discourse, but that increasingly attract tourists who are driven mainly by associations with ‘low’ popular culture.

As heritagisation is a cultural process subject to constant development (Brandellero and Janssen 2014), conceptualisations of heritage have changed in relation to popular culture. Research shows how popular culture provides opportunities for cultural heritage institutions to render cultural identities and local and national heritage (Van der Hoeven 2018). This work additionally reveals the growing connections between heritage institutions, popular culture, and tourism. For example, Van der Hoeven and Brandellero (2015) argue that within Dutch local museums, popular music is inscribed into local heritage and consequently generates a sense of place. Here, institutions contribute to constructing place identity through popular culture by ‘presenting local sociocultural histories, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride, and seeking to document the artistic legacy of places’ (Van der Hoeven and Brandellero 2015, 37). These studies demonstrate how popular culture becomes integrated in more general and formal notions of regional and local heritage and place identity.

Similarly, previous studies on film and television provided insights into how municipalities, city brand managers, and curators utilise media tourism. These studies show that formal heritage institutions increasingly include popular culture in their definition of local heritage and identity. For example, Saunders (2017) illustrates how the Malmö municipality embraces and deploys the practical utility of the portrayal of Malmö in the Swedish-Danish television series *The Bridge* (2011–2018). In a similar vein, Seaton (2016) explores how Japanese local municipalities anticipate media tourists in their tourism development strategies and tactics (Seaton 2016, 110). On the one hand, stakeholders want to profit from anticipated media tourism influx, while on the other hand, they aim to strengthen and re-negotiate local identity. In anticipating media tourism, heritage industry professionals and local municipalities grapple with simultaneously enhancing the recognition of regions and nations in economically lucrative ways, whilst remaining concerned with the media portrayal and wider representations of regions and nations.

These examples reveal an ongoing struggle in the heritage sector in dealing with the often-capricious effects of popular culture on the numbers and expectations of visitors, in the wake of popular movies or television series. This struggle is not just of a practical nature – for example, managing tourist flows – but also relates to a more fundamental issue of heritage dynamics: the need to bridge cultural divides and include different (and sometimes opposing) perspectives on local heritage and identity. This paper contributes to documenting that quest, while also discussing ongoing and new strategies to deal with this quest.

Methodology

The research inquiry is based on fifteen in-depth semi-structured expert-interviews with Scottish heritage workers and professionals. Expert interviewing (Kvale and Brinkmann 2007) was used to arrive at an understanding of how and in what ways heritage workers make use of popular films and television shows in re-telling local histories, and their motivations for this. We recruited participants by initially contacting a variety of Scottish heritage organisations by email and telephone. Thereafter, other participants were recruited through snowball sampling (Bryman 2016), which

proved fruitful as the Scotland heritage sector proved to be well-connected. Interviewees included various heritage practitioners working for national and regional organisations such as HES, VisitScotland, National Trust for Scotland, Docomomo, and several smaller heritage conservation projects, funds, and networks, such as Trails and Tails and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). The interviewed practitioners all engage in projects which connect heritage, (fictional) storytelling, and film and television. Fieldwork was conducted in late 2019; site analysis was carried out on several heritage sites-turned-film locations in Scotland. Interviews were conducted from August to November 2020 through video-calling (Skype and Zoom) as the COVID-19 pandemic halted all international travel. Two interviews were conducted via email. All participants gave (recorded) consent for the interview to be recorded and used in this research. In addition, all participants gave the first author permission to use their first names in the research when presenting quotations. Interviews lasted between 55 minutes and 2 hours.

Interviews were semi-structured, as pre-established topics and questions formed the foundation of all interviews. Using Van der Hoeven and Brandellero's (2015) and Seaton's (2016) studies as a basis for operationalisation, the interviews focused on how heritage workers *dealt with filming on locations in their practices of heritage preservation; how they engaged with media representations of the heritage sites they work at; and how they perceived their role in representing the local history of the site*. The interview topics included: general aims and objectives in heritage preservation; on-site filming procedures; post-filming tourism; and film and heritage. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and subjected to discourse analysis, to examine how the language used by participants actively creates and reproduces social meanings (Tonkiss 2012). Using Atlas.TI, analysis consisted of one round of open coding, followed by two rounds of focused coding, from which overarching themes were distilled (Mace and Ward 2002; Hsieh and Shannon 2005; Bryman 2016). The results illuminate three approaches that Scottish heritage professionals have and use towards popular culture in the preservation and development of heritage sites. These approaches are a utilitarian approach, a critical-representational approach, and an integrative approach.

Findings

Utilitarian approach: creating sustainable audiences and revenue for conservation

One of the participants, Richard, works for Historic Environment Scotland (HES), a public body that cares for and promotes Scotland's historic environment. This includes over 300 sites of national importance and cultural significance. Each property has a 'Statement of Cultural Significance'³ (SCS hereafter), which documents the history of the property and articulates key features and values that make each property culturally significant. SCS's provide guidelines for preservation and directly inform conservation work. SCS's are always a work-in-progress as new values are conceptualised and emerging. Recently, the practice of film production on heritage sites has been recognised as being of 'contemporary' and 'use' value. These values boil down to, firstly, the economic viability of filming productions on heritage sites, and secondly, the social importance of heritage sites in attracting tourist audiences. The production of films and series on heritage sites has become an important pillar that generates income and revenue for those sites and local communities. The entire process, from location filming to the post-filming profits generated by promotion of the films and tourism, is described as crucial in preserving heritage sites. As Anna – filming manager of the National Trust of Scotland (NTS)—explains, the money received from film companies shooting on their sites goes directly into sustaining their properties:

Every production is directly helping to conserve the location that they're using [...] We're a conservation charity. We don't get any support, although we have just received funding from Scottish government because of the effect that coronavirus has had on our business. But we don't receive any regular government support. (Anna, NTS)

As Anna explains, filming on heritage sites helps to support preservation directly. The revenue made during production is especially necessary since there are no central funds in place and there is no regular government support for the conservation of heritage properties. Promotional activities related to location filming – such as Q&As with film crews, film screenings, and film festivals – are also an important source of revenue. Furthermore, participants stress the importance of the post-filming period, as films are used in profitable marketing strategies for heritage sites. For example, internationally successful media productions such as *Skyfall* (2012) and *Avengers: Endgame* (2019) helped raise the profile of heritage sites once filming was completed. Moreover, heritage sites' associations with film and television reap benefits for surrounding local businesses and economies. For example, Anna discusses how a local store in Falkland is benefitting from appearing in *Outlander*:

There's *Outlander* inspired jewellery and a shop in Falkland. There's somebody who sells these beautiful little blue ceramic vase brooches. It's because Claire [a character in *Outlander*] in the first episode is looking in the shop window. That's become an income stream for that person. (Anna, NTS)

Participants praise the positive economic benefits that film tourism can bring to local businesses and communities, a claim substantiated in prior research (Beeton 2008; Heitmann 2010; Alderman et al. 2012; Garrison and Wallace 2021). Thus, heritage professionals view film and television productions as crucial in attracting substantial numbers of visitors annually. This perception is shared in prior research on how film and television have become increasingly pervasive in tourists' reasons and motivations for travelling (Beeton 2006). According to The *Outlander* Effect & Tourism 2022 report by VisitScotland, eight per cent of leisure visitors to Scotland in 2016 (which translates to approximately 700 000 domestic and international visitors) were influenced by a television programme about Scotland.⁴ The Visitor Attraction Monitor reported a growth in attendance for *Outlander*-related locations from 1.47 million visitors in 2014 to 3.20 million in 2020.⁵ It is not surprising, then, that filming on heritage sites is even encouraged by higher boards of institutions and the government in the case of HES properties, according to participants, especially as there appears to be a significant lack of regular governmental financial support for sustaining heritage sites. This apparent growing dependency of heritage sites on film production for financial survival is problematic, and suggests heritage managers must find other suitable ways of preserving and maintaining heritage sites. Although reports like the ones mentioned before celebrate the positive, lucrative impacts of film in attracting visitors and boosting local economies, the durability and sustainability of film tourism audiences and revenues are questionable. As Croy (2018) debates, the bulk of film-related site visitors turn out to be incidental visitors, for whom film is merely a 'vehicle to become aware of the scenery and landscape' (Croy 2018, 94). According to Croy, the fraction of visitors for whom film or television is the primary reason for visiting a site is relatively small. Prior research by Croy (2011) similarly questioned the long-term economic impacts of film tourism. Therefore, it is debatable whether the audiences that filming attracts to heritage sites – and accompanying revenues – will remain a lucrative endeavour in the future. In addition to garnering economic revenues, participants appreciate heritage sites' associations with film and television for their supposed social importance in attracting visitors and fostering an affective engagement between audiences and the sites.

Our main aim was to make sure that people could find the places they've seen on screen but to give additional history as well. Fans visiting [...] would see the *Outlander* thing and then find out about Jacobite heritage and maybe about their own family ancestry or textiles or Gaelic language. They think, "actually, I've only just visited this location. There's all this other stuff beneath the storyline that I want to explore". (Jenni, VisitScotland⁶)

Film is framed as something that often acts as a first pull for travelling for many tourists. Prior research frames this as the "hook or trigger"-approach' (Torchin 2002; Schiavone and Reijnders 2020), a very utilitarian approach towards popular culture where popular culture is simply used as a pull-factor, without making those associations part of a broader understanding of local heritage.

Behind-the-scenes information, film narratives, and characters are used by heritage site interpreters to spark the first interest of visitors. On site, film tourists are encouraged to learn about the history and events that took place on these heritage sites. Tourist visits that were partially motivated by film and television productions can, by proxy, inform tourists about histories and factual events behind the heritage sites. On asking Caroline, interpreter and archaeologist of Orkney heritage sites, about the role of (fictional) storytelling in engaging with place, Caroline states:

If you watch a film about the Orkney past, whether it's some sort of Hollywood blockbuster or whether it's factual – there is a huge educational potential that actually we probably haven't really tapped [...] If you look at the way in which the members of the public learn about history, by and large they're learning about it through television, films and novels, fiction writing, graphic novels. (Caroline, interpreter and archaeologist Orkney sites)

Like Caroline, heritage professionals assume popular culture has an educational role. However, it is debatable whether this idea holds up from the perspective and experience of visitors and audiences. Research has shown tourists have myriad reasons and motivations for visiting a site (Reijnders 2009; Roesch 2009; Kim 2012; Connell 2012). Focusing on tourists' agency, studies like these highlight many reasons for visiting beyond educational or even media-related purposes, and different levels of involvement and engagement with place, with cultural contexts and socio-demographic factors weighing in. Therefore, although heritage practitioners appreciate the educational potential of film and television on heritage sites based on their experiences, the extent to which this rings true for visitors remains a question this study cannot answer.

Appreciating the economic and social merit of filming on heritage sites does not mean participants are unequivocally positive about this practice. Filming on heritage sites is often accompanied by incidents, such as footfall from having too many film crews and visitors on site, which can damage the often-fragile areas surrounding the sites. There have been situations of overcrowding from tourists,⁷ as well incidents during production which caused damage to properties (although strict criteria and regulations pre-, during, and post-filming and clear communication have been established by and for heritage sites over time to minimise this as much as possible).⁸ Consequently, the growing dependency of heritage managers on film and television productions for revenue and attention is something to be wary of, as it raises concerns about what forces might become more powerful in driving the development of heritage sites. Ultimately, the associated benefits of filming on heritage sites do appear to come at a price.

Critical-representational approach: addressing the romanticising and political repercussions of Scottish historical films

There is a long and significant history of filming on Scottish heritage sites.^{9 10} Some of the biggest, internationally well-known big-budget productions filmed in Scotland were filmed at heritage sites, such as *Mary, Queen of Scots* (2018), *Braveheart* (1995), and *Outlaw King* (2018). As heritage practitioners indicate, productions filmed on, or heavily inspired¹¹ by, these sites are predominantly historical epics and period dramas. It is also these productions that leave the most visible traces on heritage sites long after filming has ended, more so, for example, than films in other genres, documentaries, or commercials. Historical epics and period dramas account for large flows of film tourism and continue to be prominently used in marketing strategies. Participants accredit this pattern to the aesthetic of heritage sites and the efficiency of using these heritage sites for film purposes for production crews.

It's your idealised castle. It has people's perceptions of what a castle should look like. It's well preserved and relatively intact. It has nice surfaces. It has an area of land around about it that's good for *Outlander* and *Game of Thrones* and the like [...] Some of the castles are based on different parts of our castles, they've been put together to look like a castle the way the Americans perceive a castle. (On Doune Castle, Richard, HES)

As Richard posits, there exists an idealised version of what a castle looks like in the public's imagination. Richard describes Doune Castle, a medieval castle built in the thirteenth century, with crumbled sandstone walls forming a pentagon shape. Doune Castle would not look out of place in any medieval-set drama. In fact, it has been used plenty in productions like *Outlander*, *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), and *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975). According to participants, film crews often seek out Scottish heritage sites as backdrops for big-budget historical films and series, as they provide ideal and convincing medieval environments. Furthermore, many of these sites have external and interior spaces with sufficient room for film crews to work without having to worry about causing damage. In addition, these sites tend to be in easy-to-reach regions, such as Stirling, making them central, accessible, and thus popular amongst film crews. Material and tangible culture (i.e. logistics and aesthetics) is thus regarded by participants as a key influence upon film crews when choosing locations. A concern voiced by participants is heritage sites becoming (or perhaps already being) an 'industry favourite' amongst companies producing historical epics and period dramas. This concern relates to representations of Scotland in these productions, which often focus strongly on historical traditions such as Clydesidism, in which Scotland is represented as 'an urban, industrial, masculine space' (Torricelli 2020, 33); the Kailyard, which focuses on the rural lowlands and late nineteenth century parochial village life; and Tartantry, a discourse reducing Scotland to the Highlands during the Jacobite rebellions (Munro 2020; Torricelli 2020). These common representations of Scotland often glorify a romanticised and/or 'working class masculinised' version of Scotland, which is considered regressive and, ultimately, limited (Munro 2020; Torricelli 2020).

There is a very romanticised view of Scotland [...] That's all that people think there is to Scotland. But you're missing so much. There is a threat of this romanticised view taking over because it's a unique correlation of how we are developing our history now and our heritage now. A lot of us, we love to look backwards. (Tyler, SPAB)

Like Tyler, heritage practitioners generally take a critical stance towards romanticised representations of Scotland in film productions and voice their concerns about romanticising views of Scotland taking over tourists' gazes. These are common worries echoed in prior research (Edensor 2002; Brereton 2012; Martin-Jones 2014). By no means do film and television have an obligation to represent histories and realities accurately – in fact, they rarely do, nor have the responsibility to do so. However, the impact of media representations should not be underestimated, as they effectively contribute to essentialising, reductive, and often stigmatising imaginaries of cultures and people in today's mediatised society (Brooks and Hébert 2006).

There's that strong identification with a past and specific cultural heritage; a very heavily Gaelic Scotland. But that's only a tiny part of Scotland. They romanticise it, and make it sound as if it should be the whole of Scotland because it does define us as different to England. (Caroline, interpreter and archaeologist Orkney heritage sites)

Caroline argues there is a very strong embedding of history in contemporary Scottish culture and a strong identification with the past. This is partly born from a need to define Scotland distinctly from England and the rest of UK. The prevalence of this romanticisation embedded in Scottish culture is reflected in the film enquiries heritage professionals receive. These experiences evidently translate into the concern that participants, in using film and television in heritage practices, are restricted to working with a very limited history of Scotland. In engaging with these reductive representations of Scotland in their profession, participants question their own role in contributing to these romanticised representations. However, heritage practitioners find ways of working with the rather narrow range of film representations associated with heritage sites, through which they can transform stereotypes tied to a site into a learning moment. Reiterating how most filmed productions illuminate only certain parts of history, Kit states:

From an adaptation point of view at the site, ideas [of romanticised representations] are interesting because we can engage with that, potentially. We can use those, even where things are wrong. We could explain, 'Well, this is how it actually was', or it opens the door to the different subjects on it. (Kit, interpretation manager, HES)

As Kit's quote shows, engaging with films depicting romanticised representations of Scotland in this way aids participants to bypass feeding into the same narratives yet again. Instead, these same narratives are used to address realities, stories, and events that nuance or enrich historical events and stories. However, there are no concrete ways of measuring the relative successes of the strategies participants adopt, nor whether film and television crews necessarily welcome such input or act upon it (as films are not obliged to represent history accurately). The question then arises whether these strategies have an impact on audiences. Prior research has shown that on-site interpretation of heritage sites is regarded as important in shaping visitors' behaviour and experiences on site, as well as their understanding and appreciation of a place (Ablett and Dyer 2009; Io 2013). Some studies even indicate that heritage interpretation is crucial for audiences as they not only offer educational experiences, but also emotional ones that significantly deepen visitors' understanding of the past (Carr 2004; Malcolm-Davies 2004). Findings like these offer first insights into the extent to which participants' efforts have an impact on visitors.

Integrative approach: broadening the meaning of heritage through film (and) tourism

The increasing pervasiveness of film and television productions at Scottish heritage sites is mostly welcomed by participants, for their potential in shaping discourses on what heritage entails. As argued previously, many film enquiries tend to relate to historical period dramas or epics, which risk representing limited histories and peoples. Participants note how changes in the media landscape, such as on-demand television and streaming services – and consequently, a growing number of resources to work with more genres, diversity, and inclusivity – could generate possibilities:

It's just having space to have more stories being told. We had a great BBC Scotland production filmed at [our] Tennant house about the history of gay-Scotland. They did a dramatised scene of a woman who's transgender, getting their makeup on and getting ready to go out [...] [The producers] were like, 'hold on, let's go and let's see if there's a new angle that we can get. Is there somebody we've not focused on before?' [...] I hope we're able to welcome more projects that have diversity. (Anna, NTS)

Taking note of the growing demand and market for inclusive and diverse media content, participants anticipate new possibilities for future practices on heritage sites. These possibilities might enable them to progress towards representing a wider array of voices and fresh retakes on history and heritage narratives. Participants explain they are not just waiting around for inclusive film enquiries. Instead, there are plenty of current and future projects in the works aimed at representing a multi-focal perspective of heritage. For example, Anne – an interpreter and archaeologist at the historical site Ness of Brodgar – discloses about a film project on which she will inform the filmmakers about specific Orkney local histories:

At the moment, a local cartoon artist is seeking funding to try and produce a cartoon film about a disabled boy who lived at Brodgar 5,000 years ago [...] The story is based on a character called Luigi who is a young, disabled boy. It will be set within Orkney and is informed by the artist's research and the help that we, other archaeologists, will give him. [We're] excited about the possibility of creating these Orkney stories nowadays. (Anne, interpreter and archaeologist Ness of Brodgar)

As Anne further elaborates, projects like these are exemplary of Orkney's contemporary cultural heritage, which is partly comprised of modern popular culture and storytelling. The cartoon project is flavoured to a large extent by the past and aims to highlight the nuances of local Neolithic culture in Orkney. Similarly, participant Anna works on a media project focusing on a recently excavated house, which was owned in the eighteenth century by a former enslaved man named Skippy:

Our curatorial team is now doing a focus on a slavery project specifically. All their time and energy is going into framing our histories within that context. I think it's important to be honest about that and to address it. Skippy has an impressive story and people are really interested in this. It's a good way for people to find out about that side of history, as a starting point anyway. (Anna, NTS)

The aim of this project is to uncover and bring to the forefront the story and voice of an enslaved man living in eighteenth century Scotland, a part of history that was reality for a great number of Scottish people and that is now perceived as a problematic and painful legacy. Stories like Luigi's and Skippy's are parts of history that are not easy to sell either to mass tourism or to the local population. However, with media projects like these, heritage practitioners actively showcase these parts of history, thereby broadening ideas of what and who heritage should represent.

Engaging in such heritage practices also transforms ideas about what expert knowledge entails. For example, experts such as historians and archaeologists are deemed essential for informing film crews on what is authentic and factual. But with projects focusing on individuals with mostly unknown (or less marketable') stories, expert knowledge extends to local knowledge or 'hidden' histories.

There are more stories being told by different people. It's about being not elitist about how information is shared, because historic properties can get a reputation as being quite stuffy, old fashioned. I suppose that's another benefit of us engaging with filming; it keeps them relevant, and it keeps us being able to talk about our properties in a current way. (Anna, NTS)

Non-professionals are engaging in conversations about what heritage should be and are effectively becoming gatekeepers who co-decide what constitutes legitimate heritage (cf. Van der Hoeven and Brandellero 2015). As Anna mentions, filming on heritage sites keeps these sites relevant and opens ongoing discussions about properties and how they develop. Within this process, experts, (non) professionals, and fans all contribute to shaping the direction of heritage, without changing its integrity but, instead, making it more relevant by making it representative of – and appealing to – a wider range of people. This trend reflects changing values in and of heritage. Participants are thus actively moving towards shaping multi-vocal heritage (Muzaini and Minca 2018), by tying the past and present together using popular culture and by reflecting values that are important to the current day.

It would not be a stretch to argue that film and television productions are becoming a significant part of many Scottish heritage sites. This is especially so for heritage sites where film and television productions have become core parts of their appeal to visitors and are heavily integrated on site. Participants stress the long and significant history of filming on sites and contend this history has become a topic worthy of commemoration. The nexus of films, places, and histories is viewed as cultural heritage, able to show what ties together the past and the present, in the same way other types of heritage are also supposed to achieve. Participant Carsten uses the HES's listing of the Banana flats in Leith in 2017—a building with close connections to the *Trainspotting* films (1996, 2017)—as an example of how buildings become officially viewed as cultural heritage due to their association with film:

Historic Environment Scotland had to go through a consultation process as any listing proposal. [...] Interestingly, the residents there were very much in favour of listing and thought of it more as an appreciation of the place where they lived. The reason why the listing was actually processed at the time was the release of *Trainspotting 2*, T2. (Carsten, Docomomo)

As Carsten indicates, the legacy of the *Trainspotting* films was crucial for enlisting the Banana Flats as a heritage site. Carsten's quote fits within the movement of heritage practitioners' endeavours 'seeking to document the artistic legacy of place' (Van der Hoeven and Brandellero 2015, 37) through tying a form of popular culture to local identity and making it part of the location's history. The enlistment of the Banana Flats, in large part because of the *Trainspotting* films, affirms the contemporary legitimacy film carries in (a) place. Effectively, localised film heritage is created (cf. Torchin 2002).

Examples of popular culture becoming part of heritage in relation to media tourism have been investigated in prior research, for example with literary, music, and other forms of media tourism (Brandellero and Janssen 2014; Reijnders et al. 2015; Agarwal and Shaw 2017). Prior research, reports, and conversations with participants offer insights into what makes film tourism as heritage especially worthwhile compared to other kinds of media tourism. Discourses of legitimisation of film have typically revolved around rationalising films as educational tools, fine art, and/or historical documentation (Cronin 2021). The second half of the twentieth century saw a new justification emerging, namely film as heritage; the notion that film is a part of contemporary culture, one that merits preservation and protection (Antoniuzzi 2021). Following these legitimisations, it is perhaps the worldwide appeal of cinema, attracting wider audiences, that signifies its amalgamation as heritage. A recent VisitScotland survey on television programmes, films, and books set in Scotland shows that the bulk of respondents' visits (14%) were prompted by films and television programmes about Scotland, whereas six per cent were prompted by books and four per cent by online video content.¹² As research on cultural globalisation posits, visual media like television and film tend to permeate national and cultural boundaries more easily than media with a strong reliance on language or other culture-specific markers, especially in the case of US or UK cultural products (Straubhaar 2014). This helps explain why in the realm of media tourism, visual media are the most popular media attracting visitors. Arguably, the medium of film – and its ability to communicate several layers of information at once – also sets it apart from other media in its potential for communicating and embodying heritage. As Carsten observes:

[Film] is an artefact and cultural heritage in itself. Films are always transported opinion about [...] what you want to show. Lots of the films about New Town in Scotland are about painting a way forward into a bright, new future, better housing, but they also inform where people come from, what the situations are, what deprivation and poverty [people experienced] at the time. It's always these underlying aspects which you can communicate with film. (Carsten, Docomomo)

As Carsten proposes, a film about Scotland can communicate an intricate and multi-levelled account of social-political tendencies and developments that characterise a specific place and its heritage. The combined visual and auditory medium of film makes history come to life with lively re-tellings and visual markers of historical events through fiction and storytelling. Consequently, films create an affective interpretation of the past, present, and future, one that poses both opportunities and pitfalls for heritage practitioners in their endeavours to preserve and develop heritage sites.

Conclusion

This article focused on professionals working in the Scottish heritage industry and how they articulate the role and importance of popular entertainment in the preservation, development, and promotion of heritage sites. It presented three approaches Scottish heritage workers adopt in dealing with popular culture and media in the preservation and development of heritage sites. First, the utilitarian approach shows that participants highly appreciate filming on site for the economic benefits it brings, and its appeal in attracting audiences. Secondly, heritage professionals adopt a critical/representational approach to popular culture. Participants voiced their concerns about romanticising views of Scotland that circulate in the film enquiries they receive. Nonetheless, however problematic these limited views of Scotland may be (Edensor 2002; Brereton 2012; Martin-Jones 2014), findings show that heritage practitioners understand the limitations of these film enquiries and actively invent ways to deal with these representations to address their limitations. Thirdly, building on their concerns about contributing to a limited, romanticised, and authoritative tourist gaze of the past, heritage professionals adopt an integrative approach towards popular culture by actively broadening the idea of what heritage should be and who it should represent. In this process, the history of cinema tied to heritage sites is

constructed by participants as a form of autonomous cultural heritage (cf. Torchin 2002). Findings thus reveal that more than merely offering economic gains, associations with popular culture offer the potential to actively develop inclusive, multi-vocal heritage (Muzaini and Minca 2018): heritage that appeals to diverse audiences and can highlight narratives of people who have been overlooked in the past. This offers a perspective of heritage in which HFB and AHD are not necessarily antithetical, but rather complementary: one which is multi-focal, representing a multiplicity of people, whilst in large part consisting of canonical well-known histories and representations of Scotland.

However, a few snags accompany the benefits of implementing film and television on heritage sites. For one, research on film tourist segments (Croy 2018) casts doubt over the impact of the well-meaning strategies of heritage professionals on audiences. Other work also questions the viability of film tourism, finding that long-term economic gains through filming and post-production effects like marketing strategies and tourism are not always secured (Croy 2011; Póvoa, Reijnders, and Martens 2019). Related to that, doubts arise when considering the apparent growing importance of heritage professionals on the filming of productions at heritage sites. This growing dependency upon film productions in sustaining many Scottish heritage sites carries critical implications: in an especially dire prospect, this could form a breeding ground for new power configurations that are not beneficial to heritage site professionals and their goals but are advantageous to other stakeholders' agendas. These important questions deserve further exploration as the film, tourism, and heritage nexus continuously develops. The current paper only includes a small sample of heritage practitioners working on Scottish heritage sites; therefore, it remains a question of how heritage professionals' decision-making processes and motivations are affected by popular culture within other cultural contexts. In addition, while the paper focuses on tangible heritage and historical heritage sites, further research could fruitfully extend this investigation, by exploring how the negotiations behind the filmic representation of more contemporary and/or ordinary everyday life settings may offer a window onto a more multi-vocal and complex view of Scotland. This research could also be extended by examining how film tourism frames the intangible heritage of places, the customs and traditions, and whether it allows for multi-vocality and complexity.

Notes

1. 'Famous film & TV locations', National Trust for Scotland (www.nts.org.uk/stories/film-tv-locations-in-scotland). Last retrieved in September 2022.
2. 'Insight Department: The Outlander Effect & Tourism 2022', VisitScotland (www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers/outlander-effect-2022-updated.pdf). Last retrieved in September 2022.
3. 'About Historic Environment Scotland', Historic Environment Scotland (www.historicenvironment.scot/about-us/who-we-are/about-historic-environment-scotland/). Last retrieved in September 2022.
4. 'Insight Department: The Outlander Effect & Tourism 2022', VisitScotland (www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers/outlander-effect-2022-updated.pdf). Last retrieved in September 2022.
5. 'Insight Department: The Outlander Effect & Tourism 2022', VisitScotland (www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers/outlander-effect-2022-updated.pdf). Last retrieved in September 2022.
6. Jenni works at the Film and Creative Industries department of VisitScotland. Although predominantly involved in the Scottish tourism industry, she has worked on many projects that involved showcasing heritage sites as visitor sites, where film and television play a large role in their appeal. It remains important, however, to remain aware of the positioning of participants in their respective industries.
7. 'Skye islanders call for help with overcrowding after tourism surge' (www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/09/skye-islanders-call-for-help-with-overcrowding-after-tourism-surge). Last retrieved in September 2022.
8. 'Code of Practice for Filming in Edinburgh', Film Edinburgh (www.filmedinburgh.org/dyn/1654013113867/Edinburgh_CoP_2021Update.pdf). Last retrieved in September 2022.

9. 'Filming', Historic Environment Scotland (www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/filming/). Last retrieved in September 2022.
10. 'Filming Locations', National Trust for Scotland (www.nts.org.uk/maps/filming-locations). Last retrieved in September 2022.
11. For example, the animated film *Brave* (2012). See Disney's Pixar Brave, VisitScotland (www.visitscotland.com/see-do/attractions/tv-film/brave/). Last retrieved in September 2022.
12. 'Insight Department: The Outlander Effect & Tourism 2022', VisitScotland (www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers/outlander-effect-2022-updated.pdf). Last retrieved in September 2022.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. CoG-2015_681663).

Notes on contributors

Rosa Schiavone is PhD candidate and lecturer at Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her PhD project critically examines film tourism in Scotland and explores the interconnections between fiction, place and local and national heritage.

Stijn Reijnders is full professor of cultural heritage at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. His research focuses on the intersection of media, popular culture and tourism. Currently he leads two large, international research projects funded by the Dutch Science Foundation and by a Consolidator Grant from the European Research Council.

Amanda Brandellero is Associate Professor at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication. Her research focuses on the creative economy and place. She currently leads a research project on making practices in urban economies.

ORCID

Rosa Schiavone  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4625-2142>

Amanda Brandellero  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0872-2166>

References

- Ablett, P. G., and P. K. Dyer. 2009. "Heritage and Hermeneutics: Towards a Broader Interpretation of Interpretation." *Current Issues in Tourism* 12 (3): 209–233. doi:10.1080/13683500802316063.
- Agarwal, S., and G. Shaw. 2017. *Heritage, Screen and Literary Tourism*. Channel View Publications. doi:10.21832/9781845416256.
- Alderman, D. H., S. K. Benjamin, and P. P. Schneider. 2012. "Transforming Mount Airy into Mayberry: Film-Induced Tourism as Place-Making." *Southeastern Geographer* 52 (2): 212–239. doi:10.1353/sgo.2012.0016.
- Alderman, D. H., S. K. Benjamin, and P. P. Schneider. 2012. "Transforming Mount Airy into Mayberry: Film-Induced Tourism as Place-Making." *Southeastern Geographer* 52 (2): 212–239.
- Antoniazzi, L. 2021. "Digital Preservation and the Sustainability of Film Heritage." *Information, Communication & Society* 24 (11): 1658–1673. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2020.1716042.
- Beeton, S. 2006. "Understanding Film-Induced Tourism." *Tourism Analysis* 11 (3): 181–188. doi:10.3727/108354206778689808.
- Beeton, S. 2008. "Location, Location, Location: Film Corporations' Social Responsibilities." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 24 (2–3): 107–114. doi:10.1080/10548400802092551.
- Beeton, S. 2016. *Film-Induced Tourism*. Bristol, UK: Channel view publications.
- Brandellero, A., and S. Janssen. 2014. "Popular Music as Cultural Heritage: Scoping Out the Field of Practice." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20 (3): 224–240. doi:10.1080/13527258.2013.779294.

- Brereton, P. 2012. "Social Realism and Contemporary British Smart Cinema: Case Studies of Trainspotting, Timecode and Sexy Beast." In *Smart Cinema, DVD Add-Ons and New Audience Pleasures*, 121–140. London: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/9781137027085_7.
- Brooks, D. E., and L. P. Hébert. 2006. "Gender, Race, and Media Representation." *Handbook of Gender and Communication* 16: 297–317.
- Bryman, A. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. London, UK: Oxford university press.
- Carr, A. 2004. "Mountain Places, Cultural Spaces: The Interpretation of Culturally Significant Landscapes." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 12 (5): 432–459. doi:10.1080/09669580408667248.
- Connell, J. 2012. "Film Tourism—Evolution, Progress and Prospects." *Tourism Management* 33 (5): 1007–1029. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2012.02.008.
- Cronin, K. 2021. "Processing Mad Men: Media Studies, Legitimation, and Archival Description." *Information & Culture* 56 (2): 138–157.
- Croy, W. G. 2011. "Film Tourism: Sustained Economic Contributions to Destinations." *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*. 3 (2): 159–164.
- Croy, W. G. 2018. "Film Tourism." *Special Interest Tourism: Concepts, Contexts and Cases*, 3rd Edition. 84–95.
- Edensor, T. 2002. *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Oxford: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Garrison, S., and C. Wallace. 2021. "Media Tourism and Its Role in Sustaining Scotland's Tourism Industry." *Sustainability* 13 (11): 1–13.
- Harvey, D. C. 2001. "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7 (4): 319–338. doi:10.1080/13581650120105534.
- Heitmann, S. 2010. "Film Tourism Planning and Development—questioning the Role of Stakeholders and Sustainability." *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development* 7 (1): 31–46. doi:10.1080/14790530903522606.
- Hsieh, H. F., and S. E. Shannon. 2005. "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis." *Qualitative Health Research* 15 (9): 1277–1288. doi:10.1177/1049732305276687.
- Io, M. U. 2013. "Testing a Model of Effective Interpretation to Boost the Heritage Tourism Experience: A Case Study in Macao." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 21 (6): 900–914.
- Kim, S. 2012. "The Impact of TV Drama Attributes on Touristic Experiences at Film Tourism Destinations." *Tourism Analysis* 17 (5): 573–585. doi:10.3727/108354212X13485873913804.
- Kvale, S., and S. Brinkmann. 2007. "Introduction to Interview Research." *Doing Interviews* 2–11. doi:10.4135/9781529716665.n2.
- Mace, M. A., and T. Ward. 2002. "Modeling the Creative Process: A Grounded Theory Analysis of Creativity in the Domain of Art Making." *Creativity Research Journal* 14 (2): 179–192. doi:10.1207/S15326934CRJ1402_5.
- Malcolm-Davies, J. 2004. "Borrowed Robes: The Educational Value of Costumed Interpretation at Historic Sites." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 10 (3): 277–293. doi:10.1080/1352725042000234451.
- Martin-Jones, D. 2014. "Film Tourism as Heritage Tourism: Scotland, Diaspora and the Da Vinci Code (2006)." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 12 (2): 156–177. doi:10.1080/17400309.2014.880301.
- McCrone, D., A. Morris, and R. Kiely. 1995. *Scotland—the Brand: The Making of Scottish Heritage*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.
- Munro, R. 2020. "Performing the National? Scottish Cinema in the Time of Indypref." *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 17 (4): 425–448. doi:10.3366/jbctv.2020.0541.
- Muzaini, H., and C. Minca. 2018. "Rethinking Heritage, but 'From Below'." In *After Heritage*, 1–21. Edward Elgar Publishing. doi:10.4337/9781788110747.00007.
- Póvoa, D., S. Reijnders, and E. Martens. 2019. "The Telenovela Effect: Challenges of Location Filming and Telenovela Tourism in the Brazilian Favelas." *Journal of Popular Culture* 52 (6): 1536–1556. doi:10.1111/jpcu.12861.
- Reijnders, S. 2009. "Watching the Detectives: Inside the Guilty Landscapes of Inspector Morse, Baantjer and Wallander." *European Journal of Communication* 24 (2): 165–181. doi:10.1177/0267323108101830.
- Reijnders, S. 2011. *Places of the Imagination: Media, Tourism, Culture*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Reijnders, S., L. Bolderman, N. van Es, and A. Waysdorf. 2015. "Locating Imagination: An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Literary, Film, and Music Tourism." *Tourism Analysis* 20 (3): 333–339. doi:10.3727/108354215X14356694891979.
- Roesch, S. 2009. *The Experiences of Film Location Tourists*. Bristol, UK: Channel View Publications.
- Saunders, R. A. 2017. "A Dark Imaginarium: The Bridge, Malmö and the Making of a 'Non-Existent' Place." *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies* 4 (3): 361–385.
- Schiavone, R., and S. Reijnders. 2020. "Fusing Fact and Fiction: Placemaking Through Film Tours in Edinburgh." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 1–17. doi:10.1177/1367549420951568.
- Seaton, P. 2016. "Building Heritage Tourism and the Semiotics of Exhibition: Constructing Places and Spaces Related to Historical Dramas in Japan." *Japan and Canada in Comparative Perspective*. 2016: 110–125.
- Smith, L. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Straubhaar, J. 2014. "Choosing National TV: Cultural Capital, Language, and Cultural Proximity in Brazil." *The Impact of International Television* 77–110.

- Tonkiss, F. 2012. "Discourse Analysis." In *Researching Society and Culture*, edited by C. Seale, London, UK: Sage. 406–418.
- Torchin, L. 2002. "Location, Location, Location: The Destination of the Manhattan TV Tour." *Tourist Studies* 2 (3): 247–266. doi:[10.1177/14687976020023002](https://doi.org/10.1177/14687976020023002).
- Torricelli, E. 2020. "Scotland's Onscreen Identities: Otherness and Hybridity in Scottish Cinema." In *European Cinema in the Twenty-First Century*, 33–49. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:[10.1007/978-3-030-33436-9_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33436-9_3).
- Van der Hoeven, A. 2018. "Narratives of Popular Music Heritage and Cultural Identity: The Affordances and Constraints of Popular Music Memories." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 21 (2): 207–222. doi:[10.1177/1367549415609328](https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549415609328).
- Van der Hoeven, A., and A. Brandellero. 2015. "Places of Popular Music Heritage: The Local Framing of a Global Cultural Form in Dutch Museums and Archives." *Poetics* 51: 37–53. doi:[10.1016/j.poetic.2015.05.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2015.05.001).
- West, S. 2010. *Understanding Heritage in Practice*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.