

Hertfordshire Screen Tourism

2021 Toolkit



creative
england

**Filming
in England**



VISIT HERTS

SW Consulting



WHY SCREEN TOURISM?

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National Context:

Research undertaken by Creative England in association with VisitEngland indicates that tourists will travel to a site specifically because it has been featured in a film or TV Drama (Creative England and VisitEngland, 2014).

Notably, this is an increased motivator for the international tourist, with 36% surveyed stating that screen production was a primary motivator for their visit, compared to 11.6% of domestic visitors (BFI, 2021).

- International core screen tourism is valued in the range of £100- £140 million for England (Excl. London).
- The longer a site benefits from clear recognition exposure, the more likely it will be to result in screen tourism activity: E.g. Highclere Castle - Downton Abbey.
- Film and TV can be a great way to advertise a destination to millions of potential visitors.
- A variety of genres can also position the same destination to multiple audiences, so broadening the appeal of a destination. E.g. Royal Naval College, Greenwich - Les Miserables, Pirates of the Caribbean, and Thor.
- Combining the appeal of screen tourism with the development of immersive visitor experiences holds huge appeal for both a domestic and international audience as seen with the huge success of Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - 'The Making of Harry Potter'.

THE UK'S WINNING INGREDIENTS

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Heritage

Is the number one reason for visiting Britain.
Any TV/ film product that tells a historical
story has an instant connection with the
inbound audience
The Favourite/ The Crown

Real Life

Specifically based on the past
Dunkirk/ Elizabeth/ Imitation Game/ Call the
Midwife

Literary Greats

Brought to life
Pride & Prejudice/ Miss Potter/ Harry
Potter/ Shakespeare in Love.

Family Appeal

Harry Potter/ Paddington/
BFG/Maleficent

Escapism

Fantasy, Syfy, Action, Adventure
Wonder Women/ Batman Returns/
Fantastic Beasts

Crime & Contemporary

Sherlock (both Film &TV) Enola Holmes/
Broadchurch/ Morse/ Grantchester/
Lewis

HERTFORDSHIRE'S CURRENT FILM STRENGTHS

©Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter

History/Period

Family/Fantasy

**Studio & Location
Experiences**



WHY HERTFORDSHIRE?

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Hertfordshire is home to world-class studios, delivering internationally acclaimed film and TV productions from Harry Potter to The Crown. The county is home to the Warner Bros. Studios in Leavesden, Elstree and BBC studios with additional investment from Sky to locate at Elstree launching in 2022.

Location filming across Hertfordshire contributes significantly to the local economy with £20m spend in 2016/2017 (Creative England & VisitEngland, 2014).

More recently, key locations have featured in films such as The Favourite (2018) and TV productions such as Bridgerton (2020 Netflix), continually raising the profile of Hertfordshire locations as a preferred choice for production.

For full details, please see the Visit Herts Screen Tourism Audit.

PLANNING

What to consider before you get started

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Working with the Location Scout/ Film Officer/ Location Databases

Planning for any production starts with the location scout/manager. They will predominantly use a location's database to shortlist possible locations, but just being on a database isn't always enough. You need to think about your location's pitch.

Imagery is Key:

Think like a camera and offer the viewer (The Scout) the maximum amount of information at the highest possible quality.

- Forget dpi, images need to be at least 1200 pixels supplied as wide-angle landscape shots. Unlike normal tourism shots, these images need to not only sell the location but need to show the accessibility and practicality of the space.
- Images need to be top quality, crisp, clear, level and preferably not close-up, as the production manager will need to know that the location can not only deliver the shot but accommodate the crew.
- Use your images to take someone on a virtual tour, so take them in sequence and order them by number and name so they are easy to locate and reference in all correspondence.
- Wide-angle shots are vital, even if they incorporate less appealing details – these can be covered over or hidden in the set design.
 - Why wide-angle? – These shots have a more practical use, general tourism shots that you would use in your marketing will not suffice, you need a different photographic brief.
- Location teams are looking for something unique that will help define their production. These unique elements will also make your location stand out from others on the shortlist.
 - Make sure unique features are included in the wide-angle shots and are listed in your description or list of facilities. You could log the 'what 3 words' reference if you are including estate buildings/multiple areas.
- You can't have too many pictures (within reason). Take shots of all areas, number and name them. Even if it's a boring side room that no one usually sees, as this could be a vital area for the crew to use while filming.

CASE STUDY

Firle Place

Emma

Firle Place near Lewes in Sussex, was one of the true stars of the screen in Working Title's 'Emma' released in 2020.

Although interior and exterior house locations are instantly recognisable, key changes were made to accommodate the production. False walls were built to cover national collection artwork that were too large to move, and areas were redecorated, a few of which have remained in their production colours such as the impressive 'blue' stairwell.

Away from the main house, Firle is also the home to Bake Off - The Professionals, filmed in the Georgian stable block.

Production teams are always looking for unique locations to help set the scene on screen. Setting clear parameters on what can and can't be adapted will help secure the use of a location.



PLANNING CHECKLIST

- Images of your location specifically for targeting productions - wide-angle
- Images that are 1200 pixels minimum
- Up to date images that include all angles and spaces
- Numbered and named each shot
- Add additional descriptive text to images and ensure all facilities are listed
- Don't think tourism, think film - something that may not be open to the public may be the perfect feature on screen.
- Cross-check your images - if you have mentioned a specific feature, do your images showcase this?



PRE-PRODUCTION & PRODUCTION

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Once your location has been selected, the discussion will start about re-access, production requirements, contracts etc. This is where having a close relationship with your film office or locations database company really comes into play. Contractual agreements, guidelines and working parameters, especially around historically sensitive locations all need to be considered here before filming begins.

Be clear and concise but maintain an element of flexibility

- If the locations scout has found you via a location's database service, it is in their interest to turn the enquiry into a production, therefore working closely with these organisations can really help to fine-tune the production agreement.
- Before you even get to the stage of negotiating to film, have a clear set of guidelines for each of the rooms/ locations available for filming... with historic properties there will be 'non-negotiable' due to the age and fabric of the property. The production team will welcome your clarity on how they need to accommodate these areas, and it also pre-empts potential misunderstandings during production.
- Building a good working relationship with the production team is vital for a successful outcome for the location, with the key point of contact being the locations' manager.
- Locations will find that contractually they will not only be sworn to secrecy in regards to filming, but will also often be asked not to take photos. This is often an inflexible element of the filming contact as they must protect all elements prior to the release date. This can be for several reasons, such as:
 - Plot spoilers.
 - Sensitivity around raising public interest in the filming, especially if the production involves high profile talent.
 - The location is being used as a 'stunt double' for somewhere else.



PRE-PRODUCTION & PRODUCTION

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What can you do to negate the photographic challenges?

- Ask for clearance use of series/ film promo material e.g. Official posters/ press cleared images for media use/ permission to stream any official trailers on your website.
- While production is taking place, it is worth noting where a majority of the camera positions were, as these will be the point of view shots that you can take once filming is over. Ensure you take these as soon as possible after filming has completed, so there are no seasonal differences.
- If you are a major location for a film/TV series and there is the potential for good location recall from the viewer (e.g. Highclere Castle for Downton Abbey or Grassington Village for All Creatures Great and Small). Now is the time to start building a relationship with the distributors, so that you can support production awareness around release dates and raise the profile of the location for potential screen tourism. Your production team can help with this.
- For period productions, this is the time to ask for access to costumes/props for exhibitions following the release. Remember period props are often hired in, for example, carriages – can you hire these directly from the supplier to capture a shot?
- Ensure you are utilising the services offered by Creative England or your private sector location database company.

CASE STUDY

Grassington Village - All Creatures Great and Small

January 2021 saw filming commence for series 2 of All Creatures Great and Small in Grassington village.

Grassington has captured everyday life during filming with this shot. It doesn't show filming or any talent in situ, however, showcases that it is a very 'real' Yorkshire village that has been used for filming the series. Shots of how shop fronts are adapted for period drama filming are a great way to capture the moment and tell the production story.

This 'behind the scenes' storytelling is a great way to raise the profile of a screen tourism destination, along with anecdotal interviews with local business owners.



PRE-PRODUCTION & PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

- Work closely with the film office/ locations search company to refine your contract
- Be clear on your 'non-negotiables' but build in flexibility to work together to find a solution
- Building relationships is everything
- If it looks like the series/film could work for screen tourism, think about the relationships you'll need beyond production
- Think film/TV, not tourism. How can you raise the profile of their product and by default raise the profile of your own?
- How you can profile the filming without access to talent shots?
- Are you making the most of all the support from Creative England and your locations database to help you through this process?



POST PRODUCTION

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How do you know you have a winner?

Short answer, you don't, but there are key components that repeatedly result in great screen tourism product.

Literary foundations

- Successful literature both historical and current- J K Rowling, Agatha Christie, James Herriot, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Tolkien (along with successful current TV and film writers such as Julian Fellowes and The Duffer Bros).

Key British historical periods/ characters/ legends

- King Arthur to The Crown.

The location's integrated connection with the story

- Whether this is the grandeur of Bath's Georgian architecture to offer a Bridgerton Backdrop or the breath-taking expanse of the Scottish Highlands for Outlander - the location has a key role to play to make the story believable and to build the relationship with the audience to encourage repeat viewing.

Cult following/ Genre Interest

- Crime series', syfy/ fantasy franchises already have a ready-made audience who are willing to travel to get one step closer to their favourite show/ film. Star Wars fans are still travelling to Tunisia to visit 'Tatooine' 44 years after the release of the first film.



POST PRODUCTION

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Destination Strengths

- The Film or TV series aligns with the location's key strengths and the key triggers for domestic and international travel for the UK. This underpins the authenticity of the screen tourism offer i.e. If I travel to a destination, am I going to experience some of the 'magic' of the production? E.g. Hatfield House as a destination location for The Favourite.

Established production/ financiers and distribution companies

- Will ensure that the product has been thought through. Companies like Mammoth Screen (Poldark, Endeavour, Victoria), Carnival (Downton Abbey) Shondaland/Netflix (Bridgerton) and International distributors like Masterpiece, Amazon, Netflix and Disney+. Big Name Studios/ Distributors - WB, Sony, Universal etc..

High profile Talent

- 'A' list actors don't always ensure screen tourism success, but they do help with audience recall.

Table 1 - Subscriber/viewing figures (March 2021)

Network	Subscribers/Viewers	Launched
NETFLIX	190 million	1997
Amazon Prime	150 million (112m in US)	2007
Disney +	60.5 million	2019
PBS/ Masterpiece	63.7 million viewers per month	1971
Apple TV	40 million	2019
Hula	28 million	2008
Sky	23.8 million	1989
HBO Max	4.1 million	2020
Britbox	1.2 million	2017
Acorn TV	1.1 million	2011

SCREEN TOURISM WINNER CHECKLIST

- Does the film/TV production have good foundations of literature or history?
- Is the location a key part of the story?
- Is there an established, cult following?
- Does the production reflect the destination's strengths?
- Production gravitas – is it a known production, financier and/or distribution company?
- Is there a potential for a series or trilogy? – Often based on the existence of a literary series
- Is there high-profile talent? – This is purposefully last on the list because so often gaining access to talent is one of the hardest requests for a destination or attraction.

DISTRIBUTION

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Distributors for both Film and TV will nearly always be confirmed by the pre-production stage, however, distribution partners can change per territory, resulting in a difference in broadcast scheduling market by market. E.g. All Creatures Great and Small will be broadcast in the UK on Channel 5 in the Autumn, but will air in the US several months later on Masterpiece.

The distributors' marketing activity will start 3-6 months before release (though this could be as much as 6 -9 months before a highly anticipated sequel). Therefore, if the production ticks multiple success factors highlighted in the previous section, then you need to start communicating with the distributor at least 9 months to a year before for a cinema release and 4- 7 months for a TV series.

Sometimes the distributors are the financiers or co-financiers of the production e.g. Netflix for Bridgerton and Stranger Things, and Masterpiece WGBH for Downton Abbey. What is certain is that distributors are commissioning/purchasing more content to meet demand.

What does that mean for UK locations? More production; increased probability of additional series' (based on viewing figures success), which in turn leads to increased audience recall of the locations used...resulting in screen tourism!

NETFLIX

britbox
CREATED BY BBC & ITV

sky

HBOmax

prime video

apple tv

itv

ACORN TV

Disney+

hulu

BBC

MASTERPIECE



DISTRIBUTION

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This is a different working relationship to the production contact. A location will have a contract in place to cover production, but if you want to benefit/ partner on aspects of the series or film's promotion at the release/ broadcast stage, this is a discussion with the distributor. The first thing you need to focus on is how you add value to their targets rather than what you need from them to assist in raising the profile of your attraction/destination.

Cinema release

It's all about box office sales on the opening weekend and how you can help them fuel the hype and drive an immediate footfall through the cinema's doors to watch the new release.

TV release

This is about raising the series' profile with the target audience and even more so, building a long term relationship that will sustain full series viewing, maintaining anticipation/ loyalty to the network while waiting for follow-on series. This can be achieved by partnering with other featured locations to offer a sweep stake prize experience - distributors don't want to deal with multiple attractions, they want one point of contact such as a DMO or experienced agent.

Offering back

Story detail for PR use by the network on social media that will interest their subscribers e.g. Masterpiece ran several documentaries on the 'real' Downton Abbey focusing on the story of Highclere Castle. This is where working with your Destination Management Organisation can support you. Sharing information as soon as possible with Visit Herts to push through our established communication channels, offers a platform to not only raise awareness of the series but of your organisation.

DISTRIBUTION CHECKLIST

- Understand the distributors targets, and focus on how you can help achieve them. Formalise your 'offer' before your 'ask'
- Think about what the distributor might need while the product is on-site - e.g. same season shots of the location... non-production shots of all the rooms/ landscape areas used
- Have PR information ready about the history/ life of the location, especially if there is cross over with the production story line
- Build a trusted relationship with the distributor and they will do all they can to help you benefit from the profile of the release. Quite often they will go back to production on your behalf to access promotion and talent shots if feasible.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

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Successful location recall can offer great opportunities not only for an attraction/destination but also the opportunity for the travel trade to build and tailor screen tourism experiences to appeal to a domestic and international audience. The association of the production with a location can also offer a great opportunity to engage new segments and markets that may not have previously thought about visiting.

Where to start?

Following the release/broadcast, it is key to monitor the viewing figure success/box office figures, as this - along with meeting the success criteria highlighted earlier - will support the development of a screen tourism bookable product.

Developing the Experience

The trend of consumers looking for meaningful, immersive experiences continues to grow. A trip to a film set or filming location of the visitors' favourite film or TV programme takes the visitor to the centre of their fandom where they can experience what they see on screen in real-time.



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PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

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What are the types of screen tourism experiences that could be developed?

Actual Location Visits

This can either be direct to the studio location, such as Warner Brothers Leavesden Studios or visiting an instantly recognisable location such as Highclere Castle (*Downton*) or Liverpool and the Black Country Living Museum (*Peaky Blinders*). There is also the opportunity for exclusive visits for small VIP groups to go behind closed door areas or to non-tourism sites – such as Keeley Hire Co. as featured in *Stardust*.

Immersive Experiences Based on Film or TV

A Secret Cinema production can attract over 120,000 people paying £50-£100 a ticket. The most recent production, 'Stranger Things' required additional dates to meet demand, running from mid-November to the end of February 2020, highlighting that experiences can drive demand regardless of seasonality. 2020 has also seen the growth in popularity of the drive-in movie experience, which could offer a great opportunity to actual film locations to screen their back catalogue of films.

Organised Events

Bridgerton only launched onto our screens in December 2020, however, dining and social events based on the theme are already scheduled and selling fast for 2021 pending Covid restrictions. 2020 saw huge interest in drive-in movie venues across the UK; a great example for Hertfordshire was the collaboration between the Bollywood Company and the UK Asian film festival to bring a sell-out Bollywood classic event programme. This targeted event approach offers a fantastic opportunity for Hertfordshire to raise the film destination profile; offering the local community a great product and the opportunity to tap into the county's considerable domestic and international VFR appeal, especially as India is the fifth highest-spending market for Hertfordshire.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

©Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter

Dining Experiences

Increasingly, research shows that visitors (60% for the UK domestic market) will choose a destination based on the bookable experiences available. Quite often it is the experience that encourages the extension of stay through exclusive/ themed or unique location dining experiences. These are increasingly popular and offer a great opportunity to link to film/ TV locations and themes. E.g. dining in a forbidden forest.

Group and FIT Appeal

The combination of film as a lead or component of a tour is one of the most effective ways to not only build a tour, but encourage visitors to go off the beaten track, visiting less well-known attractions e.g. Downton Tours may focus on Highclere Castle, but also include visits to Bampton, Cogges Heritage Trust and The Swan at Swinbrook.

Building the Desire to Travel

The home or cinema audience is a 'captivated' viewer for a destination. The 'love affair' that develops between the viewer and the drama/ film, not only builds a desire for future episodes but also a desire to get closer by visiting the location. This desire can influence a visit many years after the release E.g. Visitors still quote Brideshead Revisited as a motivator for visiting Castle Howard.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY

Secret Cinema - Star Wars Empire Strikes Back

In 2015, Secret Cinema's The Empire Strikes Back event hit a record-breaking number, attracting an audience of over 100,000 people in 100 days with tickets priced from £50-£100 per person.

The Secret Cinema team transformed a 10-acre site in London to the scenes of the Star Wars film, providing fans of Star Wars - The Empire Strikes Back the opportunity to fully immerse themselves, taking the fandom from fantasy to a real-life experience.

Outside of the main experience, Secret Cinema sourced other venues, taking the audience to a secret nightclub and a dedicated shop titled the 'Rebel X Store'.

The more recent production, 'Stranger Things' ran its additional experience from mid-November to the end of February 2020, highlighting that experiences can drive demand for off-season visitation.



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

- Think about the tools that the travel trade might need – Point of view shots that feature in the series
- Create a ready-made list of anecdotal stories from the production period e.g. Pictures of props to cover modern-day items on locations, or what had to be changed for filming.
- Can you offer exclusive access to screen tourism tours? How can the group gain a greater knowledge of the production e.g. areas where the cast liked to hang out.
- Create photo opportunities – this works so well for fantasy/ Syfy as well as period drama as so many visitors love the idea of dressing up! E.g. Game of Throne tours
- Use the drama story line to bring the real-life history of the place to life highlighting that although the visitor might have seen 'X' on-screen, in real life it's different.
- Gain inspiration from what other attractions have created and how they have woven the screen story into their destination offer.

A photograph of St Albans Cathedral in Hertfordshire, England, featuring Gothic architecture with a prominent tower and a large rose window. The cathedral is surrounded by trees with autumn foliage. In the foreground, there is a cemetery with several gravestones.

KEY CONTACTS

©St Albans Cathedral

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Register your Location:

To continue to raise the profile of the stunning film-friendly locations Hertfordshire has to offer and increase chances of being scouted for future filming, we are encouraging Hertfordshire Tourism businesses to register their location on the Filming in England Locations database for free.

[Click here to register your location](#)

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