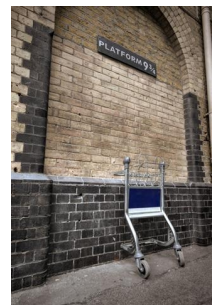


# Why Movie Tourism?

According to Film London, the agency responsible for overseeing filming in the capital, films depicting the UK are responsible for attracting about 1 in 10 overseas tourists, spending around £1.8 billion a year.

With London being the third biggest film production centre in the world and the UK offering a diverse range of historical and modern sites linked with both film and TV the time seemed right for organised film tourism to take shape in the UK. Seizing this opportunity I launched a sightseeing tour company dedicated to taking film and TV loving fans to their favourite places seen on screen.



I owe much to Ian Fleming, author of James Bond. Having been a huge fan of 007 for much of my life I have travelled to many of the locations both exotic and some not so exotic that featured in the films from past 45 years. I found that being there was a thrill in itself as it allowed me to get closer to that thrill and sense of adventure I first felt when I was younger. Being in a TV or film location can be very inspiring and exciting.

Harry Potter, Doctor Who, Gavin and Stacey, Inspector Morse, and James Bond are just some of the many tours we now offer allowing fans from the UK and all over the world to get closer to places featured in the shows and films they know and love.

But what of the experience? A terraced house in the middle of Barry in South Wales might not be an obvious tourist destination for many people but for fans of Gavin and Stacey it has become a virtual pilgrimage site as this is the house used as the property of Gwen and Stacey, two of the stars from the show. On our Gavin and Stacey Tour which uses the actual Dave's Coach featured in the TV show itself people are so excited to be able to go inside and sit in the same place as Nessa, Uncle Bryn and Stacey. It makes a lot of people very excited and very happy.



Of course not all locations we see on screen generate such excitement, some are actually very

disappointing when you see them in real life as the magic used by film makers can be deceptive i.e. wide angled shots and set dressing making them appear bigger and better than in real life.

The biggest movie franchise of all time – Harry Potter attracts huge interest for fans both in this country and from abroad wishing to see places used in the films. This is where the magic of movies becomes literal.

To visit the Leaky Cauldron, Platform 9 ¾ or sites featured as the classrooms of Hogwarts School can take people from mundane reality into a fantastical world they want to explore both in their minds and on the streets of London and Oxford. Our tours do just that and help them explore those realms whilst also being educational and fun.

Most people have done a standard tour of a city or country they have visited. Usually these tours are a great way to give you an introduction to that place. With movie tourism it allows you to get a more personalised experience and visit places that you have developed a connection with even if you are on the other side of the world just by watching a TV or cinema screen.

The power of linking emotive experiences through TV and Film should not be underestimated. Seeing the excitement and pleasure on the faces of fans both young and old makes the idea I came up with more than 4 years ago all worth while now.

**By Lewis Swan** (Director, Brit Movie Tours)

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