

This is the interview conducted by Jean Brittain with us as tour guides when writing her article “Looking for Lallybroch”. It contains material that was not published in the final article.

JEAN: What benefits do you think the Outlander books have brought to Scotland?

SAMANTHA: "Long before I lived here, I was encouraging people to read Outlander to increase their knowledge of at least part of Scotland's history. I think women especially find historical novels a more refreshing way of and bringing history to life, rather than just reading dry information on dates and names. I see that the books have also made people into amateur geographers of the country, looking for the factual places amongst the fictional. Because of these two factors, tourism is opening up in normally well hidden or ignored places. People are spending their time and money in these small places, which helps to sustain the permanent residents of those areas. I actively promote that.

When visitors have read the books, they come to us wanting to get out of the major areas, to walk and pony trek in the ancient glens, to stay in a cottars house in a forgotten and beautiful area. And it's not just Scottish descendants. Clients who do not have an ounce of Scots blood in them are dreaming of and planning their Outlandish adventures, where they may never have done so before Outlander.

I have added an extra tour to my plan this year to coincide with the Homecoming Gathering in Edinburgh in July. That's a few more visitors to the Gathering thanks to Diana!"

JEAN: As well as the obvious history of the Jacobites, have you seen an increased interest in other topics such as Celtic lore - herbalism, superstition etc?

SAMANTHA: Celtic Lore/Traditions: "A top request from our guests is Traditional Highland Storytelling, courtesy of Scot, bringing alive the Tales of Silkie, Clans, legends and place-myths. That's why Diana's books are so good for Scotland, it makes the 21st century visitor understand that he/she can have the best of both worlds. All the Highland beauty and ruggedness but with 'fairly' modern plumbing!

"Scot has been performing traditional Highland Handfasting marriages for some years now. We have noticed an increase in interest and recognition in this custom, perhaps due to the Handfasting of Jamie & Claire, then Fergus & Marsali in the books."

Superstition: " Most people who have read the books, tell us of their sense of awe for the energy portrayed of the stones. They come with an inner desire to experience even the slightest 'vibration'. Visiting the Stones is the top request on our tours, giving us a good excuse to take people to very remote and beautiful places. That would not be the case without Diana's books "

JEAN: Scot, you give lessons on the Gaelic language - can you please tell me about the interest in Gaelic that the Outlander books have brought?

SCOT: "Considering that Diana doesn't speak Gàidhlig, she has managed to bring our language alive to readers who don't speak it, in ways Commun nan Gaidheal [The Gaelic Board] would be verra proud of. Before Samantha created the Jamie and Claire Tour, she canvassed Outlander fans online for their "Must Have" experiences when they visit Scotland. Hearing and learning our language came third out of 11. Since then, as a member of the Diana's Writers' Forum, I

have been assisting members with phrases for their personal interest and their own novels, which might preface a greater use of Gàidhlig language in English and American fiction in the future. I've even put audio clips on the Tour web site and fans have appreciated hearing some of the difficult words Jamie often uses. "

JEAN: Can you please comment on 'literary tourism' in the Highlands - fiction leading folks to research the historical facts?

SCOT: " I would say that Diana has created in fans a desire to visit Scotland that is bigger than the sum of the specific places in the books. She has ignited a general appeal. Many of Diana's locations are fiction, and the fans know this, but that has not stopped them wanting to come and find their own versions. Take Emily, for instance, on the Writers' Forum she is quite famous for her long-planned Scotland trip this May. Other Forum members have been offering trip advice and reminiscing about Scotland. Emily plans to find her own *Craig na Dun* stone circle and do a bit of 'time tourism' in search of the 18th Century. She's bringing a crash helmet to batter her way into the past if needed!"

"As an oral historian and storyteller, I have been guiding genealogy tours around Scotland for Americans for a number of years. Scottish history is a big part of the attraction, but I'd say that it's of more interest to my male guests. The thing that historical fiction does, is open up quite dry history in a verrra readable way to women as well as men. I use a number of excerpts borrowed from historical fiction authors to illustrate things on my tours. As a historian, I have a great respect for the contribution that fiction writers make to understanding history. "