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DRAMA Callions Baile and Sam Heughan as Claire and Jamie Fraser



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I'VE lived in the Highlands for more than 30 years. I've married Frasers, bred Frasers and written about the most outrageous Fraser.

Yet, until Outlander hit us, the Highland image had grown a bit old-fashioned. We were beautiful, remote, cut off from the networking acid lap UK Ltd.

Not any longer. The clans brand is now carried by young, hot Jamie Fraser, as played by Sam Heughan in the hit Hollywood-produced series.

He seizes his beloved Claire with one hand, while he draws his sword out to defend them both with the other. Fact and fiction about Clan Fraser of Lovat and the Highlands mix in Outlander.

A lot of us enjoy this version of our story. Both Highlands and clans appear younger, hotter, hairier, more muscular. Hills and bosoms heave. Glens and cleavages plunge and invite the visitor to dive in.

Clan strongholds hulk on rocky crags. Silhouetted against the skyline, their towers stand erect.

The Highlands and the clans are glamorous again. We know the spotlight of historical fiction and TV will move on. But not since Braveheart have men in kilts looked more virile. Outlander has kicked the Highlands and the clans into the 21st century. Some people don't like where we've landed. The rest of us are delighted. Whatever you feel personally, for the economy it's all up.

VisitScotland records rises in visitor numbers of between 10 and 44 per cent at the heritage sites used in the series.

They call the Outlander effect "a goldmine". That means up to 40 per cent more people staying here, spending in local businesses and sharing the excitement of their vision of our region.

The series filmed all over the Highlands. The film company recruited extras from the local populations. At Culloden Battlefield, one Highlander told me Outlander "has changed my life". He is an extra. "I'm one of Jamie's men. And I love it."

People are reading, visiting, talking online and meeting up to share stories at conventions across the globe. The Outlander Facebook page has 1.5million followers. Scores of other fan sites attract tens of thousands of

WRITER Sarah Fraser enjoys telling story of clans

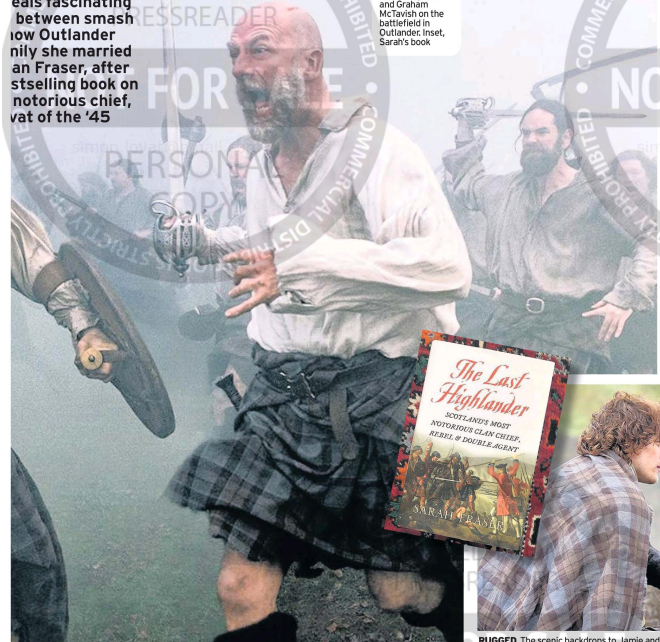


CONTROVERSIAL Shimi Fraser, aka Lord Lovat

I REALLY LOVAT WHEN A CLAN COMES TOGETHER

visitors. Many fans are well informed. They want facts as well as fiction. Eminent historian Christopher Duffy said historical fiction often begets a passion for history. As I know. A few years ago, HarperCollins published my biography of Outlander hero Jamie's grandfather. So, my real-life Highland chief is grandfather of a fictional character. The Last Highlander: Scotland's Most Notorious Clan Chief, Rebel & Double Agent, as the story of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat of the '45. In Outlander, he's played by Clive Russell. After the TV show aired, my book shot into The New York Times ebook bestseller list. It helps that Lovat, "the Old Fox", lived a riotous life. Born in obscurity near Beaulieu, Inverness-shire, he was a shrewd and calculating man of unlimited ambition. Marrying three times to reinforce his claim to the chieftainship, titles and lands of the Lovat Frasers, he forced his first wife into accepting his hand. That little escapade led to him being outlawed. Lovat fled abroad to the Jacobite court outside Paris. His

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CLANSMEN Sam Heughan, and Graham McTavish on the battlefield in Outlander. Inset, Sarah's book



GLAMOUR Outlander has created an alternative perception of Highland life

RUGGED The scenic backdrops to Jamie and Claire's relationship captured imagination of viewers

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shenanigans there earned him 10 years in a French prison house. A double agent, Lovat spied for both Stuarts and Hanoverians. He was a loyal British officer and Jacobite conspirator. In 1745, Bonnie Prince Charlie offered Lovat supreme command of the rebel forces to make him bring out the Frasers for the Jacobite cause. The act peer of the realm to be beheaded or high treason. Lovat's name is by the block in the Tower of London. Fantastic to write about. I think he must have been sheer hell to live with. As for the female lead, in Outlander history and fantasy mix to dramatic effect in heroine Claire Randall's story. She is a strong, independent mid-20th century woman. At first, it's hard to imagine such a modern woman thriving, or even surviving, in traditional clan society. She could well be seen as outspoken to the point of lunacy - and got a good hiding, before being locked up. It's true that clanship was a male-dominated society. The bottom line of clanship is that it's all about protection. Defence was predominantly men's business - swords, fighting, riding out

to punish predatory clans. Or, indeed, leaving to answer the call of Charles Edward Stuart. That's all very well but someone has to keep the home fires burning and clan lands secure in the absence of the leading clansmen. Strong and powerful women stepped into their shoes. Feisty and highly vocal, they were well able to command the respect of husband and clan. Women such as "Colonel Anne" Mackintosh, whose husband fought under Cumberland. Controlling Clan Mackintosh from

Moy Hall, south of Inverness, she was a confirmed Jacobite. In March 1746, the British government garrison in Inverness learned that Prince Charles was staying at Moy Hall as Lady Anne's honoured guest. They ordered a party of soldiers to investigate. Lady Anne was tipped off about the raid. She panicked, then got a grip and made a plan. She and Donald Fraser held off government troops long enough to allow Prince Charles to escape. She raised the clan for Charlie and sent them to Culloden. Shortly after, Jacobites captured

some redcoats on a sortie from Inverness. They released one into her custody, knowing this one would be particularly well cared for. Lady Anne looked at him and then greeted her husband: "Your servant, Captain." "Your servant, Colonel," the Lord of Mackintosh answered, equally cool. Fact is surely as full of human interest as fiction. Is this a new dawn in the story of the clans and Highlands? Looking back, the last really big clan craze was in Victorian times. Queen Victoria's passion for Balmoral, John Brown and everything Highland led to a frenzy of tartan tourism. This latest phenomenon has fired the imagination of writers, film-makers and business people. Yes, like any entrepreneurial people we want to market our brand. But this is home. We get the pleasure of sharing our history and culture with people bursting with enthusiasm and curiosity to know all we can tell them. We see ourselves slightly differently through their eyes. Outlander broadened our view of the history we have come from and our sense of who we are now. And, it's very flattering when someone wants to know all about you.

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