



# Outlandish? No, we just want to help

American women who love *Outlander*'s Sam Heughan are funding a scholarship in Scotland, **Brian McIver** writes

An army of American women are so besotted with the *Outlander* star Sam Heughan that they have funded a scholarship at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland to help budding actors follow in his footsteps.

The female fans from across the United States, most of whom have never been to Scotland, have teamed up and are hoping to donate £36,000 to the conservatoire.

The Supernova Legacy Scholarship has raised more than £5,000 in less than a week of the online campaign and the organisers said they wanted to use

their love for the epic Scots television drama series to help as many students as possible at the school in Glasgow where their handsome Highland warrior trained.

Lisa Shaw, Susie Reynolds, Sandra Gutierrez, Nicole Johnson, Bridget Dinehart and Megan Caughern have been raising money via donations, raffles and merchandise sales and are delighted with the reaction from the *Outlander* fanbase.

Shaw said: "We all live in different parts of the states and we are all huge *Outlander* fans and fans of Sam as an actor. He wouldn't be where he is today without the RCS so this seemed like a really great opportunity for us to pay it forward to a

**Lisa Shaw has met the star twice, saying he was "phenomenal"**



student. The RCS can determine which students receive the scholarship and we're committed to a minimum of three years.

"Our goal is to get the word out. Sam's representatives are aware of it and the RCS has been involved from the get go. We want to leave the scholarship in their hands and they will treat this like their other scholarships."

The women were inspired by the actor's community fitness drive My Peak Challenge, which encourages people to get fit and raise money for good causes.

The Supernova founders are all regular "peaker" participants and wanted to take their charity work further when the idea for the scholarship

emerged. While most Scots have their fees for the conservatoire paid by the Student Awards Agency Scotland, scholarships can be crucial.

Shaw said: "I've met Sam twice and he's a phenomenal person. People who are alumni of the RCS care about it and care about the arts, which are really suffering just now."

Heughan, 40, who has also starred in *River City*, has become one of the best-known TV stars in the world, winning a massive army of fans since taking on the part of the 18th-century Highland hero Jamie Fraser, who falls in love with a time-travelling nurse from 1940s England, played by Caitriona Balfe.

*Outlander*, which is on Amazon Prime Video in the UK, is based on the best-selling Diana Gabaldon books and is due to start filming its sixth series soon, after being delayed from last year by the coronavirus lockdowns.

Kirkcudbrightshire-born Heughan and his *Outlander* co-star Graham McTavish will be back on US screens this month with the new Scots road trip series *Men in Kilts*.

Heughan is also set to star in the new special forces action movie *SAS: Red Notice* in the spring and plays the film

star Paul Newman in the upcoming Hollywood film *To Olivia*.

The Supernova organisers have committed to a minimum of three years of fundraising and said the dream would be to visit Scotland to meet some of their scholarship students.

Shaw added: "Everyone fell in love with Scotland and Scottish culture because of the show, it's a show all about possibility and it shows you that anything is possible."

"It'd be great if the six of us could go to Scotland together."

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland said: "Scholarship support is vital in enabling the most promising young artists from across Scotland and around the world to realise their potential, regardless of background or economic circumstances."

"We're so proud of Sam and grateful to his fans. Sam is a wonderful ambassador for the arts and for Scotland and it's fantastic to see so many people around the world inspired to support a new generation of performing artists following in his footsteps here at RCS."

● *The women are selling merchandise and taking donations via their website [supernovalegacy.com](http://supernovalegacy.com)*



Sam Heughan, who starred with Caitriona Balfe, inspired his US fans to support Royal Conservatoire of Scotland students

## Viewers keen to buy their own little piece of *Bridgerton*

**Victoria Brzezinski**

For some of the tens of millions of fans of the hit period drama *Bridgerton*, admiring the Doric columns and Regency architecture is not enough — they want to own a piece of it as well.

The popularity of Netflix's Regency show, which has been watched by more than 82 million households worldwide, is inspiring wealthy international buyers to snap up period properties in the UK, according to estate agents.

Set in England in 1813, the drama is based on historical romance novels by the American author Julia Quinn. Although *Bridgerton* is set almost entirely in London, some of England's finest houses, palaces and castles were used as locations for the series.

Much was shot in Bath, including the Holburne Museum, featured as Lady

Danbury's estate, and the exteriors of No 1 Royal Crescent, a museum in Bath, which was used to bring the Featheringtons' home to life.

For one Australian couple, £665,000 was a small price to pay for a piece of *Bridgerton*. They bought a property on the Royal Crescent through Sotheby's after a video viewing. "They exchanged in late December — all our communications at that point referenced *Bridgerton* and the family members now call the wife 'the duchess,'" Christine Penny, of Sotheby's Bath office, said.

Even though Covid-19 closures meant that their year was condensed into six months, Knight Frank's Bath office is on track to have a record year to this April, helped in part by the *Bridgerton* effect. Charlie Taylor, office head at Knight Frank Bath, said: "We went into lockdown thinking it was going to

be Armageddon but there has been a frenzy. Around a quarter of deals struck have been from overseas buyers or expats returning from Hong Kong or Singapore."

*Bridgerton* was Netflix's most watched show in 83 countries. A second series was commissioned last week.

Alistair Heather, head of Strutt & Parker's Bath office, said: "We've had interested parties as far away as Asia, with offers even made on prop-

**The drama has made people want a Regency-style home**

erties without seeing them in person, citing *Bridgerton* as the source of their interest."

Alex Woodleigh Smith, of the buyer's brokerage AWS Prime, reported a surge in overseas investment in London and particularly for period Regency homes in South Kensington and Chelsea. He said: "I'd liken it to the *Notting Hill* effect — when all US buyers suddenly wanted to buy in Notting Hill." Not all interest is from abroad. Knight Frank recently sold two Regency houses on Belgrave



Square and a stucco-fronted house on Chester Square, all to UK buyers.

*Bridgerton* has also created international interest in the country market, according to Mark Lawson, a partner at The Buying Solution, Knight Frank's buying arm. "One US client particularly wants a country house with a huge amount of history, and a striking entrance hall and staircase in a Georgian or Regency style so that she and her family can impress when we're finally allowed to entertain again," he said.

Bath and North East Somerset council estimates that at least £1.5 million will be driven into the local economy thanks to the show. Rabbie's, a Scottish private tour firm, will run *Bridgerton*-inspired tours around filming locations after the lockdown.

**Workers on £100k snap up Help To Buy homes, Money, page 57**