

# Connery's charity tackles last target in his sights: inequality

The Bond star's drive to help struggling young Scots touched lives including Andy Murray, writes **Marc Horne**

At the peak of his powers as the definitive James Bond, Sir Sean Connery turned away from battling fictional villains and instead struck a powerful blow against inequality.

The Edinburgh-born actor, who left school aged 13 with no qualifications, used his entire fee from *Diamonds Are Forever* to establish the Scottish International Educational Trust (SIET). Now, half a century later, the charity has pledged to continue fulfilling the vision of Connery, who died aged 90 last October.

In a statement on its website it said: "We were greatly saddened by the death of Sir Sean and want to acknowledge the enormous contribution he has made to the lives of hundreds of Scots over the last 50 years through the existence of SIET.

"We will continue the work of the trust to ensure his legacy. The trust exists to give financial help to Scotsmen and women who show exceptional ability and promise."

It added: "It's at that critical time when they need to further their studies or professional training that a cash injection can make a huge difference to their development.

"Having had a scant education himself, Sir Sean was well aware of the importance of learning and the empowerment it brings."

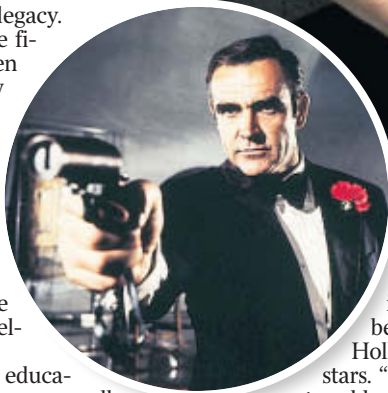
Thomas Sean Connery — "Tam" to his childhood friends — was born in a tenement in Fountainbridge, near Edinburgh city centre. He worked as milkman after leaving school before joining the navy at 16, but was discharged with a stomach ulcer three years later.

Connery returned to Edinburgh, trying his luck as bricklayer, a lifeguard and coffin polisher before developing an interest in acting while he was working backstage at the King's Theatre.

"There is one major difference



Sir Sean Connery's charity helped Andy Murray and the saxophonist Tommy Smith as youngsters



between James Bond and me," he once told an interviewer after becoming one of Hollywood's biggest stars. "He is able to sort out problems."

He was, however, being modest. Over the decades his charity has removed barriers for hundreds of young people.

Beneficiaries included a talented young tennis player called Andy Murray, who insisted on repaying the grant he received in full after he became a household name.

Others have spoken of the role the trust played in their success. Mark Blyth, a professor of international economics at Brown University in the US, who also serves as a member of the Scottish government's recovery panel, said: "The trust transformed my life. I

graduated from Strathclyde University in 1990 and was admitted to Columbia University in NYC for my PhD the following year.

"I was awarded my fees but was given no stipend for living expenses. The trust stepped into the breach and helped finance my first year of studies. I then picked up internal funding and never looked back.

"From a Dundee council house to the Ivy League is possible, but what made it actual was the faith placed in my abilities by the trust, for which I am forever grateful."

Carolyn McLeod, lead scientist for sexual offences at the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services, said: "I owe so much to the SIET. I have a career that I am passionate about and

can never thank them enough for allowing me to take the first step on that path."

Tommy Smith, the award-winning saxophonist, composer and founder of the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, wrote to the organisation expressing his gratitude.

"I'm very aware of the SIET and appreciated what you did for me all those years ago, as my family had nothing, not even the money to buy me a saxophone, so thank you again," he said.

The trust's patrons include Sir Jackie Stewart, the former racing driver, the Olympian Sir Chris Hoy and the broadcaster Kirsty Wark.



## Seaside town tries to repel second-home infiltration

**Will Humphries**

Some people will do anything for their own slice of the seaside idyll. Even if it means bending or breaking a few planning rules along the way.

The people of Salcombe, the Devon seaside town nicknamed Chelsea-on-Sea, have become so worried about the influx of second-home owners that they have enacted the strictest code against out-of-towners in the country.

In 2018 the neighbourhood planning steering group calculated that about 57 per cent of homes in the town were second homes. South Hams district council is hoping to curb this trend by making it a legal requirement that all newbuild homes be sold as a principal residence and stay that way for ever.

In the past, planning officers had the choice to attach a planning condition to a new development, stating it must be a principal residence, or draw up a Section 106 agreement with the developer, which makes it legally binding on the property's title deeds.

Judy Pearce, Conservative leader of the district council, said that planning officers more often chose to use planning conditions instead of Section 106 because they caused "less hassle".

She said that because planning conditions were not registered on the property deeds, unlike a Section 106, they often get "lost or overlooked" by homeowners and lawyers during house sales.

This allowed properties first bought as a principal residence to be sold on years later and added to the growing list of second homes.

The council has voted to ensure that its neighbourhood plan demands all new developments, excluding replacement dwellings, must have a Section 106 agreement stating it will remain a principal residence in perpetuity.

Salcombe has long been a mecca for the boating fraternity. Wealthy out-of-towners arrive in the summer months to sail on the Kingsbridge estuary and moor up in sandy bays for lunch. The population can rise from about 2,000 during the winter to more than ten times that in summer.

The new amendment will be assessed by an independent examiner before it is officially approved as part of the planning framework for Salcombe. Nikki Turton, the town mayor, said that the blanket use of Section 106 agreements would ensure the town "doesn't need to keep an eye on every property and report constantly on possible breaches".

## Unruly jet skiers shatter peace and scatter birds at hotspots

**Graeme Paton** Transport Correspondent

The British seaside has a new soundtrack: the drone of jet skis.

Complaints are growing about the use of the machines on parts of the coastline as the peak holiday season approaches. These included claims of riders harassing beachgoers, narrowly missing boats and sending birds scattering, to the dismay of wildlife lovers.

It is believed that the growing popularity of jet skis may be linked to the increase in people taking staycations on the British coast rather than risking holidays abroad, which are subject to multiple travel restrictions.

In Essex, jet-ski patrols have been stepped up by the police force's marine unit this month because of a rise in "inconsiderate and antisocial behaviour"

on the water. Last week, Iolo Williams, a presenter of *Springwatch*, called for compulsory licensing for jet skis after spotting five of them being ridden at speed through groups of seabirds off Anglesey, north Wales. He said that the riders "went right through the middle of these auks, guillemots and razor-bills", adding: "I was walking with a telescope and there were several hundred birds. They could have

killed them. Whether any were killed I do not know. If it was left to me I would ban them from these places."

Ben Porter, an ecologist and photographer, said he "stood in despair" as he watched four jet skis "blast around the corner and plough straight through" birds off another part of Anglesey weeks earlier.

The comments have renewed the debate over the regulation of jet skis, or "personal watercraft", in British waters.

At present between 12,000 and 15,000 of the ma-



Beachgoers have complained about a rise in the use of jet skis

chines are in private hands in the UK.

Local councils and harbour authorities have powers to set bylaws that require registration of jet skis used in their waters, the payment of fees and strict adherence to speed limits. People can face £1,000 fines for flouting rules.

However, the powers are geographically limited and often result in a patchwork of regulations around the coast, with many areas not covered at all.

The Department for Transport is now considering classifying jet skis as "vessels". The move, which will be subject to a consultation process, could subject users to maritime law, allowing them to be prosecuted for negligence, endangering others, causing accidents and taking control of a jet ski while drunk.

However, ministers have been ac-

cused of continuing to "drag their heels" over the issue, with no date being set for the launch of the consultation.

Andrew Norton, director of the Personal Watercraft Partnership, an industry body, said it was "not necessary for national legislation".

The partnership has already drawn up a national code, which includes banning children aged under 12 from riding them, mandating training and insurance and advising against revving engines in shallow areas, "wave jumping" behind boats and entering areas used by swimmers.

The Department for Transport said it "intends to consult on new national legislation to further strengthen existing enforcement powers and ensure that, where wilful or negligent misuse occurs, riders can be prosecuted".