

WILL GAUNT

Film Student >
Development Researcher



What impact has Foot in the Door had on Will?

- Will considers himself extremely lucky and is very grateful to have taken part in the Foot in The Door project.
- Meeting the community has had the greatest impact on Will; each contributor being a pleasure to work with and the community unexplainably supportive. Two months removed from the film Will has kept in touch with each contributor both professional and community based and finds himself still ringing them when he has a story idea that they might know more about.
- Will has found it a privilege to get to know each of the contributors and their stories have helped to shape his view of the world in such a positive way.

What was Will's journey through Foot in the Door?

- Foot in the Door was recommended to Will by his tutor Tom Ware at USW for his final project for the master's in film at the University of South Wales.
- After consulting with Tom and local housing association Pobl, Will decided to focus his final masters project on Newport's famous Transporter Bridge.
- Firstly, Will and his team received Asset-Based training from Pobl Housing and then began researching the local area as much as possible, this involved internet research, trawling through Facebook community groups, gathering archive images and documents and visiting Pill as much as possible, all to gain an understanding of the history of the area and how the people that live in Pill perceive the community they live in.

- When visiting Pill, Will and his team met with key public figures in the area: the Transporter Bridge Project team, Friends of the Newport Transporter Bridge charity and local libraries, as well as attending storytelling workshops organised by Pobl.
- Once stories were gathered, Will and his team discussed the community members that they had met and how they might fit into the story; this was narrowed down to the people that they felt were essential to the narrative of the documentary. They could then begin filming.
- The filming process started with interviews to build the narrative and then filming appropriate cutaways, archive footage from the BBC and ITV was also used. The Bridge has been extensively covered before so local libraries and the council were helpful in finding appropriate photos to use.
- Once the filming was complete and all archive and evidence was gathered, editing began.
- Will worked very closely with the editor throughout the edit making sure that he was preserving each story.

Why was Will interested in working with Foot in the Door?

- The Transporter Bridge has always interested Will, having driven past it on numerous occasions and wondering what its story was, before now Will had never had the opportunity to investigate it further.
- Additionally, Will wanted to make a film that would be beneficial to the local area and would matter to the community and the people involved. Will states "being able to make a film that has a purpose wider than itself is very satisfying as a student and the prospect of this was a big part of me wanting to engage with it."

What was different about the approach on this project?

- Providing Asset based training has been key in the success of building trusting relationships in the community and ultimately the success of the end product; 'Bridging Lives' documentary film of the Transporter Bridge.

What has Will gained from being involved with Foot in the Door?

- Placing yourself at the heart of communities is a vital skill to have in documentary filmmaking and Will has gained in confidence having taken part in the Foot in the Door project.
- In the two months since the project, Will has secured a job as a Development Researcher in Bright Branch Media, with the goal of progressing through the TV Development ranks.

What did Will learn from the programme?

- The project helped develop Will's skills in all levels of production, from research, right through to the post-production process.
- A lot of people have stories to tell that have emotional elements that may be difficult for them to talk about. Through this process Will has gained experience on how to best handle these situations, making contributors as comfortable as possible, which is the most important skill Will feels he has learnt; knowing how to approach and manage community members when finding information or discussing sensitive subjects. A skill that will no doubt be very useful moving into the world of factual TV.
- The skills that Will has learnt through the Foot in the Door project are essential skills to have in TV development work. Being able to interact with many different personalities and approach communities and people in a tactile manner can be key in securing the commission of a production.
- Through this project Will has learnt and developed skills and gained in confidence which will help in his path to working in his chosen profession of TV Development.

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