



Ben Morris - Just Walk The Shropshire Lad

Contents

History

Inspiration of Robin

Belonging

My Walk

Poetry

Digital Engagement Role

Digital Performance Analysis

Filming my walk

History

Our week 1 activity was to go for a walk to observe the surroundings. One thing that struck me was the architecture of Salford from the high rise apartment buildings towering over the small amounts of houses; but what really stood out when walking around was a church which felt very out of time, not fitting its surroundings. This sparked the idea of history that we are surrounded by remnants of ages long ago. I knew right from day one my walk would be in Shropshire, with history being deeply rich in that area. This prompted me to explore the history of Much Wenlock, looking at key points in the history of the town to home in on and include.

One of the challenges I faced with tackling this was I didn't want it to feel like a tour guide because I thought that would be very laborious going; *'here is this building they reel off the history'* so I thought; **how can I make it interesting for the audiences.**

So I decided to make it personal to me why does this town resonate with me.

All my life this little town is all I have known before moving to Salford for University which was a culture shock, having green lush fields replaced by concrete, so this led me to wanting to pay tribute to this beautiful town.

I wanted to use landmarks giving the perspective showing that we are here for such a finite amount of time. So how do we make a mark on our place? History has shaped the lands we walked. In class (Week Three) we focused on picking three items, the items I chose being a stone (Wenlock Limestone), a book my Grandad gave me and a chicken doorstop. We explored ancestry, history, people and place, and to me this exercise was incredibly helpful due to it making me look deeper into the history of Much Wenlock.

"The development of the creative performer drew inspiration from theories of selfhood and creativity that brought a new focus on the interior world of the individual" (Govan, Nicholson and Normington, 2007).

We continued the themes of history in class with writing down seven place names where we've been or lived. When moving around the room I found myself gravitating towards places where my family are based, making me come up with my second aspect of walk with the idea of belonging.

Inspiration of the Robin





<https://sway.office.com/9fGVeDro9KehZ3yS#content=mn6kppJhFDiF>

1 - The second theme I explored from exercises of being more observant of our surrounds the idea of a Robin, and how one kept visiting me from time to time.

This led me to research robins, finding out "Their message was about family, courtship, home, and the loving heart". (Clifford, 2020). I looked at those symbolisms and made them personal to me. The idea of family also struck with me, with my family being all based in Shropshire: the idea of belonging centring around the idea of home. Robins have a strong sense of home much like myself, so I drew on this by thinking that Robins are protective of their homes with them being territorial birds fighting off other birds who arrive on their patch; so they must be incredibly proud of their home. I related to this because I'm proud of where I come from.

Lockdown for many gave us a chance to reflect, looking inwards giving me a chance to process these thoughts of belonging, these thoughts came back to fruition when in class doing an exercise of arriving and leaving visualising our walks while sitting down and how that made us feel I felt comfort, tranquil and at ease. I feel a sense of belonging is so important whether that be cultural identity or emotional, the need to be accepted by others; so I wanted to raise the question to audience members: **where do they belong? What is home for them?**

Belonging

In our first lesson, we explored the idea of confinement whilst being mentally free. This exercise was an interesting experience as I found myself visualising in my head the sense of freedom I have when out in open green fields because for me, **I connect with the rural landscapes rather than being swept up in a vast exodus of strangers in a concrete jungle.**

I really explored that idea when we advanced the exercise further as we did this exercise again but reversed it, going outside then dealing with that confinement and how different that experience makes us, making us explore the space focusing on the details of the room and how that makes you feel. The idea of detail was a big talking point during the creative process, to examine the outside world and to examine the tiny details of why it is like that, making it all feel very philosophical giving you new appreciation of my home town. Going back to the detail, I feel this played a big part in the creation of the piece thinking how to link these sections thematically and be very meticulous when storyboarding the final piece when filming and what bits to be in the final edit.



2 - Robin Who visited during class exercises

My Walk

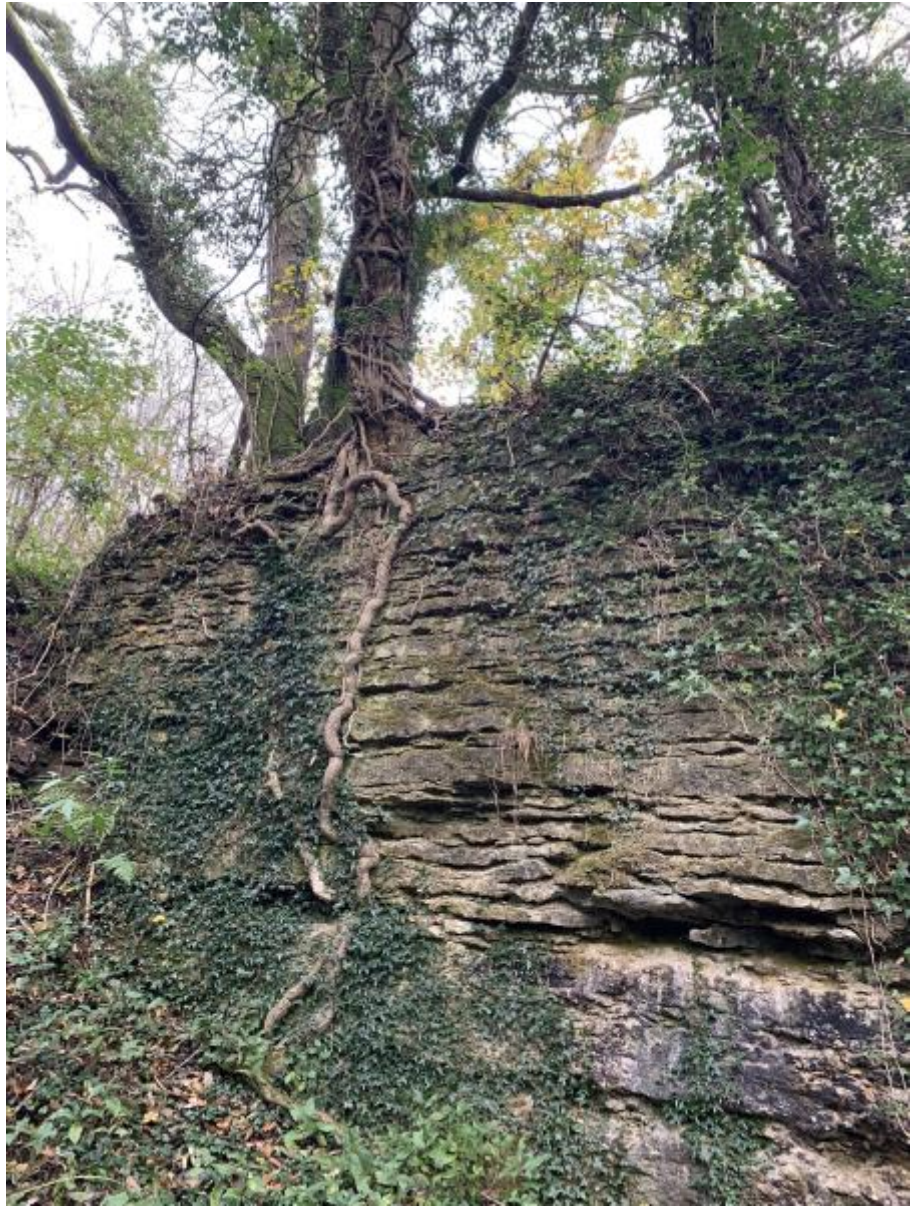


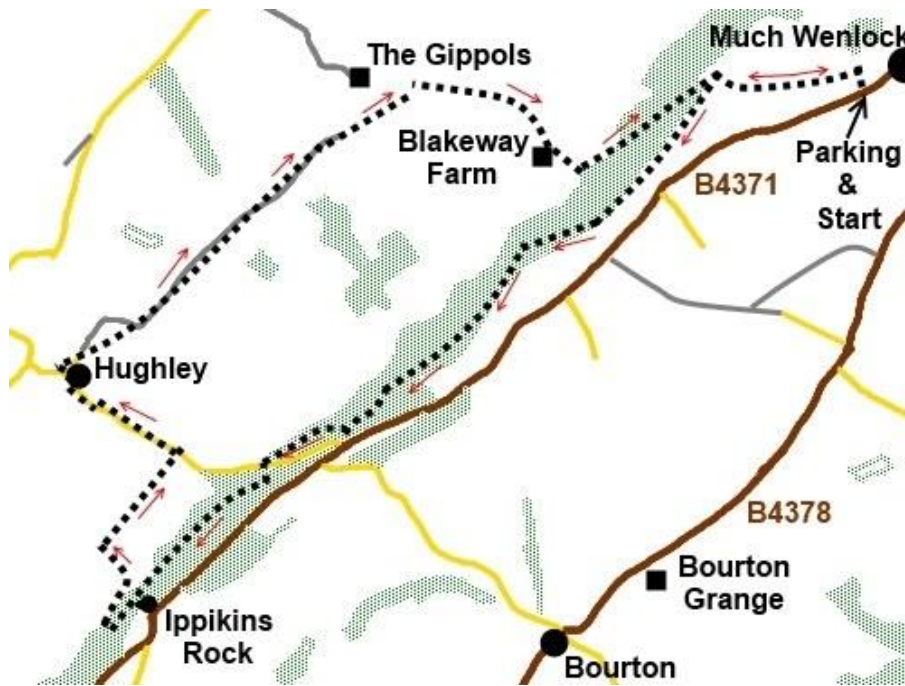


3 - Wrekin









4 - Figure 1: Map of Wenlock Edge (Source: <http://www.happyhiker.co.uk/MyWalks/Shropshire/WenlockEdge/Hiking%20Pages%20-%20Wenlock%20Edge%20Walk.htm>, n.d., 2021)

Starting point for will be Much Wenlock ending at Ippikins Rock

Poetry

And People Stayed Home by Kitty O'Meara

And People Stayed Home **by Kitty O'Meara**

And people stayed home
and read books and listened
and rested and exercised
and made art and played
and learned new ways of being
and stopped
and listened deeper
someone meditated
someone prayed
someone danced
someone met their shadow
and people began to think differently
and people healed
and in the absence of people who lived
in ignorant ways,
dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
even the earth began to heal
and when the danger ended
and people found each other
grieved for the dead people
and they made new choices
and dreamed of new visions
and created new ways of life
and healed the earth completely
just as they were healed themselves.

Figure 2: And People Stayed Home poem (Source: CRAWLEY and Addo, 2020)

Though this poem was written in 1869, the words still hold meaning and power during our current world climate. I wanted to include this poem due to its poignancy with how it linked to people struggling but also finding solace and comfort in the outside world, which I feel represents this project. I felt the poem bridged peoples feelings of trying to find light at the end of the tunnel, with by the end of the poem it was hopefully optimistic of the future, that when this is all over we will reunite with the people we hold dear, not only people being healed but the Earth, so i felt that the poem reflected a real sense of humanity and the best and worst of us.

A Shropshire Lad 31: On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble

BY A. E. HOUSMAN

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble;
His forest fleece the Wrekin heaves;
The gale, it plies the saplings double,
And thick on Severn snow the leaves.

'Twould blow like this through holt and hanger
When Uricon the city stood:
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,
But then it threshed another wood.

Then, 'twas before my time, the Roman
At yonder heaving hill would stare:
The blood that warms an English yeoman,
The thoughts that hurt him, they were there.

There, like the wind through woods in riot,
Through him the gale of life blew high:
The tree of man was never quiet:
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

The gale, it plies the saplings double,
It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone:
To-day the Roman and his trouble
Are ashes under Uricon.

5 - Figure 3: A Shropshire Lad poem (Source: Poetry Foundation, 2021.)

This poem inspired me, with it being about the final destination in my walk Wenlock Edge. I thought this was the perfect place to conclude my walk because of it being at the edge of Much Wenlock, linking back to the robin with that being the edge of territory.

One Line that stood out to me when looking at the poem was "twas the Roman, now 'tis I". That line in particular solidified how I would cover history on my walk the idea that people walk this lands before us now we walk in their footsteps. I thought that was powerful to make the audience think who once walked these paths before me

In honour of the Poem I thought I would homage it by naming my final piece 'The Shropshire Lad' in tribute of it

Digital Engagement





<https://sway.office.com/9fGVeDro9KehZ3yS#content=BTpGVd2mD8HKrz>

6 - Video of ticket



7 - Ticket to stride

I wanted to do this role due to me having experience creating online content on YouTube on a weekly basis, so I was very much used to self promoting content what I produce; so I thought I would try transferring those skills when marketing the show and I wanted to see how you market a show through other social media platforms such as Instagram.

During the creative process, we had meetings with Ashlee Cox teaching us how to promote the show. I feel these classes were useful especially if promoting myself and my work in the future. We looked at the analytics of what reach the posts get and how to widen that with what are the best times to post content on social media and how to engage with target audiences.

My role for digital engagement was photography, the business and the narrator. As a group, we decided to share these roles, giving us all the opportunity to learn the behind the scenes of these jobs on creating content to be used on social media platforms from creating short videos to images for promoting the show.

One of the first posts I worked on was the transitional video with us as a Digital Engagement team deciding we didn't want to show our faces as we wanted to focus on just our feet and slowly build up to a face reveal on the final take over.

I expanded on Fergee's original video concept of group members taking a few steps crossfading into the next clip. My concept was group members picking their phone up walking four steps and placing the phone on the floor then another person picks it up and carries on the journey, as I wanted it to feel like constant movement that everyone is also on their own little journeys.

Some challenges faced when creating this short video was getting people to send the footage as not all the group members sent the footage to me, so they were not included in the final video. Instructions were given that it must be filmed landscape, due to it being a better aspect ratio when being used for social media making it more professional when editing the footage together. I incorporated the *Just Walk* Logo and TAPP Fest banner to keep it to the style guide that the designing team designed, keeping it consistent making it feel like one brand/ company and not separate fractions.

TAPP Fest ticket

Creating the TAPP Fest Ticket was inspired by Charlie and the Chocolate Factory with the golden ticket, using tinfoil and cardboard for this. I specially created the TAPP fest overlay using the TAPP fest marketing colour scheme with adding the banner and overlaying the *Just Walk* logo again to keep it consistent with the main market of the show. I feel it is visually striking having a very natural earthy background but your eyes being drawn to the shiny ticket like a magpie so you are certainly drawn in. I think as well, because the ticket has a homemade feel to it, it reflects the show that we as people aren't perfect and that these films aren't going to be highly polished, they'll have a certain roughness to them giving them that lovely homemade feel.

Another role I gained during the end of the creative process was when we were divided into subgroups for our walks, I was put in charge of Group one which meant collecting all the footage for that part from everyone's walk: the introduction, Bearing Witness, call to action and the teaser trailer for Group three's piece, with emailing the final piece to the technician. Once we did a run through some minor changes were added as it felt that it needed something to act as a transition between certain parts, so when I re-edited it to include one of the promotional videos, I edited them picking the phones which I feel was a great addition as it being a movement piece. It acted great as a transitional piece as you move into the next section with the constant movement furthering the journey theme.



<https://sway.office.com/9fGVeDro9KehZ3yS#content=OwsbZdhDhppoVv>

Analysis of *Follow The Stone* By Carran Waterfield

Follow the stone was produced by Carran Waterfield with it being a big departure from Carran's previous work, with these being less formalised under the guidance of Sandra Reeve on her 'Virtual Strata Course' during lockdown, focusing on moving into life.

Move into Life teaches you the art of being in movement. This is movement pure and simple – not a particular way of moving, not a particular form or style. It requires no particular experience, skills or physical ability. Explore the movements you make every day – shrugs and stretches... reaching out, putting down and holding on... twisting and leaning. Choose one, slow it down, find where it starts, follow it to see where it leads. This is the essence of **Move into Life**. (Reeve, n.d.)

"How do I engage with my virtually new – in comparison to Coventry – home ground? I have long wanted to really connect with my 'new' home. Feeling more acutely in transition and rootless here in Southport the question has always been: Should I stay or should I go? If I stay, which way should I go?" (Waterfield, 2020).

This quote I feel resonates with me and my piece with it exploring the sense of belonging so it made me learn about myself that in life we have so many choices which lead us down many different paths, so instead of following the stone, my piece became follow the heart and always be guiding by what your heart says. Another inspiration was the use of signs of the footpaths, I did this also in my final piece so if audience member would want to go on the same walk then they can do the same

The use of soundscapes is incredibly effective starting off with a map of Southport setting the scene. I once again took inspiration from this instead of a map I used the sign with Much Wenlock on establishing the setting for this. The soundscape of footsteps replicating a drum sound effect to the use of breath to give the effect of the sea having waves crashing against the shore.

A prominent feature with this piece was the use of point, line and angle as this makes it incredibly dynamic to watch having the placement of the camera in the grass getting the perspective/viewpoint of the stone. I took elements of this in to my piece with use of point and angle with the way I positioned the camera following lines to get to the final destination of my work to show the determination and the pulling factor of being drawn to the final location.

Another engaging factor for this piece in the mixed version was the use of being confined physically indoors, being mentally free with the use of split screen showing giving us the view and the insight of what the character is imagining from being a poppy blowing in the breeze to her imagining her running down a path. I really enjoy the idea and concept as you the audience member can replicate and make your own version from using furniture to climb over to represent you climbing a fence. I love the pure imagination exploring that childlike play taking that to another level especially during the hop scotch part of throwing the stone imagining the path is like a school playground.



9 - Sign used in my piece



10 - (Waterfield, 2020)

Filming/ Editing my walk

Filming took place over two days as I filmed the introduction by the fireplace. This was a creative choice as to me a fire feels welcoming and homely also very inviting so I thought it was a great way to make the audience join us on our own individual journeys over the duration of the performance. For me it was important for the introduction to make the audience at ease; by greeting them with a big smile and high energy you are instantly engaged as an audience member, helping you become invested with the words we speak and the stories to tell.

For me, the biggest challenge was the performance of self. Up until this point I've hid under a green umbrella so the idea of performance of self was very daunting, almost feeling vulnerable. I feel that idea did really help me think about belonging, making me find even new appreciation for Shropshire. Being a performance of self made sense to turn it personal so I feel that the overall final piece is a reflection of me. One thing I learnt during the whole process was to be comfortable and be myself when performing, as that can be incredibly powerful just to be myself. The line in *And the people stayed home* about people meeting their shadow, was me representing having to face myself in this piece stripping everything back to face myself in order to be myself.

When filming/ editing the walk, I wanted the landscape to be the main star of the piece as i wanted to show off how stunning it is with me very much acting as a narrator, giving you glimpse of how history shapes a landscape and the people who put the place on the map. I wanted the middle to focus on me but never losing sight of how beautiful the landscape is as we begin to shift from the history section very much celebrating Much Wenlock, then shift that celebration to now it is my turn to make a mark on a place. When i started editing the challenge for me was making sure the music fit sections of the walk, the most trickiest in terms of this making Awake My Soul fit as I didn't want it to fade out halfway through the Lyrics, so I ended up looking it back to the instrumental to solve this problem.

Music

The three songs i used:

[Tom Odell - Can't Pretend](#)

[Mumford & Sons The Wild](#)

[Mumford & Sons Awake My Soul](#)

The video embedded below is a discussion of why I picked these particular songs.



<https://sway.office.com/9fGVeDro9KehZ3yS#content=Kz49lHuNU6mr4H>

Completed Walk

For me, the final piece that I produced I was incredibly happy with, especially with how it turned out with the way it flowed coherently.

My main goal was to set up the themes in the opening, such as why was a Robin shown or the relevance of The Hobbit Book, but as the walk progresses the audience can join those dots up together linking them to the different themes/ questions raised.

I hoped the audience would take away the sense of how wonderful the outside world is and how it can inspire and change our mood, helping those who need it take comfort and solace in nature, with exploring the history what is on their doorstep and to peruse there own family history: what made there ancestors live in a certain area how they made their mark on a place?

Due to the nature of our piece being pre-recorded we didn't get to have live interaction with audience members while we ventured and told our stories so we conducted a Q&A at the end giving the audience a chance to ask questions about our creative process as a group or individually. I feel

this was a great way to connect with the audience on a personal level with for many of us these are very personal stories, so it allowed audiences to open up and think about life and the outside world in a completely new way.



<https://sway.office.com/9fGVeDro9KehZ3vS#content=Rcz9mknMgNIFs3>

Bibliography

Addo, R. and Crawley, J. (2020). *And People Stayed Home* by Kitty O'Meara. Available at: <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-8180709/Carey-Mulligan-reads-viral-poem-People-Stayed-Home-Jo-Whileys-Storytime.html>> [Accessed 3 February 2021].

Clifford, G. (2020). *Robin Symbolism & Meaning (+Totem, Spirit & Omens)* | World Birds. [online]. Available at: <https://www.worldbirds.org/robin-symbolism> [Accessed 6 December 2020].

Govan, E. and Nicholson, H. and Normington, K. (2007). *Making a performance*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Happyhiker.co.uk (n.d). *Wenlock Edge Map*. [image] Available at: <<http://www.happyhiker.co.uk/MyWalks/Shropshire/WenlockEdge/Hiking%20Pages%20-%20Wenlock%20Edge%20Walk.htm>> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

Poetry Foundation. (n.d). *A Shropshire Lad 31: On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble*. [image] Available at: <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44413/a-shropshire-lad-31-on-wenlock-edge-the-woods-in-trouble>> [Accessed 18 January 2021].

Reeve, S., (n.d). *Move into Life with Sandra Reeve*. [online]. Available at: <<https://www.moveintolife.com/>> [Accessed 21 January 2021].

Waterfield, C. (2020). *Follow The Stone Screen Grab*. [image] Available at: <<https://vimeo.com/435225694>> [Accessed 24 January 2021].

Waterfield, C. (2020). *Mapping a New direction in a Creative Journey: Follow the Stone Part One | Carran Waterfield*. [online] Available at: <<https://carranwaterfield.co.uk/mapping-a-new-direction-in-a-creative-journey-follow-the-stone-part-one/>> [Accessed 21 January 2021]