

The Best Sequel in Scotland?

[Jack Davies](#) looks at why *T2: Trainspotting 2* could prove to be one of the best sequels ever made

Thursday 3 November 2016



Image: Sony Pictures Entertainment

"I'd be so chuffed to be back on set with everybody and I think it would be an extraordinary experience", said Ewan McGregor at the idea of making a sequel to *Trainspotting* back in 2009, the film that launched his career into a path that has seen him achieve worldwide fame after. A mere seven years later, the film's fans finally received the news they'd been waiting for – *T2: Trainspotting 2* began filming in Edinburgh this year.

News of this was met with a flurry of excitement amongst fans, the kind of treatment and hype only usually afforded to the likes of One Direction when their armada of pre-pubescent fans find out Harry Styles is getting a new haircut. This fervency increased after the film received an official UK release date for January 2017, and was heightened *even further* by the release of the full-length official trailer on November 3rd. Such anticipation is certainly not the kind of thing you'd expect for a movie about four heroin addicts from Scotland. Rewind two decades to 1996, the original film's release date, and it is perhaps easier to see why the announcement of the sequel has created such feverish enthusiasm. *Trainspotting*, Danny Boyle's adaptation of the novel of the same name by Irvine Welsh, is regularly heralded as one of the best British films ever made.

Trainspotting served as a platform for its stars to launch themselves into massively successful careers. Robert Carlyle (Begbie), Ewan McGregor (Renton) and Jonny Lee Miller (Sick Boy) have all enjoyed laudable acting careers at home and in Hollywood; meanwhile director Danny Boyle has ricocheted from success to success, repeatedly earning acclaim for his films, as well as an Oscar and masses of praise for his opening ceremony for London's 2012 Olympic Games.

The film is often considered a landmark in British cinema history. It stands as one of the few examples of when a film actually manages to properly capture the genius of the book it's based on: see, the repeated unspectacular adaptations of *The Great Gatsby*, 1984, etc. It demonstrates the problems and heartbreak

that drug addiction can cause without ever becoming corny or clichéd. It includes surreal and often disturbing dream sequences and hallucinations as characters fall in and out of their heroin dependency. And yet it still manages to capture the often laugh-out-loud joviality and humour that exists between a group of friends.

In other words, it's not your everyday movie, hence the highly fond memories fans hold of the film. It is, for some, not just a movie, but a comment on life and all it has to offer. I often have to remind friends that, in spite of the sprawling addiction and squalor it features, Renton's optimistic 'Choose Life' speech at the end does essentially give it a positive and happy ending. But there is of course a danger in returning to something so cherished and highly-thought of for the worry of somehow spoiling or tarnishing it with a second rate sequel.

For numerous reasons, this fate which has befallen so many great films' sequels is not one I think will befall *Trainspotting 2*. Firstly, the amount of time that has passed since the first film is significant – an entire 20 years. This is not a cynical attempt to make money by milking the last dregs of an already saturated story (I'm looking at you, *Fast and Furious*). It appears to be a genuine revisiting of a tale that has life in it yet – after all, Irvine Welsh has written two other *Trainspotting* books. Furthermore, the fact that the plotline of this film is to be loosely based on the second book gives me more confidence that *Trainspotting 2* will be a success. It is a good thing that it follows the main ideas of the second book, *Porno*, in seeing the characters get involved in the adult film industry. This is the natural progression of the characters as Welsh meant them to be after all. However, it is also a positive that it only *loosely* follows it – *Porno*, while enjoyable, is in no way as much of a classic as the first book is.

And, most importantly, *Trainspotting 2* is to include *all* of the original cast and crew that worked on the first film. That includes four main stars Robert Carlyle, Ewan McGregor, Jonny Lee Miller and Ewen Bremner, director Danny Boyle, script writer John Hodge and author Irvine Welsh. Not only does this aid authenticity, but these are individuals who all hold a special place in their hearts for *Trainspotting*. It was, after all, the film that launched most of their careers, and allowed them to display their various prodigious talents. They would not involve themselves with the sequel if they weren't all absolutely sure it would enhance rather than hinder the story of Renton, Sick Boy, Begbie and Spud.

"This film is going to be emotional for people" said Robert Carlyle ahead of filming. And with the effort going into *Trainspotting 2*, don't bet against that emotion being one of elation.



Most Read Discussed

1. [Short Film Sunday: All These Creatures](#)
2. [TV Review: Endeavour – Series 3 Episode 2: 'Arcadia'](#)
3. [TV Review: Vera Series 5 Episode 2: 'Old Wounds'](#)
4. [Film meets fact – why is historical accuracy important?](#)
5. [TV Review: Endeavour – Series 3 Episode 4: 'Coda'](#)

[6. TV Review: Endeavour Series 2 Episode 2](#)

Write for Nouse Film & TV

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in Film & TV

[Short Film Sunday: All These Creatures](#)

[Interview: Get Ready With Me director Jonatan Etzler](#)

[Short Film Sunday: Fauve](#)

[Netflix sued by Satanic Temple](#)

[Vintage Sundays Review: The Wizard of Oz](#)

[Review: Manbiki Kazoku \(Shoplifters\)](#)

- [About Nouse](#)
- [Who's Nouse](#)
- [Website Credits](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Student Discounts](#)
- [Print Editions](#)
- [Mini-Sites](#)
- [Nouse on Twitter](#)
- [Nouse on Facebook](#)
- [Nouse on Google+](#)

