



BRECON BEACONS AND SOUTH WALES VALLEYS 3 DAY WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION

This 3 day workshop covers the best of the Brecon Beacons and the heritage of the south Wales Valleys. Over the 3 days we're able to accommodate a range of experience and previous knowledge but your primary interest will be a love of the landscape and a wish to interpret it through your photography.

We will cover a range of photographic subjects and themes, developing your range of knowledge and skills and explore your own preferences.

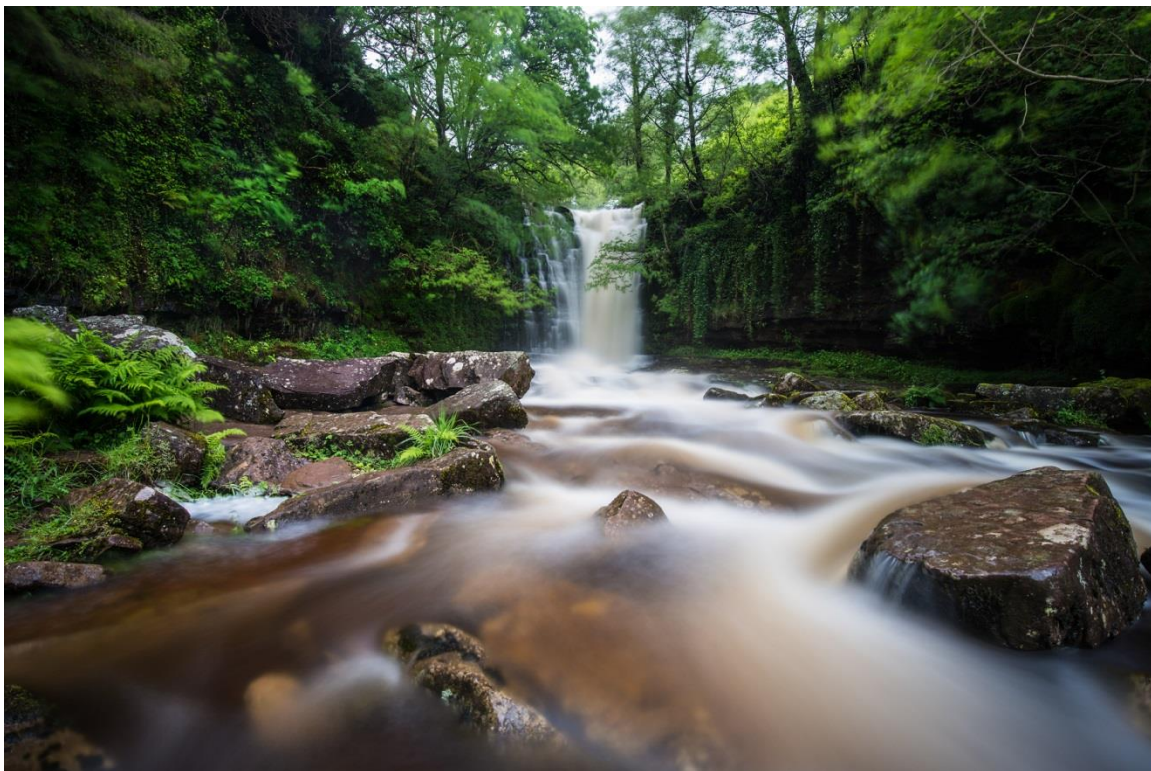
This itinerary detailed below may be modified or timings adjusted according to weather conditions; however the key locations listed below will be included. You will need a reasonable level of fitness to complete the mountain and waterfall locations but these elements of the trip can be amended in accordance with your capabilities.



There are many technically competent photographers who take acceptable pictures but could transform their photography with more emphasis on composition and use of natural light. Similarly there are others who have a creative eye but perhaps lose some potentially great images through faults in technical aspects such as over-exposure, camera shake or inaccurate focussing or whose images may appear 'flat' due to an insufficient understanding of the potential of post-processing.

Whatever your existing level of knowledge and experience, the workshop offers expert tuition in both the technical and creative aspects of photography and will enable you to create images you've always wanted.

Finally, although our courses are essentially outdoor or 'landscape' based, any course participant needing advice on any other aspect or subject in photography need only ask and Nigel will do his best to help and if possible allow time for you to practise your preference or issue during the course.



WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

The range of subjects

The workshop is structured so that you learn and understand the full digital photography process from start to finish, enabling you to produce technically excellent, creatively captured and proficiently processed landscape imagery. Our aim is to provide you with the understanding and knowledge that will enable you to produce images of a consistency high technical and creative standard

We therefore cover the following key steps:

General Technical understanding: You'll see how to take full control over your camera throughout the workshop. You'll be shown how your camera captures images and how you can apply this knowledge to develop your technical skills. We cover full manual controls, focussing options

(including manual), an overview of key settings and those specifically applicable to landscape photography, uses of lenses, reading the histogram and using RAW. We'll also cover accessories such as use of filters in landscape photography.

Specific Technical Skills: These are mainly applicable to landscape and location based photography. They are covered both in presentation material and within the location based sessions and include:

- Hyperfocal Distance / Optimising Depth of Field
- Long Exposure Photography
- Low Light and Night Sky Photography
- Colour and Monochrome Photography
- Panoramic Photomerges
- Bracketing, Exposure Blending and HDR
- Time Lapse Photography (for those who wish to try this)
- Using Filters in Landscape Photography

Composition and Developing your Style in Landscape Photography: Covered in both the initial presentation session and throughout the workshop. Learn ideas beyond the familiar rules and start to think about how you design your images and create images with impact.

Understanding Natural Light: Learn how to control and utilise natural light to make your images stand out. You'll see how light can transform a scene and in many cases become the essence of the image.

Post Production: Learn how effective post-processing can optimise and draw out the key characteristics of your image from the RAW file starting point. We'll be using Adobe software (Lightroom and Photoshop) to do this.

What information you'll take away with you

Specific Presentation Papers included within the workshop (and made available to clients as PDF files):

- The Essential Camera Settings and Technical Understanding
- How we Perceive the Landscape and Interpret this through Photography
- The Principles of Composition in Landscape Photography
- Advanced Composition and Developing a Style in Landscape Photography.
- Understanding the Weather and Natural light in Landscape Photography
- Long Exposure and Night Photography
- Photographing People on Location
- Travel Photography
- Architectural and Heritage Photography
- Other specialist subjects

Whatever your existing level of knowledge and experience, the workshop offers expert tuition in both the technical and creative aspects of photography and enable you to create images you've always wanted. They offer learning in the latest techniques in digital photography, using photoshop at the end of the course to process and print your best images.

Finally, although our courses are essentially outdoor or 'landscape' based, any course participant needing advice on any other aspect or subject in photography need only ask and Nigel will do his best to help and if possible allow time for you to practise your preference or issue during the course.

Key skills which our courses cover include for example:

Technical skills:

- The camera settings and uses of lenses
- Taking control of your image through use of manual settings
- Use of filters and accessories and how they can enhance your photography
- Shooting in RAW and RAW processing

Creative understanding

- Guidelines to effective composition – from the basics to advanced.
- How to create dramatic landscapes
- Light and colour theory
- Photographing moving water and other creative uses of long exposure photography.

Digital camera and processing techniques:

- Photomerges – creating those great panorama's
- HDR – see how you can create that glowing castle in front of a setting sun.
- Cropping, adding contrast or colour / converting images to black & white
- Removing unwanted objects!

.....and much more



Talybont on Usk Reservoir: near to home of Creative Photography Wales

WHERE WE GO

Landscapes and Waterfalls of the Brecon Beacons Itinerary

The following is the programme as currently scheduled; however please note the following:

- **Day 1** starts at midday and will include an introductory / theory session at the beginning and a feedback, review and post-processing session at the end (please see the attached Example Programme to see the approximate schedule for this.
- **Day 2** will be more flexible and usually includes more time on location
- **Day 3** will be a half day on location and will finish with an extended feedback, review and post-processing session for a 4pm finish

The following itinerary is a guide only and may be varied according to weather conditions. For example we can do the dawn start or night shoot on day 2 if the weather is looking more suitable on that day.

DAY 1 – WATERFALLS AND LANDSCAPES. 12 noon – 9.00pm

The first day has a later start and finish to allow you to travel down and settle into your accommodation before we start the workshop. We met at my studio at Talybont on Usk unless you're being collected at Abergavenny Railway or Brecon Bus Station.

Introductory session 12 noon – 1.30pm

Meet for an introductory session at my studio at Talybont on Usk at 12 noon. This will take about 90 minutes before we depart for locations. We will take this opportunity to get to know each other and determine everyone's expectations. Nigel will also review key camera settings and controls for landscape photography and present ideas on composition.



Blaen y Glyn Waterfalls 2.00 – 4.00 pm

Blaen y Glyn is at the foot of the central Beacons and is set in woodland, with a series of falls leading up the valley towards the mountains. They are accessible and great for practising exposure and shutter speed control. You'll be given time to explore the falls and come away with a great range of images.

Mynydd Llangorse Mountain Views 4.30 – 6.00 pm (or later depending on sunset time)

We drive back through Talybont on Usk into the Black Mountains to a great viewpoint overlooking the Brecon Beacons mountains behind Llangorse Lake. It's a great location either catching morning or evening light (an example is shown above). It's a steep but relatively short (150m) climb up to the viewpoint, so you'll need a certain level of fitness for this.

Evening Session – Location TBC 6.30 – 9.00 pm then return to Talybont on Usk

Set in the heart of the Llanthony Valley in the Black Mountains, the Priory is an historic monument ideal for night sky photography due to its isolation from settlements.

Specific aspects of photography covered:

- Review of understanding your camera and its settings
- Essential techniques in photography
- Composition in landscape photography
- Understanding light
- Long exposure photography

Locations visited:

- Blaen y Glyn Waterfalls
- Mynydd Llangorse and surrounding views and landscapes
- Llanthony Priory / Tretower Castle / Llangorse Lake

DAY 2 – HERITAGE AND ARCHITECTURE 6.00 am – 7.30 pm

The first day has a later start and finish to allow you to travel down and settle into your accommodation before we start the workshop.

Dawn shoot at Llangorse Lake 6.00 – 8.00 am

We make an early start at Llangorse Lake, the largest natural lake in South Wales to catch the sunrise and dawn light. You'll have the chance to practise with long exposures and the use of filters.



Breakfast review & post-processing session at the hotel. 8.00 – 10.30 am

We return to the hotel for breakfast and to review the images we've already captured and select a number of them for a post-processing session. We'll be using Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom to process the images

Blaenavon Ironworks and Big Pit National Mining Museum: 11.15 am – 2.00 pm

The South Wales Valleys has an immense amount of industrial heritage, rich in photographic potential. We visit these two industrial museums and capture them in detail and in broader landscape views.

'The Guardian' Sculpture at Abertillery: 2.30 – 4.00 pm

This sculpture was created in 2010 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of a mining disaster in the area. It's as big as The Angel of the North and a striking monument to photograph from many angles

Merthyr Town and Cefn Coed Viaduct 4.30 – 6.00 pm

Merthyr Tydfil was the heart of the industrial revolution in South Wales and has successfully combined historic monuments and features with more recent developments. We visit the town and the magnificent Cefn Coed Viaduct, hopefully lit by evening light.

Review Session at the hotel 6.30 – 7.30 pm

Set in the heart of the Llanthony Valley in the Black Mountains, the Priory is an historic monument ideal for night sky photography due to its isolation from settlements.

Specific aspects of photography covered:

- Understanding your camera and its settings
- Composition in landscape photography and looking to develop your style
- Understanding and using natural light
- Long exposure photography
- Using filters in landscape photography
- Panoramic photomerges
- Time Lapse Photography (for those who wish to try this)

Locations visited:

- Llangorse Lake
- The Blaenavon Ironworks and Big Pit Mining Museum
- The Guardian Sculpture
- Merthyr Tydfil and Cefn Coed Viaduct

DAY 3 – MOUNTAINS AND UPLANDS : PEN Y FAN & CENTRAL BEACONS 4.00 am – 3.00 pm

We spend the day in the central Brecon Beacons, walking up to Pen y Fan, at 886m the highest Peak in the Brecon Beacons and the highest south of Snowdonia. The surrounding hills have fantastic panoramic views with great opportunities for photographic composition. Although the path is good, it involves an ascent of around 450 m and an hour walk from the start point. The day will also involve 2-3 hours spent at high level (800m approx.) so you will need to wrap up accordingly. If the group wishes, there is an alternative (easier to reach) option above Tor y Foel that we can use.

Dawn shoot at Pen y Fan 4.00 – 8.00 am (or lower level at Tor y Foel as back up)

We make a very early start to catch the sunrise on Pen y Fan and spend a couple of hours exploring the views as the morning light changes. If the weather is good enough we'll have a packed breakfast at the top (you may wish to bring a flask!)

Llwyn Onn Reservoir / Ystradfellte Waterfalls. 10.00 am – 12.30 pm

Llwyn Onn sits just below the mountains and has scenic views back towards the mountains. On a still day there are perfect reflections in the water. If there is time we'll visit one of the waterfalls at Ystradfellte

Maen Llia Standing Stone: 1.00 – 2.00 pm

Maen Llia is a striking landmark set in a remote area of the Brecon Beacons. It's a great example of an isolated feature which the solitude of the Brecon Beacons. We'll be practising composition and long exposure photography.

Review session at Hotel 2.30 – 4.00 pm and Close

We finish by reviewing the day's images and selecting a number for post-processing.

Specific aspects of photography covered:

- Composition in landscape photography
- Understanding light and exposure
- Specific techniques in landscape photography
- Using Filters in landscape photography

Locations visited:

- Pen y Fan and the surrounding mountains
- Reservoirs and Waterfalls
- Maen Llia Standing Stone.



INCLUSIONS / EXCLUSIONS

Tour Price includes:

- Expert tuition and Guide Services with Nigel Forster
- Transfers from Abergavenny or Brecon for those travelling by bus or train.
- Transport to and between locations
- Photographic instruction and full course notes
- Use of equipment if required
- Tea / Coffee & refreshments during tutorial sessions

Tour Price excludes:

- Transport to the Brecon Beacons
- Insurance
- Accommodation & Meals

EQUIPMENT / CLOTHING

Photographic Equipment

Essential requirements:

Please bring your camera and any equipment you have (along with your camera manual if possible).

- Camera (with spare body) and Lenses (this might seem obvious but I frequently have customers who leave some lenses at home thinking they won't need them!)
- Memory Card (s). You should bring at least 64GB of cards with room for 2000 minimum images shot in RAW
- Camera manual
- Card reader
- Full battery + at least 2 spares.
- **Your battery charger (do not forget this).**
- Tripod

Optional items (but please bring them if you have them)

- Remote release
- Filters: e.g. Polarising / Neutral Density / Graduated Neutral Density
- Flash
- Monopod
- Any other accessories
- ***Laptop if you have it, loaded with your preferred imaging software (perhaps should be on essentials list above)***

(I can assist with some of these if required. I would also be happy to offer advice on purchasing any equipment you may be looking for).

Other Clothing / Equipment

Clothing / Footwear / Protection

- Waterproof Jacket and Trousers. These should be Goretex or equivalent material.
- Windproof jacket for dry but windy conditions
- DriFlo / Wicking layers are best for humid or wet conditions
- Fleece top & Jacket
- Walking Boots / socks and at least one other pair of footwear.
- A change of footwear other than your walking boots.
- Head protection: One or both of fleece or waterproof hat which protects ears
- Gloves. Waterproof and / or 'Windblock' Fleece pair. Fingerless mitts are also useful for accessing dials. Bring at least 2 pairs of gloves.
- Head torch with rechargeable batteries for dawn and night sessions
- Golf umbrella made from carbon fibre. Wind resistant ones are best

Other items for location use:

- Mobile Phone (however reception cannot be relied upon on Skye). We will need your mobile phone number in advance

- Maps of area (please see OS map list above)
- Flask for hot drinks
- Walking stick if you prefer

Laptop Computer / IT Equipment

While I have 3 laptops available (all have Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom and PS Elements), if you are familiar with Post Processing, you may wish to bring your own laptop loaded with your software. This will allow more time for you to post process your own images.

HEALTH & SAFETY NOTES (advisory only – health & safety of yourself and others is your responsibility)

This photography workshop is based in terrain consistent with mountain and upland landscapes. We are usually out for 4 -5 hours visiting a number of locations. However we ensure that the course is designed around your capabilities, and if applicable, takes full account of any physical limitations. In all cases we discuss the content of the course with you beforehand based on your answers to the Course Questionnaire.

Please note however that this is a photography course and not a mountain trek; the emphasis is on stopping at specific locations to learn and practice photographic techniques and to explore the potential for great photography! We only stray from a public footpath or right of way to get to key viewpoints and all will be safe; you will therefore not be asked to experience unfamiliar or untested routes to photographic locations. ***All are locations accessed by members of the public and promoted as such by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. ANYONE GONG AWAY FROM AGREED LOCATIONS DOES SO AT THEIR OWN RISK.***

Within these parameters we cover a variety of locations:

- **Upland landscapes** such as steep sided hills, ascents and escarpments. This includes rocky, and uneven ground (such as Pen y Fan & Mynydd Llangorse).
- **Waterfalls, river valleys and cascades.** These are potentially hazardous. The paths are wet, slippery and steep in places and adjacent to deep water at points along the route.
- **Towns and villages.** Traffic is the main concern at these locations. Please be aware of passing traffic at all times
- **Monuments and Features.** These are generally safe and easily accessible however please do not climb on these and adhere to signage at all times

Don't forget how distracted you can be when taking photographs; look around you at all times. Do not at any time place your and others lives in danger by taking unnecessary risks. Please bear the following specific hazards in mind (these are not comprehensive: others may be around which you should be mindful of):

- **The mountain paths have steep paths and drops.** Be aware of the steep embankments and rocky outcrops. The path surface may also be slippery. Do not stand next to edges or back away from a vantage point without looking behind you.
- **The waterfalls route.** This has slippery and rocky paths and potentially fast flowing water at all locations. Never stand on wet rocks or in deep or fast moving water to take pictures from; even if the vantage point may be better from there. Current can be strong and ground conditions underneath extremely slippery. Never, ever stand near the top of a waterfall.
- **Always wear waterproof walking boots & clothing.** Please also note the other 'Essential Requirements', such as a Headtorch listed above.
- **Never keep your camera on a tripod while walking on uneven or slippery ground or near water.** Always remove it from the tripod and pack it away before moving to a new position. This is because if you do slip, your first instinct will be to protect the camera rather than yourself!
- **Do not leave any item of your equipment in a position where it may be a hazard to any other person in the area;** this is of utmost importance in an area such as this with limited access & dangerous hazards.
- **Be aware of traffic at all times in towns and villages.** It is easy to become distracted with photography; be a conscious of other road and footpath users.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

'Leave only footprints, take only photographs': A familiar expression but very relevant to a business promoting photography. Our key principles are as follows:

- **We never leave anything behind:** we always take your litter home including biodegradable matter. We do not accept littering in others.
- **We never cause unnecessary erosion** by straying off used footpaths or tracks, particularly on heavily used rights of way. We never climb on walls or exposed foundations of historic monuments and encourage others not to do so.
- **Our photographic subjects stay where they belong:** from objects found in the landscape to tiny wild flowers always stay where they are and never go to the studio
- **We only go where we're allowed to:** we only stray off common land or rights of way with permission. We do not climb over walls or over fences to get to a location

Nigel Forster - Your Tutor and Guide



Nigel has a wealth of experience of teaching both groups and individuals in photography and with an extensive knowledge of the Brecon Beacons. Nigel specialises in evocative landscape images and he has travelled in many parts of the world. He is therefore not only able to teach you the technical and creative skills of photography, he will also act as your guide and has a 'feel' for what visitors want to record and take back with them as a lasting memento of their trip.

FINALLY – If there's anything contained in the website information or on these Trip Notes you're not sure about or require further explanation, please contact us at any time and we're happy to help. Hope to see you soon!