ABRUZZO PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Autumn Trip: Saturday October 9th – Saturday October 16th 2021

Mountainous plateaux, majestic valleys and picturesque hilltop towns. Abruzzo is Italy's most stunning and unspoiled region! So, visit one of Italy's hidden gems from my own village of Pennadomo to the epic plateaux of the Gran Sasso mountains and Rocca Calascio. This photography trip will see some of Italy's most beautiful places and leave you with some wonderful images.

This trip is a fun, creative and sociable way to experience authentic Italy. We'll stroll through picturesque landscapes, photograph villages lost in time, and enjoy the region's cuisine! €We're running week long trips in spring and autumn, making use of great light and colour: if you think that central Italy produces flat Mediterranean light difficult for photography, then think again!

Light in the Apennine Mountains:

The Apennine Mountains form a great backdrop to the area. There are wonderful views of the mountains from Chieti and great light at all times of year. We also travel into the Gran Sosso mountains

About Creative Photography Experience and our Photography Workshops

I'm Nigel Forster and I run all Creative photography Experience workshops. I have been running a range of **Landscape Photography Workshops** for up to 6 people at great locations throughout the UK for 10 years. This includes both **Day Workshops** and **Short Breaks of between 2 and 5 Days** for photographers at all levels.

Having bought an apartment in Abruzzo in 2019 and having discovered much of the beauty and great photographic opportunity in the region, I will be running photography workshops from my base at Pennadomo from 2020. The intention in the longer term is to extend this to other parts of Italy.

The majority of our workshops assume some previous knowledge and experience. However, while this is important on Day Workshops, on longer workshops you'll learn plenty of tips and new skills as you go along so in some respects your starting point matters less with longer workshops.

Ideally, you'll have a DSLR or mirrorless camera, with hopefully an additional lens or two, although this isn't essential. You'll normally have some additional equipment such as a tripod (though these are available to borrow from me if required).

At the heart of my work is simple composition and use of natural light; aspects of photography that will transform your images and really make them stand out.

You'll get a great range of course notes with my workshops on a wide range of subjects from composition to long exposure photography, architecture and heritage, weather forecasting for photographers and much more!

I very much look forward to seeing you on one of our Italy workshops. These trip notes include lots of information, but if you need to know anything else, please ask.

Finally, my workshops offer a diverse range of skills; it's more about learning principles than subject matter.

So, whether it's landscapes, cityscapes, heritage, abstracts, wildlife, people…and whatever else is around, you'll learn some great skills and develop your creativity!

About Abruzzo and our trip

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Where in Italy is Abruzzo?

Abruzzo is a region in central Italy (east of Rome), with a mix of mountain, rural and coastal landscapes. It's also very much traditional Italy with medieval towns and villages, hilltop castles and a traditional rural economy with olives, vines and other agricultural crops. It is beautiful and quiet; much less visited than much more well-known areas such as Tuscany or Umbria, but full of photographic opportunities. It's divided in provinces.

The Abruzzo Provinces

The region is divided into provinces as in the map on the left. The village of Pennadomo is in Chieti, where much of the trip will take place. However, we will also venture into L'Aquila and Pescara on a couple of the days. Pescara is a city as well as a province and is the regional capital. Pescara Province also includes some great coastline, characterised by old fishing platforms, great for dawn photography.

L'Aquila was sadly the centre of the earthquake in 2009 that killed over 300 people and badly affected 1000 sqm of land and has been slow to rebuild. Chieti was not affected by the earthquake.

The region looks quite small on the Italy map; however in reality it's not! It's a mountainous region and travel is slow and mainly very indirect. The climate is surprisingly changeable with proper seasonal changes; expect temperatures similar to the UK in April (though it'll feel warmer with the sun out) and warmer in October. However, be prepared for anything! I've had thunderstorms every time I've been so far with great skies for photography! ***If you'd like to do some research or reading up on the area beforehand, then let me know. There are some good guidebooks and maps but the better ones are not advertised here but can be bought in Abruzzo (including English language versions). Please ask if you'd like some more information.***

Pennadomo Village

Accommodation

We recommend 2 choices for main accommodation: We can assist with arranging this or you are welcome to arrange this yourself. Either is fine: no commission is charged for arranging this! We will collect you and take you back to your accommodation on each day. You'll find that costs are similar for the 2 options listed below. See details below of overnight at Rocca Calascio. There will therefore be a night away from the Chieti Region.

Hotel: The Paradiso Hotel in Torricella Peligna. http://www.paradisohotel.eu/. It's about 15 minutes drive from my base at Pennadomo. The hotel prides itself on its local food and relaxed family atmosphere. Expect to pay 60 Euro for a double and 35 Euro for a single room based on a week stay

Bed and Breakfast: If you'd like something smaller and more rural and intimate, then stay at Il Monte Holiday Accommodation. However, this is subject to availability (they only have 2 rooms) and therefore more notice / advance booking may be required than the hotel.
https://www.facebook.com/ilmonteabruzzo/
This B&B is based in Colle Zingaro, around 10 mins drive from Pennadomo. I have stayed there myself and it's a lovely place with great views!

While for logistical reasons, we would prefer you to stay at one of the recommended places above, you may wish to find your own accommodation: You are free to do so. However, if you do this, please hire your own car for the week unless you book in Torricello Peligna, Colle Zingaro, or Pennadomo. Any other locations will make logistics more difficult when we provide transport for the week and affect the trip for other participants. Please also note that indoor / review sessions will typically be at my apartment in Pennadomo and you will need to be able to work around travel arrangements with other participants.

There is also a two night overnight stay at Rifugio Rocca Calascio in L'Aquila province on the Tuesday and Wednesday night. It's over a 2 hour drive and we'll spend 2 days there to make the most of this beautiful area, of the castle and its magnificent surroundings. We'll also explore L'Aquila and Sulmona during that excursion. See https://www.rifugiodellarocca.it/

Transport arrangements

The local transport hub is Lanciano: This is the main town in Chieti and about a half hour drive from Pennadomo and 45 mins to Torricello Peligna. Buses are frequent from Pescara and Rome airports (details available on request) and if you get to Lanciano, we can collect you from there. There are also trains from Pescara. This is a good website for transport options: **https://www.rome2rio.com/s/Pescara/Lanciano.** Whichever option you go for, we'll collect you from Lanciano

Flights to Italy / Abruzzo:

Both Easyjet and Ryanair have frequent flights to Italy from most UK airports. In April and October, it's low / mid-season so you should be able to get these at low cost. Depending on where you are flying from or which has best price and availability, you'll choose one of the following cities to fly into:

- **Rome:** (either Rome Ciampino Airport or Rome Fiumicino Airport). Ciampino is the right side of Rome and the preferable one). Ryanair and Easyjet have regular flights to Rome. Rome is around 3 – 3.5 hours drive to Lanciano.
- **Pescara:** This is the closest airport (around an hour away from Lanciano or 75 mins to Pennadomo)
- **Naples:** Flights go from Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol to Naples (as well as London airports) and can be a good option. However, transport to Lanciano is more difficult and requires car hire. It's a 2.5 - 3 hour drive to Pennadomo (Lanciano is further)

From the airport to Pennadomo:

- **Car hire:** Car hire is not expensive in Italy, particularly if you have an annual excess policy (it pays for itself on one trip). I can generally hire a car for less than £100 a week with unlimited mileage and can offer extensive advice on car hire options. However, while the car will be useful for getting to Pennadomo, as I provide all transport once you are there, unless you want to travel around as well, you'll perhaps get limited use from it once there. I use https://www.rentalcars.com
- **Bus:** regular buses go from Pescara and Rome to Lanciano: https://www.rome2rio.com/s/Pescara-Airport-PSR/Lanciano and https://www.flixbus.co.uk/bus-routes/lanciano-rome-fiumicino-airport . You can also get a bus from Naples airport: https://www.checkmybus.co.uk/lanciano/naples
- **Train:** You can also go by train from Rome or Pescara to Lanciano. https://www.omio.com/trains/rome/lanciano . There is no convenient rail route from Naples to Lanciano.

From Lanciano Bus / Train termini to Pennadomo

Simply let us know in advance and confirm by telephone or email when you arrive in Lanciano and we'll come and pick you up and take you to your chosen accommodation. For the rest of the week, we'll provide all transport and take you back to Lanciano for your return trip.

Eating arrangements

On any photography workshop, eating arrangements have to be flexible. We will look to catch dawn light and include evening and night shoots at appropriate locations. We don't want to be inside and miss photographic opportunities in great light while we're eating! This means that the itinerary will need to be flexible both in terms of location and timing.

While details will be provided closer to the workshop dates, there are a few general points to make around eating arrangements:

- **Breakfast:** Expect around 4-5 dawn shoots from the 7 days potentially available to us. Even if we go out early for a dawn shoot, where locations are local in and around the Pennadomo / Torricella Peligna area, then there will be time to go back to the hotel for breakfast after the shoot. However, when we go further afield, we won't be going back until later and you will need to go out early and miss breakfast at the hotel / B&B. We will instead find it at a café at a nearby town or village.
- **Lunch:** Lunch will out and about so we'll normally find somewhere local to where we're shooting. We're never far from a town or village but if for any reason we are either I'll prepare some sandwiches or you can arrange from the hotel / B&B
- **Dinner / Evening Meal:** We'll need to vary this according to shooting conditions and whether we're staying out for a night shoot or not. We'll either eat earlier or later depending on this . Again, we're never far from somewhere to eat. Therefore, we will look for variety in evening meal / dinner locations, and again vary these according to the locations we've been at during the day. Dinner will be at the Paradiso Hotel or a nearby restaurant on the first night and possibly on the final evening. Otherwise we'll ensure variety at local restaurants.

We'll also have coffee stops at convenient locations during the day. I often use these breaks for review sessions and showing presentations.

Roccascelegna Castle at dusk.

OUR LOCATIONS AND SUBJECTS

The emphasis is to explore the landscapes, architecture and culture of this area of Italy with your camera; therefore, a wide range of different locations are chosen & include:

- Rural landscapes at locations throughout the Chieti province of the Abruzzo region. We also go to Pescara and L'Aquila provinces as they contain coastal and mountain landscapes as well as many historic towns, villages and monuments.
- Mountain landscapes in the L'Aquila province
- Coastal landscapes and towns in the Pescara Province
- Hilltop castles and other monuments throughout the region. The area is characterised by hilltop villages, of which Pennadomo is a superb example!
- Historic architecture (and the very occasional modern building!)

All this is set within traditional Italian culture, a varied climate with great skies and at times exciting weather for photography (this is not sunny Spain!).

Specific locations include:

Chieti: This region is our base and forms 3-4 days of the trip

These are a few of our definite destinations:

- Pennadomo village
- Roccascelegna and the castle
- Gessopalena inc WW2 ruins
- Lanciano – town & architecture
- Lake Bomba
- Collademezzo (see image to left)
- Ruins at Fara San Martino

The magnificent view at Collademezo. We'll get there in dawn light!

The landscape at Gessopalena in Abruzzo

L’Aquila and the Gran Sasso: Covered in a 2 day / 2 overnight excursion

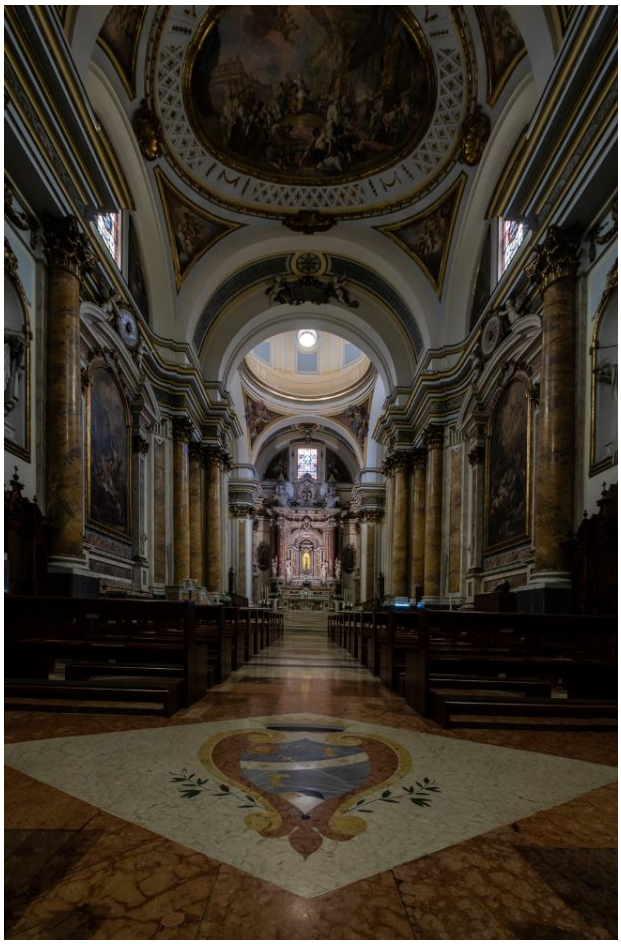
- L’Aquila City
- Rocca Calascio Castle and surrounding landscape
- Santo Stefano di Sessano mediaeval hilltop village
- Sulmona and Pescocostanzo. Architecture and street photography
- Landscapes of Gran Sasso

Views of the landscape and monuments at Rocca Calascio

Pescara: This region will be covered in a day trip

- Ortona – medieval coastal town
- Chieti coastal fishing platforms: these characterise the Abruzzo coast and make a great dawn photographic subject
- Fossacesia marina and abbey

A beautiful decaying doorway at Montebello in Abruzzo



The inside of Basilica Della Maria Del Ponte at Lanciano

The itinerary is in outline form and may be modified according to the specific capabilities and preferences of participants. You will need a reasonable level of fitness for this trip but most locations are easily accessible and elements of the trip can be amended in accordance with your capabilities. We may also make day-by-day changes to locations to allow for weather conditions or group preferences.

However……

Don't forget that the secret of photography is not in going to specific places to take pictures from. It's about exploring with your camera and looking for your own unique images. We'll constantly be looking at changing light, a chance moment or whatever we can find on the way, so you'll never quite know what you'll find through the lens of your camera!

Our indicative itinerary:

As with all photography workshops, we'll need to be flexible with the itinerary according to the weather on each day; We'll also revisit places within the itinerary if specific weather conditions create some great photographic opportunities

Rural spring landscape near Torricello Peligna

The basic structure of the week is as follows:

Saturday 9th to Monday 11th October – Chieti region

- **Saturday 18th - Arrival and Pennadomo:** After checking into the hotel / B&B, we meet during the Saturday afternoon and explore my local village of Pennadomo and its immediate surroundings. We'll have dinner at the Paradiso hotel at Torricello Peligna.
- **Sunday 19th - The landscape and villages from Pennadomo to Roccascelegna**: We'll vivit Roccascelegna, Gessopalena, Montebello, Fallascoso and more so that you'll get a real feel for the area. We end the day with a night shoot overlooking Roccascelegna Castle
- **Monday 20th – From Collademezzo and Bomba to Lanciano:** We travel a little further afield with a visit to Lanciano, the regional capital of Chieti. It has a beautiful historic centre and is a great place to spend the morning. Later in the day we'll travel back to Collademezzo and Bomba; both have great views of the area. Collademezzo is a great sunset location, so we can eat dinner there and finish with a sunset shoot.

Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 13th October – L'Aquila region

Our stay at Rocca Calascio: We have a 2 night stay in this wonderful area (on the Tuesday and Wednesday nights), leaving after breakfast on the Thursday morning), staying at the Rocca Calascio Rifugio. We visit Rocca Calascio Castle with a dawn shoot and explore the surrounding area. Over the two days we'll also go the historic city of L'Aquila, capital of the region, Santo Stefano di Sessano mediaeval hilltop village, Sulmona and Pescocostanzo. Staying over 2 nights allows us to fully explore the area together.

Thursday 14th – Saturday 16th October – Chieti and Pescara regions

- **Thursday 23rd April: return to Chieti:** We arrive by lunchtime and booking back into the original accommodation you chose. A possible plan for this afternoon is to travel to Fara San Martino but this may be on a different day depending on any changes to the itinerary.
- **Friday 24th April: Pescara and the Abruzzo Coast:** The trip will include a day of coastal photography. This is initially planned for Friday 24th but this is subject to change depending on the weather. This coastline is east facing so it will include a dawn start to catch the sunrise. The characteristic fishing platforms are a prefect sunrise opportunity! During the rest of the day we'll visit Ortona – medieval coastal town and Fossacesia marina and abbey before heading back to the Pennadomo area. Last day dinner location to be agreed!
- **Saturday 25th April, our last day:** There is an optional dawn start at a location at or near to Pennadomo but the Saturday is meanly the day to say goodbye, check out of the accommodation and return to the airports for the flight home. There will be transport for anyone wishing to get to Lanciano for onward transportation.

All days: Theory, Review and Post-processing Sessions

All days will be full of exploration and photographic opportunity. However, we will frequently have breaks for theory, review and post processing sessions on a wide range of photographic subjects. You'll be given comprehensive course notes and information

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN ON THE WORKSHOP

Within the workshops we're able to accommodate a range of experience and previous knowledge but you should have some previous experience and your primary interest will be a love of the landscape and a wish to interpret it though your photography. We will cover a range of photographic subjects and themes, developing your range of knowledge and skills and explore your own preferences.

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 and Lightroom at the end of the course to process 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. We will do our best to help and if possible allow time for you to practise your preference during the workshop.

Key skills which the workshop covers for example:

Technical skills:

- Recommended camera settings for landscape photography
- Use of lenses in landscape photography
- Taking control of your image through use of manual camera 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 through understanding light and the weather
- Long Exposure and Night Photography
- Light and colour theory
- Creative uses of long exposure photography.
- Understanding Black & White photography

Digital camera and processing techniques:
Our priority will be optimum processing of your RAW image, but we will introduce other ideas and techniques in post production.

The night sky at Pennadomo

Theory Sessions

We will include theory sessions which will mainly take place in the evenings, but also potentially during the day in the event of bad weather. In this case, we would also spend additional time on post-processing. Main theory subjects include the following:

- Composition in Photography
- Developing a Style in your Photography
- How we perceive and interpret the landscape and our environment.
- Long Exposure Photography
- The Weather, Seasons and Light in Landscape Photography
- People and the Landscape
- Travel Photography – creating a story of your trip

INCLUSIONS / EXCLUSIONS

The trip cost includes:

- Expert tuition and Guide Services with Nigel Forster for a week
- Transfers by private car from Lanciano or other local location by arrangement for those travelling by bus or train.
- Transport to and between all locations (a vehicle will be hired locally with a size depending on the group size)
- Two nights accommodation at Rocca Calascio Refugio. Two booking together share a room; others each have a single room. Includes B&B only not evening meals.
- Photographic instruction and full course notes (in PDF form)
- Use of camera equipment if required
- Filters and other accessories if required

The trip cost excludes:

- Flights to Italy (if required). The cost will vary depending on airline, airport and when booked.
- Internal travel within Italy to Abruzzo. Expect around £30 - £75 / €40 - €90 return
- Accommodation in Chieti (5 nights), though this can be arranged at cost (expect this to be around £180 - £200 / €200 - €225 per person or around 75% more for 2 booking together
- Meals / drinks. These will be purchased during the trip.
- Holiday insurance & insurance of personal camera equipment

A lone tree under stunning light at Abruzzo

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).

Poppies in Abruzzo

Other Clothing / Equipment

In spring and autumn, you should be prepared for all potential weather conditions. We'll also go into the mountains so warm and waterproof clothing is essential

Clothing / Footwear / Protection

- Waterproof Jacket and Trousers. These should be Goretex or equivalent material.
- DriFlo / Wicking layers are best for humid or wet conditions
- Fleece top & Jacket
- Walking Boots / socks and at least one other pair of footwear.
- Head protection: One or both of fleece or waterproof hat which protects ears
- Gloves. Waterproof or 'Windblock' Fleece pair. Fingerless mitts are useful for accessing dials.
- 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 / books of area if you wish
- Flask for hot drinks

Items for accommodation / other use

- Normal clothing for 5-6 days
- Most utensils are provided but you may want to bring anything specific
- Towels (available for rent but we suggest to bring your own)
- Toiletries & other personal effects

Chiesa di San Pietro at Roccascelegna

HEALTH & SAFETY NOTES (ADVISORY ONLY – HEALTH & SAFETY OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY)

Key general points are as follows:

- This photography workshop is based in terrain consistent with mountain, inland and coastal landscapes. We are usually out for several hours visiting a number of locations. Importantly we may also be reaching two or three of these locations in near darkness to catch dawn light.
- We ensure that the workshop is designed around your capabilities, and if applicable, takes full account of any physical limitations. In all cases we discuss the content of the workshop with you beforehand based on your answers to the Workshop Questionnaire.
- Our locations are generally safe and not exposed. However, the weather can always turn, particularly in mountain areas. In particular, the area gets frequent thunderstorms. We will check on these on each day.
- ***Please note however that this is a photography course and not a trek***; the emphasis is on stopping at specific locations to learn and practice photographic techniques and to explore the potential for great photography. Therefore, the majority of locations are fairly accessible from the car; however we do intend to offer longer walks to and around locations.
- We only stray from a 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.

General Health & Safety Advice

Please bear the following specific hazards in mind (these are not comprehensive: others may be around which you should be mindful of):

- **Exposed locations**. Be aware of steep embankments and rocky outcrops. The path surfaces may also be slippery. Do not stand next to edges or back away from a vantage point without looking behind you.
- **Waterfalls.** These often have 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. Currents can be strong and ground conditions underneath extremely slippery. Never, ever stand near the top of a waterfall.
- **Steps / Climbs.** Abruzzo is hilly with steep drops. Be careful when accessing these locations
- **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.
- **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.

First Aid / Emergency Medical Treatment

We will have a full First Aid Kit available in the event of any minor accidents; this will be kept in the vehicle and taken with us. However, if you have any specific medical conditions or requirements please bring the necessary medications or first aid items with you. Please advise us of this in advance via the questionnaire.

Should the unlikely need arise, there are hospitals at Lanciano and Casoli.

Light over the Apennine Mountains from Torricello Peligna

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 ourselves or 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. If stiles are provided do not climb gates to get to locations
- **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
- **Recycling**: If recycling facilities are available at our accommodation, please use them as instructed.

CONTACT:

Nigel Forster

Creative Photography Experience

Email: info@creativephotographytraining.co.uk

Telephone: 0044 7815 089835 / 0044 1874 676402

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CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY WALES

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