



# Location Lighting for Television at Brockweir Gloucestershire

Bernie Davis and Mike Baker are the tutors on this workshop based week of location lighting training.

Bernie and Mike have many years of experience of the ever changing challenges of TV location lighting between them and have been running this highly successful residential course for six years. Both spent a large part of their careers in the BBC.

Set in the rural location of The Forest of Dean, delegates work together in a highly interactive way to build on their knowledge with a wide range of exercises devised to enable delegates to maximize their learning experience during their week.



**Brockweir** is a small village on the river Wye in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. It has a Moravian Church, a Church Hall and a Pub.

It is easily accessible from the M4 or M5 being less than 30 miles from the Severn Bridge. London is less than 150 miles away.

Delegates and tutors stay together in local accommodation. The village always welcomes us and some of the ladies of the village provide us with tea, coffee and lunch throughout the week at very reasonable cost.

In 2001, BBC Television Outside Broadcasts asked Bernie Davis to look into the possibility of running some training for location lighting actually on location. Bernie asked Mike Baker to assist during the first course in the village of Brockweir which was chosen as a 'test bed'. Eight years later the course is still going strong and they have been organised and run by Bernie and Mike ever since.

By virtue of the many satisfied delegates who have been through the courses, it has become a centre of excellence for location lighting training.

We like to run the course twice yearly, generally in early Spring, and Autumn. Although the delegates have in the past tended to come from BBC TV Outside Broadcasts, we also encourage freelancers who wish to improve their location lighting skills. Ideally, we like to run the course with six delegates so that we can have two groups of three for practical work.

We are also able to give a quotation for bespoke courses. Lighting appreciation courses for Designers, Directors and others not directly involved with lighting are a distinct possibility. Typically, they could be of a three day duration but we are entirely flexible in response to a

### What's on offer?

The original requirement for the course was that it was to be effective, residential and inexpensive.

Delegates travel to Brockweir during the Monday morning of the course. We assemble during late morning and unload the cameras, lamps, dimmers, grip gear, cables and all supporting kit from the transport vehicle that has arrived from London. Initially, these are all stored in the Hall which is ours for the week. The Hall offers sufficient space to carry out many of the exercises in the early part of the week and is our discussion/reviewing area. Our local contacts, Jeff and Pat Boden liaise with the villagers for matters of access, parking and provision of lunch and refreshments.

After lunch and mutual introductions, the course begins. It is important to note that the schedule is flexible to a point in order to ensure that delegates individual requirements are met. The week includes the following topics and activities:

- 1) lamp appraisal during which a large range of different kinds of luminaire are examined especially with a view to appropriate usage on location.
- 2) Basic portraiture rules and when to break them! Workshop follows in which delegates can experiment and work to a brief, but are also encouraged to experiment.
- 3) Extension of portraiture into classic 'one plus one' and 'one plus two' interview situations.
- 4) Mixed lighting problems and solutions. Introduction to soft light, its nature and how to achieve it on location. Diffusers, Poly, reflectors hard and soft, Kinoflows.

- 5) 'Commentary Box' and temporary studio lighting: coping with large picture windows in the rear of a multi camera setup.
- 6) Night time lighting, interior and exteriors. Discussion and examples.
- 7) Coping with low ceilings and appropriate use of grip gear: pole cats, magic arms etc.
- 8) Some practical examples of solving location lighting problems: Leeds piano Competition, Royal Wedding (church and temporary studios),
- 9) Dimmers, Mains distribution, moving light demos and lighting desk demo. Appropriate use of colour and moving lights on location.
- 10) Planning and plotting of small to medium sized location programmes.

The delegates are split into two groups allowing an excellent tutor/student ratio throughout the week. Each group works through individual exercises for most of the time. The larger practicals towards the end of the week are done in combination.

There are a wide range of practical exercises devised to take maximum use of the Church, Hall and immediate surroundings which cover both day and night, lit and 'as lit' scenarios. These gradually build on the delegates experience such that after five days, they are in a position to take on a lighting role with increased knowledge and confidence.

Each delegate is provided with a series of handouts in digital form as pdf files on a CD. Delegates are encouraged to bring along examples of lit work that they have done, or of lighting that they particularly enjoy. These are used in a discussion/forum situation during the week. We also review the previous days work each morning. Some of the major lighting filter manufacturers provide info and samples of some of their products. We also try to provide each delegate with materials to construct their own reflector board.

The week concludes at Friday lunch time after a de brief and feedback session. After derig, the delegates are free to return to their base.

An experienced electrician is always on hand to assist in rigging and de-rigging of lamps. His experience is invariably such that he forms an invaluable source of information that supplements that of the two tutors. All working practice complies with current safety regulations.



'Chamber Music' exercise in the Church

'Commentary Box' exercise using the Hall kitchen.



Brockweir Location Lighting Training is a highly effective way of ensuring that each member of the 'team' interacts with the other. Tutors and delegates work closely together and share non tutorial time in the evenings as well. Discussions often continue well into the night! Although there is a 'core' teaching time, we work 'flexitime' to incorporate lit evening exercises according to the time of seasonal darkness.

Further details from Mike Baker on 01446 773325 or Bernie Davis on 0208 5543939. You can also check out my web site at: [http://www.bakerlite.co.uk/brockweir\\_location\\_lighting.htm](http://www.bakerlite.co.uk/brockweir_location_lighting.htm)