In Focus

Tavistock Photography Club | Newsletter No. 5 | October 2026

A warm welcome

With the new season well and truly under way, we've already had a competition, two speakers, two members' workshops and an informative photo walk in Plymouth, organised via WhatsApp — and it's still only October!

Club news

Your committee has been busy and, as you will have seen from Rod's email, the skittles evening is now booked for 9 December at the Copper Penny Inn, Chipshop, Lamerton, PL19 8NT. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to join us. Members and partners all welcome and entry is free. Food will be payable in advance.

Open Shutter meetings continue to be well attended. Last month's theme was water, which prompted a good-natured, wide-ranging and interactive session, with members interpreting the theme in many different ways. Next month's topic is 'Moors'. There was also a thought-provoking discussion about the use of AI.

I was disappointed that, at our first competition of the year, the winning image in the B Group was not awarded the full 20 points. This was despite the judge having received clear written instructions from Rod, which I have seen, explicitly stating that at least one image in each group must be awarded 20 points.

Although I raised this on the night, I have since followed up by email with the judge concerned, expressing my disappointment that these instructions were not followed. I also raised concerns about comments made in relation to one image in the B Group, which I considered unhelpful and unprofessional, offering no constructive feedback or suggestions for improvement.

I want to be clear with all members that, as Chair, I will not accept judges failing to adhere to the explicit written instructions provided by Rod on behalf of the Club. These instructions are there for a reason, and we must expect them to be followed. There was also some uncertainty about whether the winning image in the A Group would receive the full 20 points, although fortunately this was resolved on the night.

I was also surprised and disappointed to learn that the judge was not a member of a Western Counties Photographic Federation (WCPF) affiliated club. I intend to raise this with the WCPF, as I believe it is a matter of legitimate concern. In my view, our competitions should ideally be judged by members of the WCPF, or at the very least by judges who belong to a recognised, affiliated photographic club elsewhere in the country.

I believe it is important that we maintain appropriate standards, both in the judging of our competitions and in the way our members' work is assessed and constructive feedback provided. Our members deserve nothing less.

The recent Members Workshop meeting

I hope you found the members' workshop on 7 October interesting and enjoyable. Our next workshop is on 18 November. We have some ideas for the topic, but your suggestions would be very welcome.

Early autumn opportunities

- **Devon Gardens Trust Photography Competition 2026**: The deadline is 31 October 2026. The competition invites entries featuring public parks and gardens across Devon, with categories for different age groups and prizes including cash and memberships. Find details and entry information at: https://www.devongardenstrust.org.uk/events/photography-competition

- **Devonport Guildhall** is hosting an evening with photographer, illustrator and educator Gretchen Viehmann as part of the TRACE Talks series. Drawing on a career spanning photography, publishing and visual storytelling, Gretchen will share insights into her creative practice, professional journey and the process of bringing compelling imagery to life. Whether you're an artist, photographer, student or simply curious about creative careers, this is a rare opportunity to hear from an experienced practitioner working at the intersection of image-making and education.

  Friday 23 October
  Doors 6.30pm
  Talk starts 7pm
  Mayor's Parlour, Devonport Guildhall
  Book your place now.

  https://www.realideas.org/events/8859697

- **The Orionid meteor shower** will peak overnight on October 21–22, 2026, with the best viewing window during the dark hours after moonset (around 2:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. local time) and before dawn. However, they are active until 7 November. This could be a good topic for a WhatsApp group meet!

A final note

Now that the season is fully under way, I'm keen to speak to as many of you as possible and hear your views, so that the club continues to offer what you want from it.

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