HELDERBERG Photographic Society

SINCE 1954



# Monthly Newsletter: November 2026

## November Photography Club Highlights

As we approach the end of another photographic year, our November club meeting proved that creativity is certainly not running out.

Our Set Subject, **"Bell, Books and Candle,"** brought forward some truly interesting photographs. Members explored the theme with imagination, originality and plenty of out-of-the-box thinking. It was wonderful to see the different interpretations and creative approaches.

The Open Category was just as diverse, showcasing a lovely mix of photography, from landscapes, wildlife and street photography to night photography and creative fun.

With the year drawing to a close, our members are still pushing their creative boundaries, experimenting with ideas and finding new ways to tell stories through their lenses.

But as we celebrate another year of photography, we also need to look ahead. **HPS is at a crossroads.** Important decisions need to be made about the future and direction of our club as we move into 2027.

Photography clubs, particularly here in South Africa, face challenges with declining membership and fewer people getting involved. We need to ask ourselves what we want HPS to become and how we can keep it relevant, active and enjoyable for everyone.

One thing is certain: a club cannot survive on the efforts of a handful of people. It takes all of us! We need members who participate, share ideas, volunteer and take an active interest in the running of the club.

I encourage everyone to read the accompanying article, **"Why Photography Clubs Matter – And Why We Need to Keep Them Alive."** It explores the importance of growing as photographers, receiving constructive feedback, getting our photographs judged and, most importantly, being part of a photographic community.

The future of HPS belongs to all of us. Let's work together to make sure there is a future worth looking forward to.

**Don't just belong to HPS. Be part of HPS!**

*The editor*

## November Results

Our November monthly meeting was another wonderful celebration of photography, creativity and the many different ways we see and interpret the world through our lenses.

This month, we welcomed outside judge Mariana Visser, who brought fresh perspectives, interesting insights and valuable feedback to our judging evening. Her comments gave us plenty to think about, with different viewpoints on composition, technique, storytelling and creative interpretation.

Of course, not everyone necessarily agreed with all the feedback received and that is perfectly okay! Photography is wonderfully subjective. What one person sees in an image may be completely different from what another sees.

But remember, don't be discouraged by a mark or a comment. Take the feedback, learn from it, experiment, grow and keep challenging yourself. Every photograph is part of your journey as a photographer.

And most importantly, ask yourself: Do YOU like your photograph? Does it tell the story you wanted to tell? Does it make you feel something? If the answer is yes, then celebrate that! A judge's opinion is an opportunity to learn, not a reason to lose confidence in your creativity.

**Overall, Winner**
Nightly Reading
Photographer: Hugh Michler
Mark: 14/15

**Top Entries – Open Category**

- Steve Trimby – Canary Wharf Tube Station – 14/15 – Category Winner
- Peter Dewar – Start of Dune 45 Climb – 13/15 – Runner-up
- Izak van Niekerk – Solitaire – 13/15 – 3rd Place

**Top Entries – Set Subject: Bell, Books and Candle**

- Peter Dewar – Shadow Light – 14/15 – Category Winner
- Steve Trimby – BBC2 – 13/15 – Runner-up
- Hugh Michler – Amen – 13/15 – 3rd Place

A big congratulations to all our photographers, not only to those who received top marks, but to everyone who submitted an image. Every photograph represents an idea, a moment, an experiment or a creative vision, and that is what makes our club so special.

A sincere thank you to Mariana Visser for giving her time, sharing her expertise and offering us plenty of food for thought.

Keep photographing, keep experimenting, keep learning and, above all, keep enjoying what you do. Remember, we are here to inspire one another, not to compete with one another. There is always something new to learn, another perspective to discover and another photograph waiting to be taken!



**Overall, Winner**
Nightly Reading
Photographer: Hugh Michler (New member)
Mark: 14/15

Some photographs tell a story, while others invite you to step right into another world.

Hugh Michler's *Nightly Reading* is a beautiful example of how light, shadows and carefully chosen details can transform an ordinary still life into something truly magical.

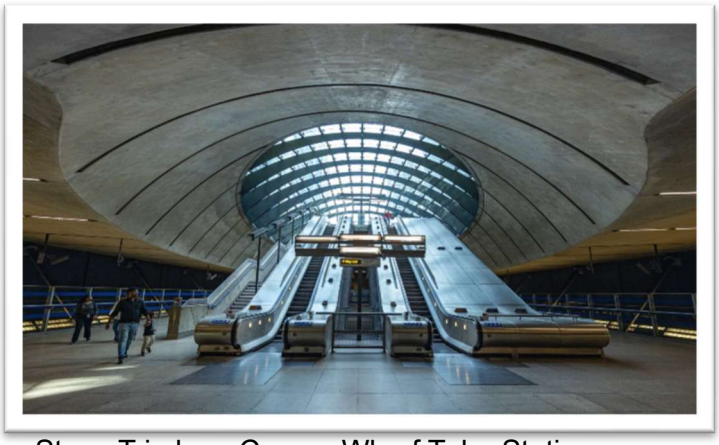
The warm, flickering candlelight draws your eye to the open book, while the delicate dried grasses, reading glasses and antique-looking objects create a wonderful sense of nostalgia. The dark background adds mystery and drama, allowing every detail to emerge from the shadows.

There is something wonderfully poetic about this image. It makes you imagine quiet evenings, old stories, forgotten secrets and the simple pleasure of getting lost in a good book.

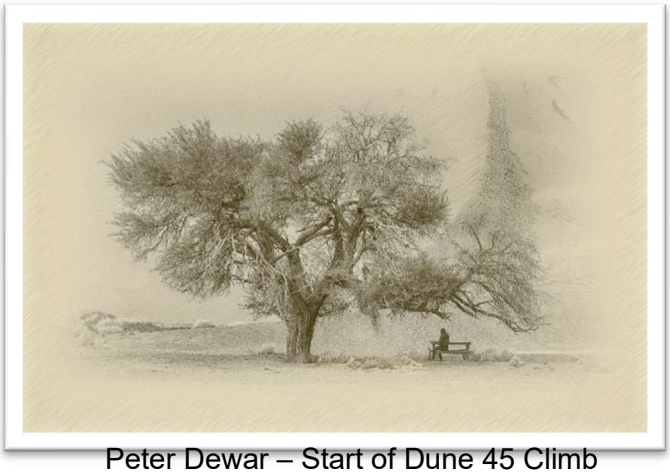
A beautifully considered composition that captures the spirit of Bell, Books and Candle with atmosphere, creativity and a touch of magic.

Congratulations, Hugh, on a well-deserved Overall Winner!

## Open Category: Members Photos



Steve Trimby – Canary Wharf Tube Station



Peter Dewar – Start of Dune 45 Climb



Izak van Niekerk – Solitaire




Hilldidge Beer – *Lost*



*Hugh Michler – Relax in Shade*



Neels Beyers – *Three in One*



Carima van den Berg – *Klein Karoo Soul*



Antenie Carstens – *Eskom Management Meeting at Sunset*



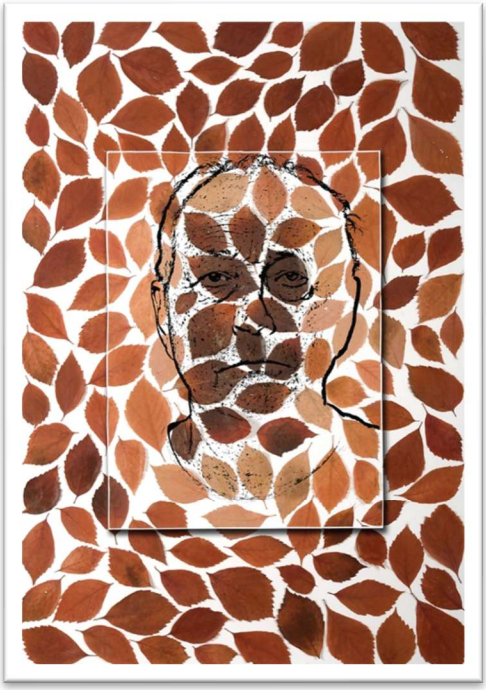

Steve Trimby – *Blackfriars Station*




Sandra Snyman – *Hurry Home*



Wynand Muntingh – *Looking at the City*



Antenie Carstens – *Strijdom van der Merwe in His Artwork*



Hilldidge Beer – *Tunnel Vision*



Carima van den Berg – *Umoya Wamanzi – Spirit of the Water*



Neels Beyers – *Into the Air*



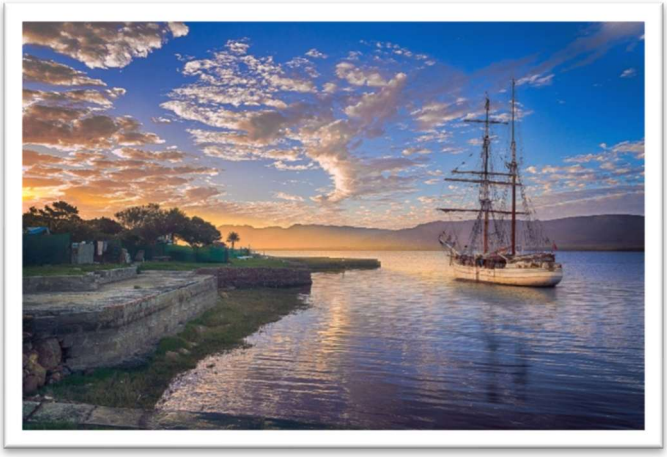
Hugh Michler – *Leo Looking Back*



Izak van Niekerk – *Sendelingsdrif*



Wynand Muntingh – *Footprints in the Sand*



Peter Dewar – *SS Soren Larsen*



Sandra Snyman – *Out of Office*

**Set Subject: Bell, Books and Candle**



Peter Dewar – *Shadow Light*




Steve Trimby – *BBC2*



Hugh Michler – *Amen*




Neels Beyers – *Hugo de Groot*



Peter Dewar – *The Excommunication*




Steve Trimby – *BBC1*

## Club Meeting Information:

**Join us for our Photography Year-End Party!**

🗓️ **Date:** Tuesday, 8 December 2026
🕛 **Time:** 18h30
🍷 **What to bring:** Just your favourite wine!

**Snacks and some light refreshments will be provided**, so come ready to nibble, sip, relax and enjoy an evening of good company and photography fun.




## Outings, Workshops and Courses

**Audio-Visual**
Invitation: AV Showcase Day
Join the AV community for a relaxed evening of sharing.
Audio-Visual productions on the big screen, not a competition, just creativity, stories, and good company.

**Holiday Adventures – Let's Get Out and Capture Some Moments!**
December holidays are just around the corner! Some of us will be heading off to the Kalahari, others to Gauteng, some lucky members will be travelling overseas, while others will be enjoying a well-deserved break right here at home. Wherever your December adventures take you, don't forget to pack your camera! There are photographs waiting to be taken everywhere, from beautiful landscapes and wildlife to little everyday moments.

Here's an idea! If you're planning a photography outing, a day trip, a visit to a nature reserve, a beach walk or even a wine farm adventure, why not invite a few fellow HPS members to join you?

Photography is even more fun when shared. It's a wonderful opportunity to learn from one another, exchange ideas, enjoy some good company and, of course, capture a few beautiful images along the way. You never know what photographic adventures might come from a simple invitation!
So, let's keep the HPS spirit alive during the holidays. Share your outings, invite fellow members, and let's see what everyone gets up to.
Happy holidays, happy travels and happy clicking! 📸🌎






# Light & Lens Monthly Article

*by Carima van den Berg*

**Why Photography Clubs Matter – And Why We Need to Keep Them Alive**
**Are Photography Clubs Becoming a Thing of the Past?**

Photography has changed tremendously over the years. Today, almost anyone with a smartphone or camera can capture an image, edit it and share it with the world within seconds. Social media gives us an endless platform to showcase our work, connect with other photographers and collect those wonderful likes and comments.

But somewhere along the way, I wonder whether we are losing something important: the value of belonging to a photographic community.

Photography clubs, both internationally and here in South Africa, are facing challenges. Membership is declining, participation is becoming less consistent, and many clubs are struggling to attract new members and keep existing ones involved.

Life is busy. We all have commitments, families, work and plenty of other interests competing for our time. Some photographers prefer to work independently, while others question whether traditional club meetings, competitions and judging still have a place in modern photography.

There is also a misconception that photography clubs are only for experienced photographers, serious competitors or people with expensive equipment. Nothing could be further from the truth!

A photography club should welcome everyone, from the person who has just bought their first camera to someone who has been photographing for decades. But if these clubs disappear, what exactly are we losing?

We lose opportunities to learn from one another, exchange ideas, share knowledge and discover new techniques. We lose inspiration, encouragement, friendships and the wonderful experience of being surrounded by people who share our passion.

A photography club should be more than a monthly meeting. It should be a place where we grow, both as photographers and as people.

**Likes Are Lovely, But Do They Make Us Better Photographers?**
Let's be honest. We all enjoy a little appreciation when we post a photograph on Facebook or Instagram. There is nothing wrong with that. A like or a lovely comment can certainly brighten your day!
But how much do those likes actually teach us?

A photograph might receive hundreds of likes because it is beautiful, popular or emotionally appealing. That doesn't necessarily mean the composition is strong, the lighting is correct or the image has achieved what the photographer intended.

If we genuinely want to improve, we need more than applause. We need constructive criticism, honest opinions and feedback from people who understand photography.
And this is where a photographic club becomes so valuable.

**The Value of Having Your Photographs Judged**
For many photographers, submitting an image for judging can be quite intimidating. We become emotionally attached to our photographs. We remember the planning, the difficult lighting, the beautiful location and the effort that went into capturing that one special moment.

Then someone looks at our photograph and points out something we never noticed!
Perhaps the composition could be stronger. Maybe the lighting isn't quite right, the subject needs more separation from the background, or something distracting is taking attention away from the main subject.
It might not always be what we want to hear, but sometimes it is exactly what we need to hear.
A judge offers a different perspective. They help us recognise the strengths and weaknesses in our work and understand why an image succeeds or where it could be improved.

One constructive comment can change the way you approach photography.
Judging is not about telling someone their photograph is bad. It is about learning to see our own work differently. Remember, a score is just a number. The feedback and lessons behind that number are far more valuable.

Don't let a 10 or an 11 discourage you, and don't let a 14 or 15 convince you that you have nothing left to learn. There is always room to grow.

**Step Outside Your Comfort Zone**
One of the greatest benefits of belonging to a photography club is the inspiration we get from seeing what others are doing.  When we photograph alone, it is easy to fall into a routine. We visit familiar locations, photograph the same subjects and use techniques we already know. But growth happens when we try something different.

Perhaps you have never experimented with black and white photography, macro, street photography, creative portraits, still life or long exposures. Then another member presents something completely different, and suddenly you have a new idea or challenge.

That is the magic of belonging to a club.
We learn from one another. We share our successes, our mistakes, our techniques and sometimes even our little photographic secrets. Sometimes the most inspiring photograph isn't the one that wins the competition. It is the one that makes you think, "I would love to try that!"

**Competition Isn't Everything – But Learning Is**
Not everyone wants to enter photographic salons, collect honours or compete at provincial or international level. And that is perfectly fine. You don't need to be a competitive photographer to benefit from belonging to a club. However, competitions give us something valuable: a reason to challenge ourselves, experiment and look at our photography more critically.

They encourage us to think outside the box and produce images we might never have attempted otherwise. Being judged also helps us understand photographic standards, build confidence and identify areas where we can improve. Whether you are a professional, an enthusiastic hobbyist or someone who simply enjoys taking photographs on weekends, there is always something new to learn.

**The Future of Photography Clubs Is in Our Hands**
Photography clubs cannot survive on the enthusiasm and hard work of a handful of people alone.
They need participation, fresh ideas, new members and people who are willing to contribute.
If we want our clubs to continue, perhaps we should ask ourselves not only what we get out of belonging to a club, but also what we bring to it.

Attend the meetings. Submit your photographs. Participate in discussions. Share your knowledge. Encourage newcomers and be willing to learn from people with different styles and experience. If you have been sitting on the sidelines because you are nervous about having your work judged, give it a try. You might surprise yourself!

A photography club should not be all about scores, certificates and competitions. Friendship, social interaction, outings, workshops, exhibitions and simply sharing our passion are just as important.
A healthy club makes room for learning and laughter, competition and creativity, experienced photographers and complete beginners.

**A Club Doesn't Run Itself – So Please Don't Be a Stoel-Sitter!**
Here is something we all need to remember: A photography club belongs to its members. It does not belong to the chairman, the committee or the handful of people who volunteer their time behind the scenes.

We are ALL part of the community, and we ALL have a responsibility to help keep it alive.
It is neither fair nor sustainable to expect the same two or three people to organise meetings, arrange judges, manage submissions, plan outings, communicate with members, maintain websites, organise events and constantly come up with new ideas.

A club cannot grow if only a handful of members are prepared to make an effort.
If you enjoy attending meetings, appreciate the competitions, benefit from the knowledge shared or simply enjoy the friendships, then you also have a part to play.
Get involved! Offer to organise an outing. Share a skill or give a short presentation. Help with an event. Volunteer for a committee role. Suggest new ideas. Welcome new members. Ask how you can contribute. Please, don't be a **stoel-sitter!**

Don't simply arrive, take your seat, enjoy everything that others have worked hard to organise and then leave, expecting it all to happen again next month.
You don't have to take on a huge responsibility or spend every spare moment helping. Even the smallest contribution makes a difference. A club becomes stronger when many hands share the work.
We need fresh energy, new ideas, willing volunteers and members who care enough to participate.
If we want our photography clubs to survive, grow and remain relevant in South Africa, we need to stop thinking of ourselves as members who simply attend meetings and start thinking of ourselves as a community that we help build.

**So, Why Do We Belong?**
Photography is a journey. None of us knows everything, and none of us should ever stop learning.
Social media might give us likes, but a photographic community offers something much more valuable: knowledge, inspiration, experience, friendship and the opportunity to become better photographers.

A photography club is ultimately what its members make it.
If we want exciting meetings, interesting challenges, more outings, opportunities to learn and a thriving photographic community, we all need to play our part.
So, before another photography club closes its doors, perhaps we should ask ourselves two simple questions:

*What can I do to become a better photographer?* Perhaps even more importantly:
*What can I do to help keep my photography club alive?*
Because once these communities are gone, rebuilding them won't be nearly as easy as clicking a like on Facebook.

**Editor's disclaimer:** This article reflects the editor's personal views and observations. Some readers may agree, others may disagree and that's perfectly fine. The intention is to encourage thought, discussion and perhaps a little positive action

*Don't just belong to the club. Be part of it!*

**Additional Information:**

Our **website** is being updated regularly, go and have a look.

Visit our **Facebook** page, invite friends to like our Facebook page.

Webpage: https://helderbergphoto.com/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/helderbergphoto/