



Photo Challenge

-: FOOTWEAR :-

Finding Photographs in the Familiar

The Eight Challenges

Shape & Silhouette — Capture the outline of footwear: boots, sandals, trainers. Strong side-light or back-light works beautifully for clean shapes.

Texture & Material — Leather grain, woven fabric, rubber tread, stitching. Get close and let the surface tell the story.

Signs of Use — Scuffs, creases, worn soles, faded colour. Show the life the footwear has lived.

Footwear in Context — Shoes by a doorway, boots on a workshop floor, slippers beside a chair. Let the environment add meaning.

Patterns & Repetition — Rows of shoes, repeating tread marks, laces arranged in patterns. Think visually and graphically.

Colour & Contrast — Bright trainers against a neutral background, dark boots on pale flooring. Use colour to create impact.

Unusual Angles — Shoot from above, below, or very close. Reveal shapes people don't normally notice.

Humour & Interpretation — Create a playful scene: shoes "talking", boots "marching", slippers "relaxing".
A visual pun always gets a smile.



Submit **up to 5 images**, one from each chosen category:

***Please submit your
images via the***

<< Link >>

by Sunday 11th Oct 2026

Why Footwear?

- Footwear has one major advantage over many photographic subjects. Everybody has access to it.
- You don't need specialist equipment, expensive travel, perfect weather conditions or unusual locations.
- Whether you photograph walking boots, gardening shoes, trainers, slippers or formal shoes, you already have possible subjects close at hand.
- The challenge is not finding footwear.
- The challenge is seeing it differently.



More Than Just Shoes

- Most people wear footwear every day without ever really looking at it.
- Yet footwear carries evidence of our lives.
 - It reflects occupations, hobbies, interests and journeys.
 - A pair of muddy walking boots tells a different story from polished dress shoes.
 - Well-worn slippers tell a different story from brightly coloured trainers.
- As photographers our role is often to reveal those stories.



Thinking Like a Photographer

- Before we begin the individual challenges, let's consider a simple question.
- What makes a photograph more interesting than a record shot?
- Usually it is one of four things:
 - Light
 - Composition
 - Detail
 - Story
- As we go through the challenges, think about which of those four elements might help strengthen your image.



Challenge 1 - Shape & Silhouette

- **Based on: "Capture the outline of footwear."**
- The human eye recognises shape very quickly.
 - Even in silhouette we can identify boots, shoes and trainers.
 - Try photographing footwear against a bright background.
 - A window, doorway or sunset sky may help create separation.
 - Simplify the frame and focus attention on the outline itself.
 - Ask yourself whether someone could identify the footwear purely from its shape.



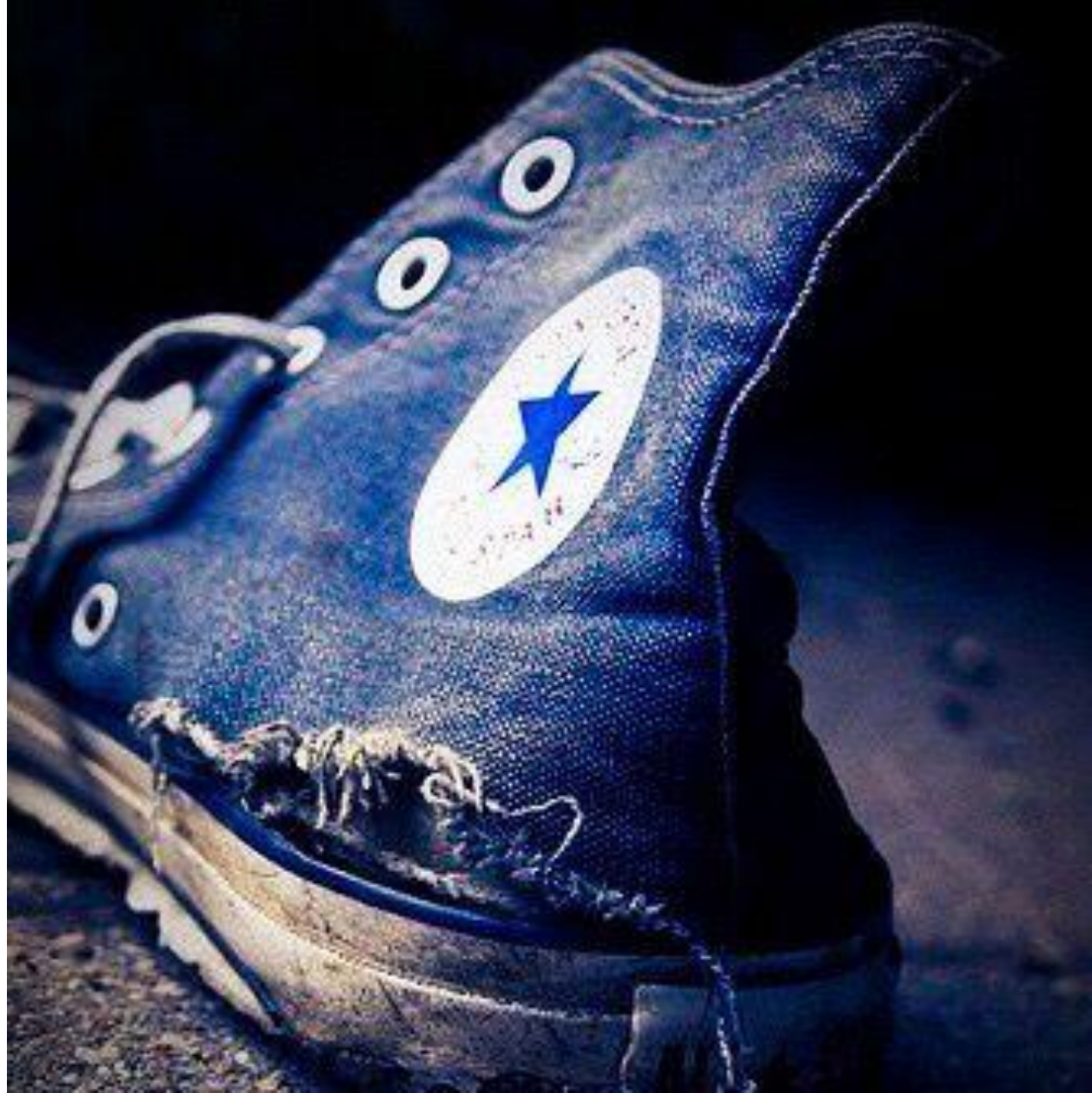
Challenge 2 - Texture & Material

- This challenge encourages close observation.
- Look for:
 - Leather grain
 - Stitching
 - Laces
 - Rubber treads
 - Canvas fabric
- Move closer than you normally would.
- Side lighting can reveal remarkable surface details.
- Your aim is to make viewers almost feel the texture simply by looking at the image.



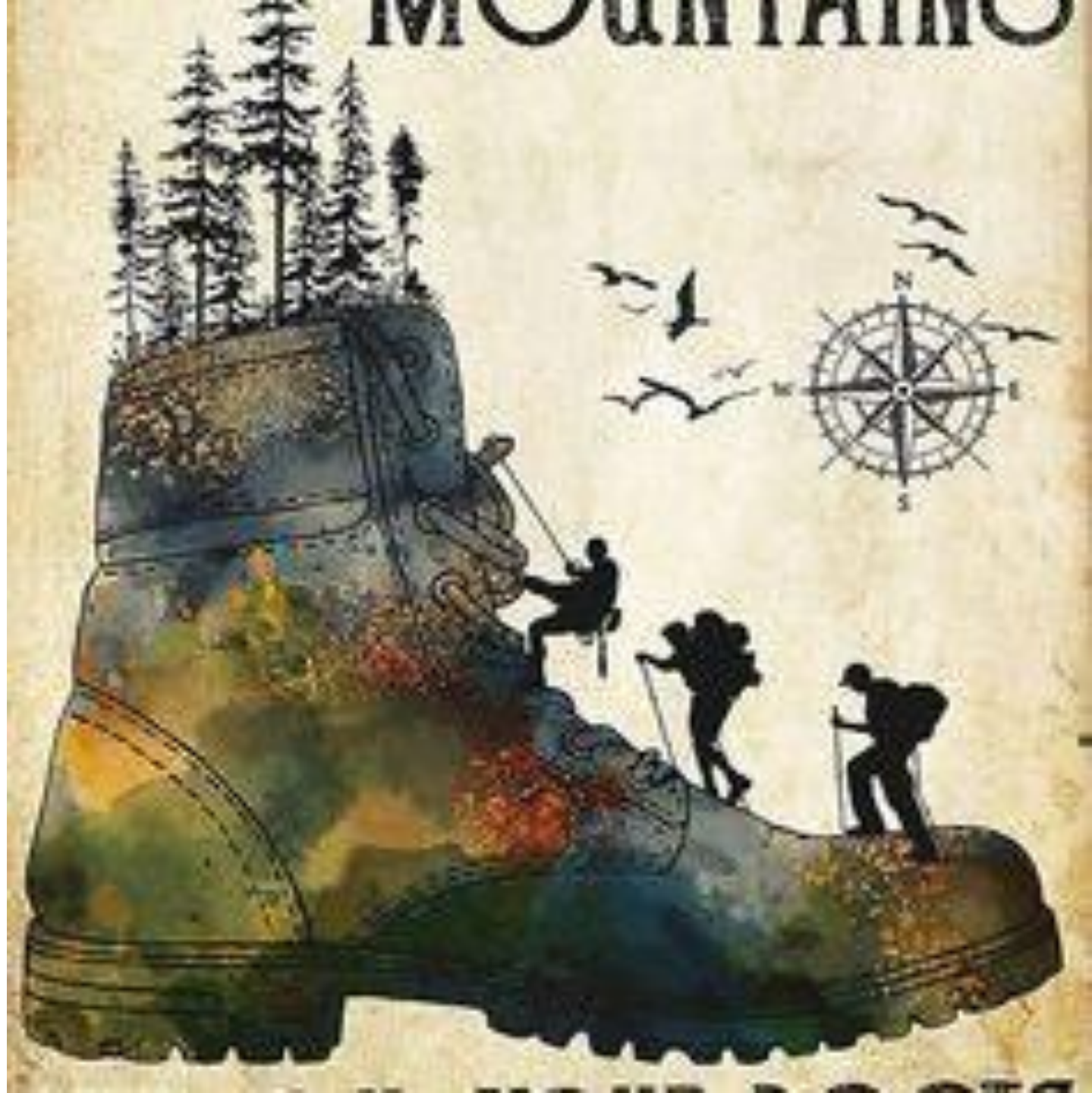
Challenge 3 - Signs of Use

- This may be the richest storytelling category.
- Look for:
 - Scuffed toes
 - Creased leather
 - Mud stains
 - Worn soles
 - Repairs
- The story often lies in the wear and tear.
- A brand-new shoe may be technically perfect.
- An old well-used boot may be visually far more interesting.



Challenge 4 - Footwear in Context

- Context adds meaning:
 - A pair of walking boots beside a map.
 - Wellington boots by a greenhouse door.
 - Running shoes beside a park bench.
 - Slippers next to a favourite chair.
- The surroundings help us understand the relationship between the footwear and its owner.



Challenge 5 - Patterns & Repetition

- Look for repeated shapes.
- Examples might include:
 - Rows of shoes
 - Collections of trainers
 - Repeating lace patterns
 - Repeated tread marks
- Patterns create visual rhythm and often produce strong graphic images.
- Don't be afraid to fill the entire frame



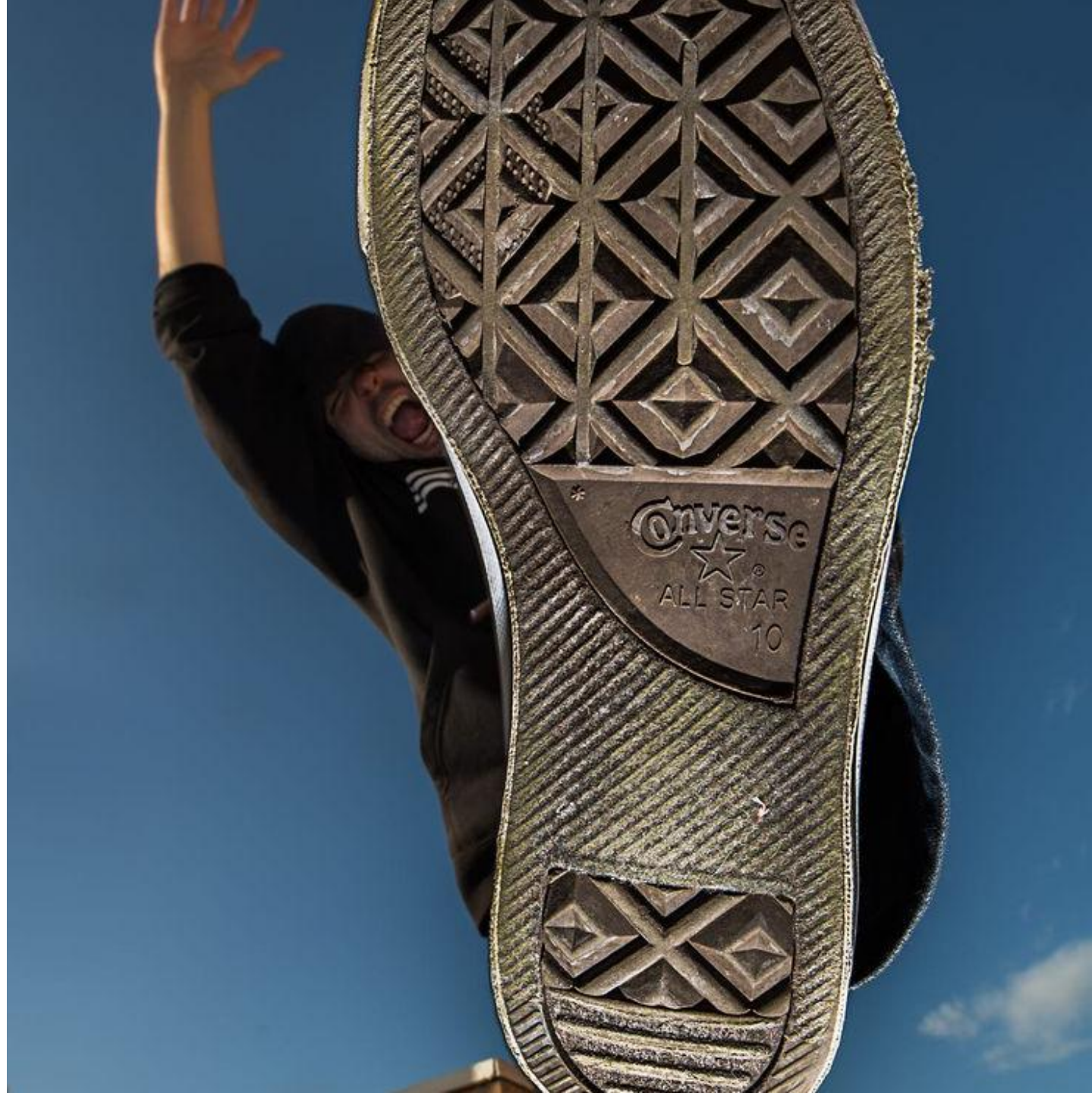
Challenge 6 - Colour & Contrast

- Colour can become the main subject.
 - Perhaps bright trainers against a neutral background.
 - Or dark boots on a pale floor.
 - You might even arrange footwear purely by colour.
- Think carefully about which colours complement one another and which colours create strong contrast.



Challenge 7 - Unusual Angles

- Most people see footwear from a standing position.
- As photographers we are not restricted to that viewpoint.
- Try:
 - Looking directly down
 - Shooting from floor level
 - Extreme close-ups
 - Looking through footwear
- Changing viewpoint is one of the quickest ways to make an ordinary subject appear more interesting.



Challenge 8 - Humour & Interpretation

- This is the fun challenge.
- Think creatively:
 - Could slippers appear to be relaxing?
 - Could boots be marching?
 - Could trainers be arranged to suggest movement?
- Humour often creates memorable photographs because viewers enjoy discovering the visual joke.
- Let your imagination have a little freedom here.



A Few Practical Tips

- Before taking your photographs:
 - Check the background.
 - Watch for distractions.
 - Experiment with window light.
 - Try several viewpoints.
 - Take more than one version.
 - The first photograph is often not the strongest one.
 - Slow down and give yourself time to experiment.



Final Thoughts

- Over the next three weeks I encourage you to pay attention to footwear wherever you encounter it.
 - Notice shapes.
 - Notice textures.
 - Notice wear and tear.
 - Notice how shoes and boots tell stories about the people who wear them.
 - Photography is ultimately about observation.
- This challenge is an opportunity to practise seeing familiar objects with fresh eyes.
- We all look forward in anticipation to seeing the results at our next meeting.
- Good luck and happy shooting.



The Eight Challenges

Shape & Silhouette — Capture the outline of footwear: boots, sandals, trainers. Strong side-light or back-light works beautifully for clean shapes.

Texture & Material — Leather grain, woven fabric, rubber tread, stitching. Get close and let the surface tell the story.

Signs of Use — Scuffs, creases, worn soles, faded colour. Show the life the footwear has lived.

Footwear in Context — Shoes by a doorway, boots on a workshop floor, slippers beside a chair. Let the environment add meaning.

Patterns & Repetition — Rows of shoes, repeating tread marks, laces arranged in patterns. Think visually and graphically.

Colour & Contrast — Bright trainers against a neutral background, dark boots on pale flooring. Use colour to create impact.

Unusual Angles — Shoot from above, below, or very close. Reveal shapes people don't normally notice.

Humour & Interpretation — Create a playful scene: shoes "talking", boots "marching", slippers "relaxing".
A visual pun always gets a smile.



Submit **up to 5 images**, one from each chosen category:

***Please submit your
images via the***

<< Link >>

by Sunday 11th Oct 2026