

## **Photographic accessories for Christmas:**

### **Memory cards**

The first thing to do is make sure you can use your camera as much as you want. Memory cards are cheap these days, buy plenty of them, and carry on shooting, but don't buy cards in your local high street shop, they haven't heard that they're getting cheaper, buy them on line from somewhere like:

<http://www.mymemory.co.uk/>

### **Printers**

Once you've got photos, use them, and show them. Print them out. You can either buy a printer which connects to your PC,

[http://www.canon.co.uk/For\\_Home/Product\\_Finder/Printers/Inkjet/PIXMA\\_iP3600/index.asp](http://www.canon.co.uk/For_Home/Product_Finder/Printers/Inkjet/PIXMA_iP3600/index.asp)

Or one which works on its own and takes a memory card or CD directly. Get one with Bluetooth, and you can also send prints to it from your camera phone

[http://www.epson.co.uk/printers/small\\_format\\_digital\\_photo\\_printers.htm?Section=home](http://www.epson.co.uk/printers/small_format_digital_photo_printers.htm?Section=home)

The cheapest printers can be a false economy. Small ink tanks, or ones which hold more than one colour can be expensive. The cost of ink over the life of the printer can be much greater than the purchase cost of the printer itself.

### **Software**

If you print photos using your PC, the next requirement is for software to make it easier and to be able to edit your pictures. The most popular is Adobe's Photoshop elements

<http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopelwin/>

Shak will be pleased to know that it's also available for the Mac, but the latest version (7) hasn't been released for the Mac yet.

<http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopelmac/>

But there are free options. Go and look in the box that the camera came in, some; particularly Digital SLRs are often supplied with editing software, Canon in particular supply a wide range of free software with the camera.

You can download Picasa free from Google:

<http://picasa.google.com/>

Once you are making good use of your basic camera, then is the time to build on it, to give it more capabilities:

Firstly add or change lenses. You don't have to buy the same make as your camera, there are a number of independent manufacturers you can buy from. Sigma is one of the biggest, and I've used lenses from their range as examples. Most manufacturers, including both Sigma and the camera companies actually produce lenses at different quality levels. The camera companies top ranges will be the best quality, but you will pay accordingly.

## **Lenses**

Kit lenses supplied with digital SLRs usually have the focal length range of 17-50mm, but tend to be cheap and cheerful. Upgrade possibilities are either to go for better quality in the same range, which can also let more light in:

<http://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/lenses/dclenses/18-50mmEX.htm>

The other option is to go for a wider zoom range

<http://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/lenses/dclenses/18-125mmOS.htm>

or longer still:

<http://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/lenses/dclenses/18-200mm.htm>

To make the longer lenses easier to use, buy one with optical stabilisation, it helps you to hold it steady without camera shake:

<http://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/lenses/dclenses/18-200mmOS.htm>

If you're happy with your kit lens, add a longer lens to go with it:

<http://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/lenses/dclenses/55-200mm.htm>

Now the options start to expand. If you bought a lens which let more light in as a replacement for your kit lens, pair it with a longer lens which will also let more light in:

<http://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/lenses/dclenses/50-150mmEX.htm>

## **Flash guns**

Even on an expensive digital SLR the built in flash gun is small, provides harsh lighting and has a limited range. If you take a lot of indoor photographs, it's worth considering a separate flashgun, with more power and the ability to bounce light off the ceiling to give better coverage and more diffuse light. Unlike lenses, it's better to buy a 'gun from the same manufacturer as your camera. Both are very sophisticated microprocessor based pieces of equipment, and so work together better if they are designed to work together by the same manufacturer.

A good choice is a mid range model, like this one from Canon for their EOS cameras:

<http://www.usa.canon.com/consumer/controller?act=ModelInfoAct&fcategoryid=141&modelid=17302>

## **Cases**

Once you've started to build up your outfit, you'll need something to carry it around in:

LowePro produce a huge range of bags, rucksacks, pouches and rolling cases

<http://www.lovepro.com/>

Rucksacks are a comfortable way of carrying your equipment, but have the disadvantage that they have to be laid on the ground when you want to put equipment in or out. Sling backs are not shoes, but a new camera bag range which is carried like a rucksack, but can be swivelled round to get your equipment out without taking it off your back.

<http://products.lovepro.com/catalog/Sling-bags,4.htm>

For something a bit funkier:

<http://www.crumpler.co.uk>

At the other end of the spectrum, Think Tank make bags which don't look like camera bags

[http://www.thinktankphoto.com/ttp\\_products.html](http://www.thinktankphoto.com/ttp_products.html)

## **Tripods**

If you really get interested in photography, buy a tripod to hold your camera still and stable. One of the best dealers in the UK is very close to Chelford in Bollington:

<http://www.bobrigby.com/>

They sell popular brands like Manfrotto and Giottos, and the Rolls-Royce of tripods Gitzo. But, a word of warning, check their location on their web site, use sat nav, and you may still need to ring them to talk you in, they are not easy to find, but well worth it.