

# Corley and Fillongley Photographic Club



December 2016

## Congratulations to last month's winners of 'Portrait, People and Groups' competition.

### BLACK AND WHITE

1<sup>st</sup> PLACE



Brent Thompson

2<sup>nd</sup> PLACE



Keith Russell

3<sup>rd</sup> PLACE



Martyn Blair

### COLOUR

1<sup>st</sup> PLACE



Steven Gill

2<sup>nd</sup> PLACE



Martyn Blair

3<sup>rd</sup> PLACE



Pete Wrighton

A huge thank you to Andrea Houghton for judging November's competition.  
I think you will all agree they are great photographs – also well done all of you that entered.

*“If you have knowledge, let others light their candle at it.”*

**DON'T FORGET IT'S THE AGM ON 2 JANUARY. PLEASE DO YOUR BEST TO ATTEND. IT'S YOUR CLUB - HAVE YOUR SAY.**

# Christmas Photography Tips

(Source Exposure Guide)



Christmas (and winter) is the most energetic and exciting time to take photographs for a variety of reasons – the natural elements, the captivating and imaginative decorations (including Christmas lights) and the festive mood that overcomes whole communities. You can photograph during the day, but some of the most evocative images can be found at night.

## Photograph Outdoors 1

The cold chill of winter brings a certain purity to the air. Even the light usually has a different quality to it. This is all great for your photography. Most neighbourhoods have several families that nearly go overboard with their enthusiasm for the season and have decked out their homes with intricate lighting and prop arrangements – these make excellent backdrops for your photos – seek these out. Also shoot at night where the whiteness of the snow elevates the overall light level (sort of like an environmental reflector). You'll want to use long shutter speeds – below 1/15 (which might require a tripod) – to get some spectacular shots of the lit-up houses and the sky.



## Christmas Lights & Ornaments 2

Christmas lights and ornaments are the decorations you'll find in nearly every Christmas photograph; they're a staple, but they're also a cliché staple. You'll want to find ways to utilise them in inventive ways – extreme close ups or just having them dominate the frame where the "subjects", the people, populate the background to give dimension and suggest depth. Don't be afraid to unplug lights so they might be off directly behind your subject, but turned on in the opposite side of the frame... it's a way to balance the composition and not add a distracting element. Another interesting and effective technique you can employ when photographing ornaments and Christmas tree lights is the Bokeh technique. With Bokeh, you use the blurred or soft focus part of an image (that's just outside of the depth of field) as part of the image composition. One way to enhance the effect is to place a piece of black paper/board with a shape cut out of it in front of the lens, and the soft-focus/blurred light halos will take on the shape of what you cut into the paperboard. It's a neat effect that can add character to your photographs.



## Capture the Preparation Stages 3

Families come together at Xmas, but not just for the main event, they come to help decorate... and these are exciting, fun-filled moments, so they're ripe with photographic opportunity! Decorating the tree is a special moment in creating the atmosphere of Christmas, and most families have a cherished collection of ornaments, lights and stockings – all of which need to be hung on the tree. Try to get people's faces as they open the ornament boxes. Young children (who might not have remembered the last Christmas) are especially good subjects. When the tinsel goes on, you're almost done, but there are two more shots to get – the first is when the star (or angel) is placed on the top of the tree; and the last shot is when everything is on the tree and the lights are plugged in for the first time.



## Recommended Settings

There's usually going to be a lot of additional, practical light sources "on" during Christmas (all those Christmas lights) and these will probably bump up the ambient light level to a certain extent, but not so high that you can shoot at ISO 100, so go for 200; even when you're inside. Shutter speeds between 1/30 and 1/90 should suit you the best, as you should try for aperture settings of f/2 to f/5.6; you'll get shallow to moderate depth of field at these settings, which will add to the ambiance, by keeping the illuminated background just out of focus.

## Recommended Equipment

A fast zoom lens is great for Christmas photography, try for a 28 – 80mm or something similar; this way you'll have a wide angle for group portraits and shooting houses/buildings that are magnificently decorated, and you'll also be able to grab intimate and inviting close-ups. Consider having your tripod available. Even if you don't use the timer function the tripod can be helpful for stabilizing the camera for high angle shots (which might be the best/only way to get everyone in a group shot). Use a corded flash or a flash with a tilt/swivel head to avoid having the flash fire head-on at your subjects. A head-on flash will wash out not only the skin tones, but the vibrant colour cast from all the Christmas lights as well.

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Affiliated to the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain through the Midland Counties Photographic Federation

**HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**