



## PHOTOGRAPHS OF RESCUES AND DISASTERS IN BERWICK, 1952-1969

REFERENCE: BRO 1944/1/591/2, BRO 1944/1/180/2, BRO 1944/1/5357/5c | SUGGESTED AGE GROUPS: KS2, KS3, KS4,  
LIFELONG LEARNERS | TOPIC AREAS: PHOTOGRAPHY, DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY, JOURNALISM,

### BERWICK PHOTO CENTRE

Originally founded in 1951 as the Photo-News Service, the Photo Centre in Berwick was a staple of town life for over 65 years as a family-run press agency and photo studio.

Their premises at 17 Bridge Street had a well-equipped studio above the shop where

commercial photography took place. The business also covered newsworthy events in the area and recorded family occasions and celebrations, marking milestones in the lives of several generations of townspeople.



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## PHOTOGRAPHS OF RESCUES AND DISASTERS IN BERWICK

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The first photograph (BRO 1944/1/519/2) was taken on 28th October 1953. There was a miraculous escape for 65 passengers on the overnight Glasgow to Colchester train when it came off the rails at Goswick near Berwick-upon-Tweed at 1am. The locomotive ploughed on for more than 100 metres ripping up rails and sleepers before landing on its side. Remarkably only one person, a man from Berwick, suffered slight injuries.

The second photograph (BRO 1944/1/180/2) was taken on 25th June 1952. Two airmen were rescued from the North Sea when a Shackleton bomber exploded and crashed while on a naval exercise. The two survivors were brought to the Carr Rock Jetty in Spittal by the Holy Island lifeboat. Then they were transferred to salmon cobs which were rowed by the fishermen to an ambulance waiting on Spittal beach.

The final photograph (BRO 1944/1/5375/5c) was taken on 25th August 1969. It shows an RAF helicopter rescue from Holy Island causeway. This family of four holiday makers were stranded in their car by the rising tide by the bridge and “did not realise the water was so deep”. They were able to wade as far as the rescue box to wait for assistance to arrive. It was the third incident on the causeway that month and this still happens today.

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## RESCUE SERVICES AND PHOTOJOURNALISM IN BERWICK

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Being close to the sea, and on a main railway and road link between England and Scotland, Berwick has always had to be prepared to respond to incidents. The Lifeboat Stations at Berwick and Holy Island have a long history of dealing with boats in distress and other incidents at sea including searching for people washed overboard or dragged out to sea. Many of these rescues took place in terrible weather conditions, putting the lifeboatmen in danger. The Lifeboat Station at Berwick still operates today but the Holy Island Station was closed in 1968.

Over the years, there have been various railway accidents near Berwick, particularly at Goswick. In October 1947, the Flying Scotsman was derailed there, causing the death of 28 passengers and the injury of 65 passengers.

All these incidents would have been reported in the local press and further afield, particularly railway accidents and those of national importance. David Smith, founder of the Photo Centre, started his career in Berwick as a Photojournalist on the Berwick Journal, a local newspaper. These journalists were expected to take photographs to capture the “story” and write the text to accompany them. In 1951, David Smith started his own business, a family run press agency and photo studio. David and his photographers, including his son, Ian, covered many events including royal visits and sporting fixtures and sent their photos and reports to regional and national newspapers for publication. Through time, this element of their work declined, and the studio and commercial work became more important.

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## DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY

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Documentary Photography is an umbrella term encapsulating a wide range of approaches; however the term usually refers to art which captures a real moment, conveying a message about the world. It provides a straightforward and accurate representation of people, places, objects, and events, and is often used in reporting.

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## PHOTOJOURNALISM

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Photojournalism is a type of journalism that uses images to tell a news story. Photojournalism usually refers to photographs, but sometimes the term can be used to describe videos used in broadcast journalism.

Photo essays are a form of visual storytelling, presenting a narrative through a series of images. Photo essays can be powerful ways to evoke emotion and understanding without using words.

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## OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

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## EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY

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Science Museum website, page about history of photography: <https://www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/history-photography>

British Library website, page about invention of photograph (Henry Fox Talbot): <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/invention-of-photography>

Bodleian website, biography of Henry Fox Talbot: <https://talbot.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/talbot/biography/>

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## PHOTOCENTRE

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Portrait of a Town exhibition: <https://www.photocentreberwick.co.uk/portrait-of-a-town/work-and-industry>

Photocentre workshop resources: <https://www.photocentreberwick.co.uk/learning>

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## DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY

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V&A page about contemporary documentary photographers: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/contemporary-documentary-photographers/>

Tate page about documentary photography: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/d/documentary-photography>

Aperture page about Post-Documentary photography: <https://aperture.org/editorial/the-post-documentary-photographers-who-care-about-the-world/>

National Galleries page about documentary photography: <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/glossary-terms/documentary-photography>

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## PHOTOJOURNALISM

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Tate page about photojournalism: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/photojournalism>

V&A page about photojournalism: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/p/photojournalism/>

National Geographic page about the best photojournalism stories of the last decade: <https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/photography/2020/10/the-best-photojournalism-of-the-last-decade>

Page for the National Press Photographers Association: <https://nppa.org/>

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## ARTIST BANK – DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHERS

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### SOPHIE CALLE

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Sophie Calle is a French writer, photographer, installation artist, and conceptual artist. Her work frequently depicts human vulnerability and examines identity and intimacy. She is recognised for her detective-like ability to follow strangers and investigate their private lives. Her photographic work often includes panels of text of her own writing.

Example documentary photographs: [The Hotel, Room 28, 1981](#); [The Sleepers, 1979](#); [Room with a View, 2013](#)

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### DOROTHEA LANGE

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Dorothea Lange was an American documentary photographer and photojournalist, best known for her Depression-era work. Lange's photographs influenced the development of documentary photography and humanised the consequences of the Great Depression.

Example documentary photographs: [Migrant Mother, 1936](#); [Sharecroppers, 1936](#); [Plantation Overseer and his Field Hands, 1936](#)

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### MARTIN PARR

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Martin Parr is a British documentary photographer, photojournalist, and photobook collector. He is known for his photographic projects that take an intimate, satirical, and anthropological look at aspects of modern life, in particular documenting the social classes of England, and more broadly the wealth of the Western world.

Portfolio: <https://www.martinparr.com/>

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### LEE FRIEDLANDER

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Lee Friedlander is an American photographer known for his innovative images of city streets. Often featuring candid portraits of people, signs and reflections of himself in storefront windows. Friedlander's documentary and street photography captures the unexpected overlaps of light and content in urban landscapes.

Portfolio: <http://www.artnet.com/artists/lee-friedlander/>



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## ARTIST BANK – PHOTOJOURNALISM PHOTOGRAPHERS

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### KITRA CAHANA

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Kitra Cahana is a documentary photographer, photojournalist, and photo/video artist. She is a contributing photographer for National Geographic Magazine and a TED speaker. She has produced a number of photo-essays and documentary videos on various different subjects both for National Geographic and as a freelance photographer. She has won awards for investigative journalism.

Portfolio: <https://kitrachana.com/>

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### STEPHANIE SINCLAIR

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Stephanie Sinclair is known for producing photographic essays about the most sensitive gender and human rights issues around the world. She has documented the defining conflicts of the last decade, and covered the everyday brutality faced by young girls in developing countries around the world.

Portfolio: <https://stephaniesinclair.com/>

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### STEVE MCCURRY

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Steve McCurry is an American photojournalist. He has covered many armed conflicts particularly in the Middle East and Asia. Many of his photographs concentrate on the toll war takes on humans. His most famous photograph is [Afghan Girl \(1984\)](#), depicting a young girl named Sharbat Gula at the Nasir Bagh refugee camp on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Portfolio: <https://stevemccurry.com/>

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### RENA EFFENDI

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Rena Effendi is a social documentary photographer. Her works tend to focus on stories that are either well-known or underrated, her early work focused on the oil industry and how it effects people's lives. She also has photographic series responding to wildlife conservation and environmental decay.

Portfolio: <http://www.refendi.com/>



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LYNSEY ADDARIO

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Lynsey Addario is an American photojournalist. Her work often focuses on conflict, human rights issues, and the role of women in traditional societies. In the early 2000s she travelled to Afghanistan under Taliban rule to document life and oppression under the Taliban.

Portfolio: <http://www.lynseyaddario.com/>

# LEARNING ACTIVITIES – PHOTOGRAPHS OF RESCUES AND DISASTERS IN BERWICK, 1952-1969

**TOPIC:** PHOTOGRAPHY, DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY, JOURNALISM, ETHICS  
**SUBJECT AREAS:** PHOTOGRAPHY, HISTORY, CITIZENSHIP, LITERACY



Background	Activity	Resources
<p>Documentary Photography is an umbrella term encapsulating a wide range of approaches; however the term usually refers to art which captures a real moment, conveying a message about the world. It provides a straightforward and accurate representation of people, places, objects, and events, and is often used in reporting.</p> <p>Photojournalism is a type of journalism that uses images to tell a news story. Photojournalism usually refers to photographs, but sometimes the term can be used to describe videos used in broadcast journalism.</p>	<p><b>See:</b> What is documentary photography?</p> <p><b>See:</b> What is being documented in these photographs?</p> <p><b>See:</b> What is photojournalism?</p> <p><b>See:</b> What news stories are being told in these photographs?</p> <hr/> <p><b>Think:</b> What is the difference between documentary photography and photojournalism?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> Is documentary photography ethical?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> Is it right for a documentary photographer to manipulate the image to convey their message?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> Do documentary photographs always convey the truth?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> Should documentary photographers intervene in the scene?</p> <p>E.g. <a href="#">The Vulture and the Little Girl – Kevin Carter (1993)</a> and <a href="#">Napalm Girl – Nick Ut (1972)</a>.</p>	<p><a href="https://expertphotography.com/controversial-pictures/">https://expertphotography.com/controversial-pictures/</a></p> <p><a href="https://aboutphotography.blog/blog/the-terror-of-war-nick-uts-napalm-girl-1972">https://aboutphotography.blog/blog/the-terror-of-war-nick-uts-napalm-girl-1972</a></p> <p><a href="https://expertphotography.com/photojournalism-vs-documentary/">https://expertphotography.com/photojournalism-vs-documentary/</a></p> <p><a href="https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/migrant-mother-dorothea-lange-truth-photography/">https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/migrant-mother-dorothea-lange-truth-photography/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.diyphotography.net/this-is-the-disturbing-story-behind-the-iconic-afghan-girl-photo/">https://www.diyphotography.net/this-is-the-disturbing-story-behind-the-iconic-afghan-girl-photo/</a></p>





Photo essays are a form of visual storytelling, presenting a narrative through a series of images. Photo essays can be powerful ways to evoke emotion and understanding without using words.

**Think:** Are there some scenes that shouldn't be documented?

**Think:** What kind of social impact can documentary photographs and photo essays have?

**Think:** Does photojournalism ever exploit people in vulnerable situations? You could consider Migrant Mother by Dorothea Lange and Afghan Girl by Steve McCurry.

**Do:** Analyse each of the rescue photographs. What can you infer from each?

**Do:** Write a newspaper article to accompany one of the rescue images describing the events that have taken place.

**Do:** Choose a person from one of the rescue photographs. Write a journal entry from their perspective of the events leading up to, during, and after the photograph was taken.

**Do:** Choose a documentary or photojournalism photographer to look at. Analyse their work and make a profile to record the areas of documentary photography and photojournalism they have worked with.

**Do:** Choose a photograph or photo series by created by your chosen photographer without reading the background context of the image. Think about the phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words". Make a list of all of the words that you associate with your chosen photograph. This could include words that describe what is taking place in the photograph; who, what and where the image is



	<p>showing; the context of the image; how the image makes you feel or what it makes you think about.</p> <p><b>Do:</b> Use your list of words to write a journalistic article that could accompany the image. This doesn't need to be factually correct; this is your interpretation of the scene shown in the image.</p> <p><b>Do:</b> Research the background context of your chosen image. Compare this to your article interpreting the scene shown in the photograph. How well does the photograph convey its story?</p> <p><b>Do:</b> Undertake a photojournalism project in your school. Are there any stories you could cover? You could take photographs and write an article for your school newsletter or website.</p> <p><b>Do:</b> Use Lynsey Addario's images of Afghanistan to debate and critically discuss how images from a certain time period or event can be used for contemporary comparison. Consider Addario's images of Afghanistan in the early 2000s and how this compares to the events of 2021 with the Taliban re-taking control of the country.</p>	
<p>Documentary Photography is an umbrella term encapsulating a wide range of approaches; however the term usually refers to art which captures a real moment, conveying a message about the world. It provides a straightforward and accurate representation of people,</p>	<p><b>See:</b> What is documentary photography?</p> <p><b>See:</b> What are the main characteristics of a documentary image?</p> <p><b>See:</b> What are the aims of a documentary image?</p> <hr/> <p><b>Think:</b> Why do people take documentary photographs?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> How do photographers decide what to document?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> What can be learned about people, places and cultures from documentary photographs?</p>	<p><a href="http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/contemporary-documentary-photographers/">http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/contemporary-documentary-photographers/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/d/documentary-photography">https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/d/documentary-photography</a></p> <p><a href="https://aperture.org/editorial/the-post-documentary-photographers-who-care-about-the-world/">https://aperture.org/editorial/the-post-documentary-photographers-who-care-about-the-world/</a></p>



places, objects, and events, and is often used in reporting.

**Do:** Look at examples of works produced by documentary photographers. What kinds of themes and subjects do they work with?

**Do:** Analyse the photo essays you have been looking at. What makes these images powerful or successful? What tools have the photographers used to convey their message?

**Do:** Experiment with taking photographs inspired by the style, themes and subjects used by the photographers you have been looking at.

**Do:** Choose one of the themes, subjects or styles used by one of the photographers you have analysed. Plan a documentary photography shoot based around your chosen theme, subject or style.

**Do:** Create your documentary shoot with a minimum of 3 final images.

**Do:** Think about how you would present your final images. Would it be in a magazine, a traditional exhibition, a pop-up exhibit in a community, or something else? Plan how you would do this.

**Do:** Present your final images in your chosen format.

**Do:** Evaluate your final images. Did you achieve your intentions? What was successful and why? What could be improved in the future?

**Do:** Choose your own topic that you would like to create a documentary photography series. Plan your shoot and consider how you will present your final images.

**Do:** Present your final images in your chosen way.

<https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/glossary-terms/documentary-photography>



	<p><b>Do:</b> Evaluate your final documentary images. Did you achieve your intentions? What was successful and why? What could be improved in the future?</p>	
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