



Francis Meadows Sutcliffe, *Three Happy Boys*, 1889

PICTORIALISM AND LATE VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Francis Meadows Sutcliffe, *Three Happy Boys*, 1889

- In the second half of the nineteenth century photography developed rapidly with a proliferation of photographic shops and then in the 1880s with the invention of the Kodak camera.

REFERENCES

- Wikipedia
- John Thomson, *Victorian London Street Life in Historic Photographs*. 37 photographs first published in the 1870s with a description of each person based on an interview at the time. The best evocation of the Victorian period available.



INTERESTING GROUP POSED FOR A DAGUERRETYPE
BY A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.

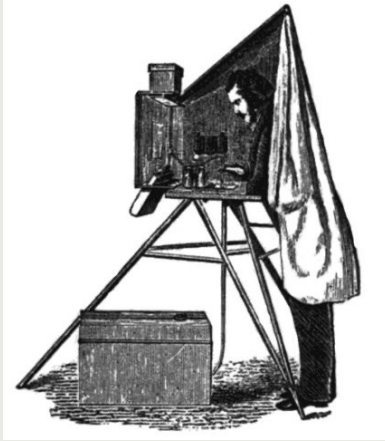


INTERESTING AND VALUABLE RESULT.

Punch cartoon, 1855

Punch cartoon, 1855, 'Interesting Group Posed for a Daguerreotype', 'Interesting and Valuable Result'

- The rapid growth of photographic shops was driven not by art but by commercial portraiture. Portrait painting had been the preserve of the wealthy but photography brought portraiture to the masses which is why it expanded so rapidly on the high street.
- There were problems. This shows what were perceived by *Punch* readers as one of the problems of photography, the exposure time. In the 1850s exposure times could be minutes, there were clamps for the head but if there was any movement faces would be blurred and distorted and the fine detail of clothing lost. Nevertheless, portrait photography became **very popular** as it meant that **families** that could not afford a painting could, for the first time, **obtain a likeness**.
- From a mere handful of photographers in the mid 1840s the number **grew to 66 in 1855, and to 147 two years later**. In London, a favourite venue was **Regent Street** where, in the peak in the mid 'sixties there were no less than **42 photographic establishments**.
- The French poet **Charles Baudelaire** (1826-1867) commented on the daguerreotype, '**our squalid society has rushed, Narcissus to a man, to gloat at its trivial image on a scrap of metal.**' So our infatuation with the selfie is nothing new.



Darkroom tent from Hermann Wilhelm Vogel, *Handbook of the Practice and Art of Photography*, 1871



Roger Fenton's photographic van, 1855, Roger Fenton, The Royal Photographic Society Collection at the National Media Museum
Marcus Sparling, Fenton's assistant, is the figure shown seated at the front of the van.

Darkroom tent from Hermann Wilhelm Vogel, *Handbook of the Practice and Art of Photography*, 1871

- The other practical problem outside the photographic shop was that it was a messy business.
- Things improved in **1851**, when **Frederick Scott Archer**, an Englishman, discovered that **collodion** (cellulose nitrate dissolved in ether and alcohol) could be used as an alternative to egg white (albumen) on glass photographic plates. This reduced the exposure time to a few seconds. This method became known as the '**wet-plate collodion**' or 'wet collodion' method and it dominated photography for the next thirty years.
- However, as the plate had to be wet the chemical had to be applied to the plate immediately before the photograph was taken and in the dark. Portable tents were sold that were tied around the photographer's waist. Serious photographers would use a wheelbarrow to carry the equipment or even a horse-drawn covered wagon.

NOTES

- In **1851**, **Frederick Scott Archer**, an Englishman, discovered that **collodion** (cellulose nitrate dissolved in ether and alcohol) could be used as an alternative to egg white (albumen) on glass photographic plates. Collodion reduced the exposure time necessary for making an image. This method became known as the '**wet-plate collodion**' or 'wet collodion' method. Collodion was relatively grainless and colourless, and allowed for one of the first high-quality duplication processes, also known as negatives. This process also produced two types of positives: the **ambrotype**; the **tintype** (also known as ferrotype).
- The process required great skill and included the following steps:

- Clean the glass plate (extremely well)
 - In the light, pour "**salted**" (iodide, bromide) **collodion** onto the glass plate, tilting it so it reaches each corner. The excess is poured back into the bottle.
 - Take the plate into a darkroom or orange tent (the plate is sensitive only to blue light) and immerse the plate in a **silver nitrate** sensitising bath (for 3–5 minutes)
 - Lift the plate out of the bath, **drain and wipe** the back, load it into a plate holder and protect from light with a dark slide.
 - Load the plate holder into the **camera**, withdraw the dark slide and expose the plate (can range from less than a second to several minutes)
 - Develop the plate (using a ferrous sulphate based developer)
 - Fix the plate (with potassium cyanide, fatal dose 200-300mg, or sodium thiosulfate)
- All of this was done in a matter of minutes, and some of the steps in (red) safelight conditions, which meant that the photographer had to carry the chemicals and a portable darkroom with him wherever he went. After these steps the plate needed rinsing in fresh water. Finally, the plate was dried and varnished using a varnish made from sandarac, alcohol and lavender oil.

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Charles Dodgson
(known as Lewis
Carroll, 1832-1898),
The Rossetti Family,
1863

Charles Dodgson (known as Lewis Carroll, 1832-1898), *The Rossetti Family*, 1863

- Here is an example of a family photograph taken by Charles Dodgson, later better known by his pen name Lewis Carroll.
- In 1856, he was a scholar and mathematician at Christ Church, Oxford, when he discovered photography. He soon excelled at the art and considered making a living out of photography. If he had we would not have the *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) or *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871).
- He took photographs of many of the famous characters of the day and was a particular friend of Dante Rossetti shown here with **Christina Rossetti**, his mother **Frances Lavinia** and, on the right, his brother the art critic **William Michael**.

NOTES

- "This photograph of the Rossetti family was taken by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, later known as Lewis Carroll, the author of the Alice books. An Oxford mathematician, Dodgson was also an avid amateur photographer. In the fall of 1863, Dodgson took a series of photographs in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's back garden at 16 Cheyne Walk in London. This photograph shows **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** standing, at left; his sister, the poet **Christina G. Rossetti**, seated on the step; their mother, **Frances Lavinia Rossetti**, seated next to her; and another sibling, **William Michael Rossetti**, standing at right. Missing from the picture is the other Rossetti daughter, Maria Francesca. The Rossetti children are in their early to mid thirties in this photograph." [1]
- About half of his surviving photographs are of young girls but the remainder are a wide variety of subjects. His pictures of children were taken with a parent in attendance.
- He stopped in 1880 after 24 years as it was taking too much of his time. He took some 3,000 images of which about 1,000 survive.

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- [1] <https://editions.covecollective.org/chronologies/lewis-carroll-photographs-rossetti-family>
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André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri (1819–1889), *Carte de Visite of Napoleon III*, 1859



John Jabez Edwin Mayall (1813–1901), *Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, Prince Consort*, May 1860

André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri (1819–1889), *Carte de Visite of Napoleon III*, 1859

John Jabez Edwin Mayall (1813–1901), *Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, Prince Consort* May 1860, albumen photographic print pasted onto card | 8.5 x 5 cm, Royal Collection

- The other great development during the 1850s was **the carte-de-visite**, a photographic visiting card and portrait.
- The portraits of **Napoleon III made the carte-de-visite popular overnight in France in 1859** and the **death of Prince Albert in 1861 created enormous demand** for his carte-de-visite portrait that had been commissioned by Queen Victoria the previous year.
- The price of photographic portraits was dropping all the time and when the price dropped further there was a **fashion for giving friends and family a carte de visite**. Families would **collect carte-de-visite of famous people in special albums**. The craze became so popular it was called 'cardomania' and it meant the end of the painted portrait miniature and artists either went out of business or converted to photography.

CARTE-DE-VISITE

- Carte de visite became an **overnight success in 1859** when **Emperor Napoleon III's photograph** was distributed in this format. It was patented in Paris by photographer André Adolphe Eugène Disdéri in 1854, although first used by Louis Dodero.. He patented a method of taking eight separate photographs on one plate thus speeding up reproduction. The final prints were 2.125x3.5 inch mounted on a 2.5x4" card. Carte-de-visite became so popular the collecting of them became known as '**cardomania**'. Cards were **traded** between friends and visitors and collections of **famous people** were published. It spread across Europe and then America and albums of such cards became established in Victorian households. In the 1870s there

were replaced by cabinet cards which were larger (4.5x6.5") and they remained popular until the early 20th century.

J. J. E. MAYALL

- Mayall was an English photographer now famous for taking the first carte-de-visite photograph of Queen Victoria. He was born Jabez Meal, son of a manufacturing chemist from Manchester. He travelled to America where he changed his name to Mayall and took up photography. He was trained, like his father, as a chemist and his daguerreotypes were known for their high quality. When he returned to England in 1846 'The Times' wrote, *'In consequence of the new discoveries which he has made . . . he is enabled to take daguerreotype portraits by an entirely new process, of a degree of delicacy, depth of tone, and lifelike reality, never previously attained by himself of any other photographic artists.'*
- He considered himself an **artist rather than a photographer** and always wrote 'artist' on the census return. He was a pioneer in **allegorical photographs** but also the scientific improvement of the process. By 1846, he had **reduced exposure times to only nine seconds** by the use of ammonia. Soon after establishing his studio in the Strand he **met Turner** who was **fascinated** by the light effects captured by his camera. He was struggling financially and worried about being sued by the owner of the patent to the daguerreotype process in England. **Turner encouraged him** to continue. Mayall produced a series of mammoth plates of the **Great Exhibition** of 1851 in Hyde Park and he exhibited 72 daguerreotypes. He took photographs of eminent men such as Charles Dickens and in 1860 took a number of **portraits of the Royal Family**. In **1861 Prince Albert died** and his death created **enormous demand** for his portrait. Mayall was **paid £35,000** for his portraits of the Royal Family and he produced over **half a million cartes a year** which produced an **income of £12,000 a year**.

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- See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carte-de-visite>
- <https://albert.rct.uk/photographic-technologies/carte-de-visite>
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BBC News 5 June 2016, 'Taken from life: The unsettling art of death photography'

- It was common for families to have **lots of children**, and about a quarter to a third **died before they were five**. Grief stricken parents were desperate to have something to remember their young child by and in this photograph, **the youngest child has died** and is propped against a stand for the picture.
- This may seem morbid to us but we have many photographs of our loved ones but in Victorian England, these photographs became a way of **commemorating the dead** and blunting the sharpness of grief.
- In images that are both unsettling and strangely poignant, families pose with the dead, infants appear asleep, and consumptive young ladies elegantly recline, the disease not only taking their life but increasing their beauty.
- Victorian life was suffused with death. Epidemics such as diphtheria, typhus and cholera scarred the country, and **from 1861 the bereaved Queen made mourning fashionable**.

NOTES

Source: Conversation with Bing, 19/11/2023

- According to Statista, the child mortality rate in the United Kingdom, for children under the age of five, was **329 deaths per thousand births** in 1800 ¹. This means that approximately one in every three children born in 1800 did not make it to their fifth birthday. Over the course of the next 220 years, this number has dropped drastically, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century, and the rate has dropped to its lowest point ever in 2020 where it is just **four deaths per thousand births** ¹. Unfortunately, I could not find the exact number of children who died before the age of five in 1850. However, according to a BBC article, childhood mortality was high in England and Wales in the 1850s, with a quarter of children dying before the age of five

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- (2) Dying too young: Maps show little has changed in 170 years.
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- (6) en.wikipedia.org. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_mortality



Calvert Richard Jones (1804-1877), *The Coliseum, Rome, 1846*

Calvert Richard Jones (1804-1877), *The Coliseum, Rome, 1846*

- Changing the subject, pictures of foreign locations were **extremely popular, a form of armchair tourism**.
- The Reverend. Calvert Richard Jones belonged to a **wealthy** Swansea family and became a **mathematician and painter**, best known for his seascapes. He was educated at **Oriel College, Oxford** and moved in the same circles as **Fox Talbot**. He is credited with taking the first photograph in Wales and although he did not take up photography as an occupation he did take many photographs and took his equipment on holiday to France and Italy. He developed his own technique for taking **panoramic photographs** by overlapping images.
- Knowledge of the calotype or talbotype process was initially spread through a loose network of family, friends and social contacts. Jones was one of the most expert calotypists of the 1840s, and some of his finest work was made during the course of a tour through France and Italy in 1846. Jones was later involved with Talbot's largely unsuccessful attempts to commercialise the calotype process through the selling of prints.
- The packaged holiday became just becoming popular. **Thomas Cook** began operating European tours **in the 1850s** opening up the continent to **upper middle class families**. His first tour was a circuit of northern Europe ending with four days in Paris at an **all inclusive cost of £11**.
- The illustrated book was a luxury item for armchair travellers and it began to be replaced in the 1860s by the sale of views of exotic locations to the increasing army of **middle class tourists** who could afford to take advantage of this new record of the world. But it was not until **1894 that the first picture postcards** of popular tourist

destinations could be bought in shops and kiosks.

NOTES

- A calotype is a process introduced by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1841 using paper coated with silver iodide which was subsequently 'developed'. The use of a chemical developer meant that only a faint image was required and so exposure times were reduced to a minute or two in bright sunshine. The process results in a translucent original negative from which positive images can be produced by contact printing.

REFERENCES

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvert_Jones

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Cook_%26_Son



Francis Frith (1822-1898), *The Ramesseum of El-Kurneh, Thebes*, 1857

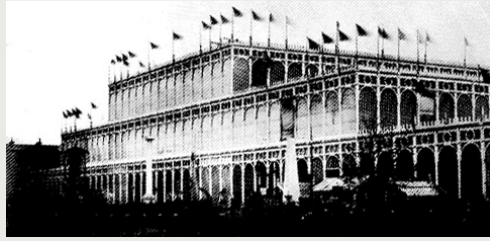
Francis Frith (1822-1898), *The Ramesseum of El-Kurneh, Thebes*, 1857

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Frith

- The best known travel picture photographer was Francis Frith whose photographs can still be bought.
- Perhaps the **best known photographer** of travel pictures is **Francis Frith**. He photographed the Middle East as well as many towns in the United Kingdom. He was a founding member of the **Liverpool Photographic Society** in 1853 and he **dedicated himself** entirely to **photography** in 1855.
- He noted that tourists were the main consumers of views of Italy but armchair travellers wanted scenes of further afield. His ambitious goal was to **create a true record, 'far beyond anything that is in the power of the most accomplished artist to transfer to his canvas.'** He took enormous trouble, this photograph was one of the gigantic **20x16 inch glass plates** that Frith took to Egypt along with the huge camera the plates needed and all the other equipment and chemicals.
- He first went to the **Nile Valley in 1856** and later extended his trip to include Palestine and Syria. He kept a journal in which he complained about the difficulty of finding a good viewpoint for taking photographs. A problem known to photographers today. Yet he is praised for his ability to find a novel viewpoint. This is the Ramesseum that I discuss in my talk on ancient Egyptian art.
- When he had finished his travels he opened the firm of Francis Frith & Co in Reigate and became the world's first specialist photographic publisher. He then embarked on his grand project to **photograph every town and village** in the United Kingdom. He initially took them himself and later hired people and he set up the first postcard company and within a few years over **2,000 shops** in the United Kingdom were selling

his postcards.

- His **family firm** continued in business until **1970** and Bill Jay, a photography historian identified the archive as being nationally important and he persuaded Rothmans, the tobacco company to purchase it. It was **re-launched in 1976** and from 1977 run as an independent business that sells over **125,000 photographs of 7,000 cities**, towns and villages.
- The Ramesseum is a memorial temple to Pharaoh Ramesses II (Ramesses the Great) in Thebes in the Upper Nile near modern day Luxor. Only the torso of the statue of the Pharaoh remains and it weighs over 1,000 tons. It was alleged to have been transported 170 miles over land. It is the largest free standing statue in the world.



Philip Henry Delamotte (1821-1889), photograph of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, 1851

Philip Henry Delamotte (1821-1889), photograph of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, 1851

- From the 1850s onwards, photography was used to **record important events**. This is a photograph of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851. Most of the photographs you will see of the Great Exhibition are of a different building that was erected near Sydenham two years later.

CRYSTAL PALACE

- Philip Henry Delamotte (1821-1889) was an artist and photographer and became Professor of Drawing and Fine Arts at King's College, London. He was commissioned to record the disassembly of the Sir Joseph Paxton (1803-1865, died aged 62, made his money by successful speculation on the railways) building in Hyde Park in 1852 and its reassembly in Sydenham. When published it was one of the first books in which photographic prints were used (although you have already heard about *The Pencil of Light*). He and Roger Fenton were the first artists to use photography as a way of recording important structures.

REFERENCES

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Henry_Delamotte

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Exhibition



South Transept & South Tower

Philip Henry Delamotte, *Crystal Palace South Transept & South Tower from Water Temple*, 1854

Philip Henry Delamotte, *Crystal Palace South Transept & South Tower from Water Temple*, 1854

- This is a photograph taken by Delamotte after the building had been reassembled at Sydenham in 1854.
- The original building in Hyde Park **cost £150,000** and entry was £3 for men £2 for women later a shilling a person. **Six million** visited (a third of the population) and it made a **profit of £186,000** (£17.7m today) which funded the building of what are now the South Kensington museums. The rebuild in Sydenham was 50% larger and with the park cost **£1,300,000** (£50.5m today), £800,000 over the £500,000 budget. It never repaid the debt and only ever made a small profit.

NOTES

- 1,848 feet long, 465 feet wide, 135 feet tall, 900,000 square feet glass and a floor area of 772,784 square feet.
- It had the first **public toilets** for which it charged one penny ('spending a penny').
- The park and grounds cost much more than rebuilding the Palace.
- Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins made 33 life-sized models of the newly discovered and named dinosaurs by Richard Owen.
- There were **12,000** jets of water, the highest fountains were **250 feet** and a full display took **7 million gallons** of water. The first **water towers collapsed** under the weight of water and **Isambard Kingdom Brunel** was called in to design two new towers 284 feet tall and 46 feet wide.



Roger Fenton's assistant seated on Fenton's photographic van, Crimea, 1855



Roger Fenton (1819-1869), Cantinière tends the wounded soldier in the Crimean War, 1854

Roger Fenton (1819-1869), Cantinière tends the wounded soldier in the Crimean War, 1854

Roger Fenton's assistant seated on Fenton's photographic van, Crimea, 1855

WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

- Although the photographic equipment was large and cumbersome it was used as **early as the 1850s** to document war scenes during the Crimean War (October 1853 - February 1856). It is believed that many of the **photographs were staged** although this was almost inevitable with the exposure times and the need to hold a pose for minutes.

CRIMEAN WAR PHOTOGRAPHS

- **Roger Fenton (1819-1869)** was a pioneering British photographer and one of the **first war photographers**. His **father was a wealthy banker** and Member of Parliament and was the fourth of 17 children by two wives. After his degree at Oxford he **studied law** at University College, London but became **interested in painting**. He went to Paris and may have studied in the studio of Paul Delaroche. He visited the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park and was impressed by the photography exhibits. **He founded the Photographic Society, later the Royal Photographic Society, in 1853.**
- In autumn **1854** the Crimean War grabbed the public's attention and Fenton was **encouraged by his friend Prince Albert** to go to the Crimea to record what was happening. **He stayed for three months** and it is possible the photographs were intended as **propaganda** to counter criticism of the war in the press.
- The photographs were converted to **woodblocks** and printed in the *Illustrated London News*. Because of the long exposures photographs **had to be posed** and he **avoided** photographs of **dead, injured and mutilated** soldiers.

- Despite high temperatures, **breaking several ribs, suffering from cholera and depression** from the carnage he managed to take **350 usable negatives** which were displayed in London on his return. However, it was not a commercial success. Undaunted he travelled widely across Britain recording the landscape. He later came into **conflict with other photographers** as he was **wealthy** and did not need to **make money** and he believed no photographer should **soil himself** with the **sin of exploiting his talent commercially**.
- In **1862** at the International Exhibition in London **photography** was **placed with machinery** and tools **rather than with the fine arts** as it had been five years earlier at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition. For **Fenton this was proof photography has sold out** and its **status was diminished**. In 1863, he **sold his equipment** and returned to law as a **barrister**. He died six years later aged only 50.
- The Crimean War was the **first major war to be photographed**. This photograph shows a **Cantinière** (pronounced 'con-tin-e-air') tending a wounded soldier. A Cantinière or Vivandière (pronounced 'vee-vand-e-air') is a French name for women attached to military regiments as sutlers (someone who sells provisions to soldiers) or canteen keepers. Their actual historic function was selling wine to the troops and working in canteens. Before the French Revolution the provision of food, drink and other items was allocated to eight privileged soldiers called Vivandières. They were allowed to marry and as the soldiers were busy with their other duties their wives took on the role of selling wine. This was encouraged to lessen the chance of desertion. The role of the Vivandière has not been closely studied by historians.

NOTES

- The Crimean war was fought between the Ottoman Empire, France, the United Kingdom and Sardinia against Russia. When talks broke down Russia invaded part of what is now Romania and Britain and France supported the Ottoman Empire stopping the Russian advance.

REFERENCES

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Fenton

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimean_War



The Ruins of Tintern Abbey, c. 1890, lantern slide

The Ruins of Tintern Abbey, Monmouthshire, Wales from the hillside with the old cottages in the foreground. On the Welsh side of the River Wye Tintern Abbey Monmouthshire was founded in 1131 by Walter De Clare. This is from a magic lantern slide from circa 1890.

HOLIDAY PHOTOGRAPHS

- From about 1660 to the 1840s upper-class European men of means took a trip around Europe as a form of finishing school. There was an active business in selling portraits and views of the major sites to the wealthy young men.
- Starting in the 1750s **factory owners** and traders were able to **afford holiday's abroad** as a form of **leisure activity** and this created a demand for **lower cost views** of the locations. At the same time with the advent of more engravings of **exotic locations** there was a market selling to 'armchair travellers'. This included **picturesque views** of **British scenes** as well as the well known cities of the Grand Tour and more exotic locations in the Middle East.
- The invention of photography created a large market for **famous views of locations around Britain** and abroad. The style used by many early photographers was inspired by the **Picturesque movement initiated by William Gilpin in 1782 in his book Observations on the River Wye**. Gilpin challenged the basis of the Grand Tour by showing how rural Britain could compete with classically-oriented tours of the Continent. The irregular, anti-classical ruins became sought-after sights pictured by Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) and others.
- These picturesque images were the basis of photographic studies and guides produced later in the nineteenth century.

NOTES

- By the 1870s mill workers were taking three days of unpaid summer leave and by 1914 it was ten days.

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John Thomson,
Street Life in London,
The Cheap Fish of
St. Giles, 1877



John Thomson (1837-1921), *Street Life in London*, The Cheap Fish of St. Giles, 1877
See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Thomson_\(photographer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Thomson_(photographer))

- Photography was also used as a documentary record of the day-to-day life of Victorian Britain.
- **John Thomson** (1837-1921) was a talented and influential photographer, who had spent ten years travelling in, and taking photographs of, the Far East. On his return to London **he joined with Adolphe Smith, a socialist journalist**, in a project to **photograph the street life of the London poor**. The volumes were published in monthly parts as *Street Life in London*, and were an early example of social and documentary photography (pioneering photojournalism).

JOSEPH CARNEY

- This is **Joseph Carney**, a self-employed **costermonger** who must **hire the barrow** for **18d a week**. He must keep an eye out for the **police** who **confiscate** the barrows and place them in the **Green yard** where they charge a **shilling a day** for storage. The owner will also be **fined 2/6 to 10s**. Carney works near **Seven Dials** and this day he has bought a barrel of **500 fresh herrings** for **25s**. He sells the **200 largest** herring for **1d each** and the **smaller** fish for **1/2d each**. If he sold them all he made a **profit of 4s 2d**.
- Herring are an oily fish and, except for good salmon, were they most nutritious fish available. Smoked herring are known as kippers.

John Thomson, *Street Life in London, The 'Crawlers'*, 1877



John Thomson, *Street Life in London, The 'Crawlers'*, 1877

- This is another photograph from his book, a book that can be bought today.
- This is a '**crawler**', a **beggar who is so poor and weak from hunger** that she can no longer beg but relies of other beggars giving her food. Many crawlers were middle-class people who had fallen on hard times. This woman looks after a baby all day in return for a cup of tea.
- The question I asked was '**Is Photography Art?**' and we have seen the various ways this question was approached in the Victorian period. There was an enormous **proliferation of uses for photography** and one approach was to use photographic techniques to assemble a photograph that **looked 'artistic'**. However, I think this **final image is the most telling**. The photographer, John Thomson, was **documenting scenes of London life** not trying to create an artistic scene and yet **this image** is perhaps the most powerful demonstration we have seen of the ability of photography to create **a new form of art**.

NOTES

- A crawler is someone who **begs from beggars** and literally **crawls** from place to place. The book writes,
 - Huddled together on the workhouse steps in Short's Gardens, those wrecks of humanity, the Crawlers of St. Giles's, may be seen both day and night seeking mutual warmth and mutual consolation in their extreme misery. As a rule, they are old women reduced by vice and poverty to that degree of wretchedness which destroys even the energy to beg. They have not the strength to struggle for bread, and prefer

starvation to the activity which an ordinary mendicant must display. As a natural consequence, they cannot obtain money for a lodging or for food. What little charity they receive is more frequently derived from the lowest orders. They beg from beggars, and the energetic, prosperous mendicant is in his turn called upon to give to those who are his inferiors in the "profession." Stale bread, half-used tea-leaves, and on gala days, the fly-blown bone of a joint, are their principal items of diet.

- They sit **on hard stone steps** day and night in wind and rain and get **little sleep**. She is looking **after the baby** from 10 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon for a **cup of tea** which she does not always get. Many of the crawlers were previously **middle class people** who fell on **hard times**. This woman's **aim** is to **earn a few shillings** in order to travel to the hop fields in order to **save about a pound**. With this she could **start work again**, her **son** could get his **clothes** out of the **pawnshop** and **get a job** and she would **rent** a little **room** in order to have an **address** so she could get a **job**.
- John Thomson gradually acquired a clientele of the fashionable rich during the 1880s and eventually a royal warrant in 1881.



Peter Henry Emerson (1856–1936), *Ricking the Reed*, 1886

Peter Henry Emerson (1856–1936), *Ricking the Reed*, 1886, from his first photographic album *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*

Two men loading reeds onto boat, England. 'Rick' is to form into stacks or ricks.

- Let us return to the use of photography to produce an artistic image. The fine art photography movement of the late nineteenth century was **Pictorialism and this is a perfect example**. It started in the 1850s when the English artist **William John Newton** suggested that photography could be artistic but the high point was from 1885 to 1915 and it was the international photographic style that **dominated art photography in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century**.
- It is difficult to define exactly but there is **typically some manipulation** of the image such as soft focus, composite images or even the addition of brushstrokes. It was influenced by fine art movements such as Impressionism and the Pre-Raphaelites and so the subject matter was similar. Photographers pushed the boundaries and this led to great innovation. The aim of the photographer was to create a mood.
- The name derived from **Henry Peach Robinson's** book *Pictorial Effect in Photography* (1869). In the 1880s **Peter Henry Emerson** promoted the creation of personal expression in photography and his book *Naturalistic Photography* (1889) influenced generations of photographers internationally.
- It transformed that debate about photography as an art form and culminated in many art galleries purchasing photographs as works of art.

NOTES

- Pictorialism in England was associated with William Newton, Henry Peach Robinson, Peter Henry Emerson, George Davison and Francis Meadows Sutcliffe.

- Pictorialism is the name given to an international style and aesthetic movement that dominated photography during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. There is no standard definition of the term, but in general it refers to a style in which the photographer has somehow manipulated what would otherwise be a straightforward photograph as a means of "creating" an image rather than simply recording it. Typically, a pictorial photograph appears to lack a sharp focus (some more so than others), is printed in one or more colours other than black-and-white (ranging from warm brown to deep blue) and may have visible brush strokes or other manipulation of the surface. For the pictorialist, a photograph, like a painting, drawing or engraving, was a way of projecting an emotional intent into the viewer's realm of imagination.
- In England, as early as 1853 amateur photographer William J. Newton proposed the idea that 'a "natural object", such as a **tree**, should be **photographed** in accordance 'the **acknowledged principles of fine art**'. The first organisation devoted to **photography as art** was '**The Linked Ring**' which was founded by Henry Peach Robinson, George Davison and Alfred Maskell.

REFERENCES

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James Booker Blakemore Wellington (1858-1939), Eventide, 1890

James Booker Blakemore Wellington (1858-1939), Eventide, 1890

- In 1892, Henry Peach Robinson founded **The Brotherhood of the Linked Ring** with George Davison and Henry Van der Weyde. Membership grew by invitation only and included **James Booker Blakemore Wellington**. Other included **Frank Meadows Sutcliffe** (1853-1941), Frederick H. Evans, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Frederick Hollyer, James Craig Annan and Alfred Horsley Hinton.
- Soon The Linked Ring was at the **forefront of the movement to have photography regarded as an art form**. In 1893 they started an annual photographic salon whose 'aim was to "**exhibit (images)** that are description of pictorial photography **in which there is distinct evidence of personal feeling and execution**'.
- The Brotherhood represented themselves with a logo of **three interlinked rings**, which were meant in part to represent the **Masonic** beliefs of **Good, True, and Beautiful**.

NOTES

- After The Linked Ring invited a select group of Americans as members, debates broke out about the goals and purpose of the club. When more American than British members were shown at their annual exhibit in 1908, a motion was introduced to disband the organization. By 1910 The Linked Ring has dissolved, and its members went their own way.



George Davison (1854-1930), *The Onion Field*, 1890

George Davison (1854-1930), *The Onion Field*, 1890

- **George Davison** was a noted photographer, **co-founder of The Linked Ring**, managing director of Kodak UK and a millionaire thanks to an early investment in Eastman Kodak.
- He was from a **poor family in Lowestoft** but had a good education and joined the civil service. In 1885 he joined the **Camera Club** society and the **Royal Photographic Society** where he exhibited his prints. At this time his work was influenced by Peter Henry Emerson. He turned away from naturalism and was one of the first photographers to use a **pinhole camera for its effect**. *The Onion Field* uses **rough paper to achieve the effect of a painting and is considered the first Impressionistic photograph**.
- His photographs were criticized and he became the **subject of controversy** so he left the Royal Photographic Society and was one of the **founders of the Linked Ring Brotherhood**.
- **George Eastman offered him the position of director in 1889** and he joined Eastman Photographic Materials Company in 1897. He organised a successful photographic exhibition that was attended by 25,000 people in three weeks and he became a deputy director in 1898 and director two years later.
- He was linked with **social reform and anarchists** and so **Eastman asked him to resign in 1908**. He continued until 1912 when he moved to north Wales and then Antibes, southern France for health reasons.



Francis Meadows Sutcliffe (1853-1941), *Water Rats (Sea Urchins)*, 1886

Francis Meadows Sutcliffe (1853-1941), *Water Rats (Sea Urchins)*, 1886

- **His most famous photograph** was taken in 1886; *Water Rats* caused a little comment at the time as it featured naked children playing in a boat, but the image is not erotic. Sutcliffe was using the **conventions of the academic nude** to show how photography can approach art. He was, however, **excommunicated by his local clergy for displaying it**, as they thought it would **'corrupt' the opposite sex**. Edward VII (then the Prince of Wales) later purchased a copy of the picture.



Francis Meadow Sutcliffe, *Whitby*, 1890

Francis Meadow Sutcliffe, *Whitby*, 1890

- Another photograph by Sutcliffe. He was a **prolific writer on photographic subjects**, contributed to several periodicals, and wrote a regular column in the *Yorkshire Weekly Post*.
- This photograph of Whitby bay shows his skill at controlling the light and it may have been assembled from **multiple images** taken using **different exposure times**. This technique enables cloud details to be retained without losing detail in the shadow areas such as the boats keel.
- Modern phones can achieve the same effect by taking a series of photographs using different exposures and then combine them together.



Francis Meadows
Sutcliffe, *Three Happy
Boys*, 1889

Francis Meadows Sutcliffe, *Three Happy Boys*, 1889

- Francis Meadow (Frank) Sutcliffe (1853–1941) was an English photographic artist whose work presents an enduring record of life in the seaside town of Whitby and surrounding areas, in the late Victorian era and early 20th century.
- He was born in Leeds and had a basic education before becoming a portrait photographer in Tunbridge Wells and then, for the rest of his life, in Whitby, Yorkshire. His father was a painter who introduced him to John Ruskin. He resented prostituting his art by taking photographs of holiday makers but in his own time he built up one of the **most complete and revealing collection of photographs of late Victorian England**.



Francis Meadows Sutcliffe, *Three Happy Boys*, 1889

PICTORIALISM AND LATE VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Francis Meadows Sutcliffe, *Three Happy Boys*, 1889

- Which brings me to the end of my talk. In the twentieth century photography blossomed in many directions. **Alfred Stieglitz** (1864–1946), **Edward Steichen** (1879–1973), **Man Ray** (1890–1976), **Alexander Rodchenko** (1891–1956), **Dorothea Lange** (1895–1965), **Ansel Adams** (1902–1984) and **Cecil Beaton** (1904–1980) were some of the leading photographers of the early twentieth century and each deserves a talk of their own.
- But that is all for now.
- Thank you.