

# The power of photographs in geography

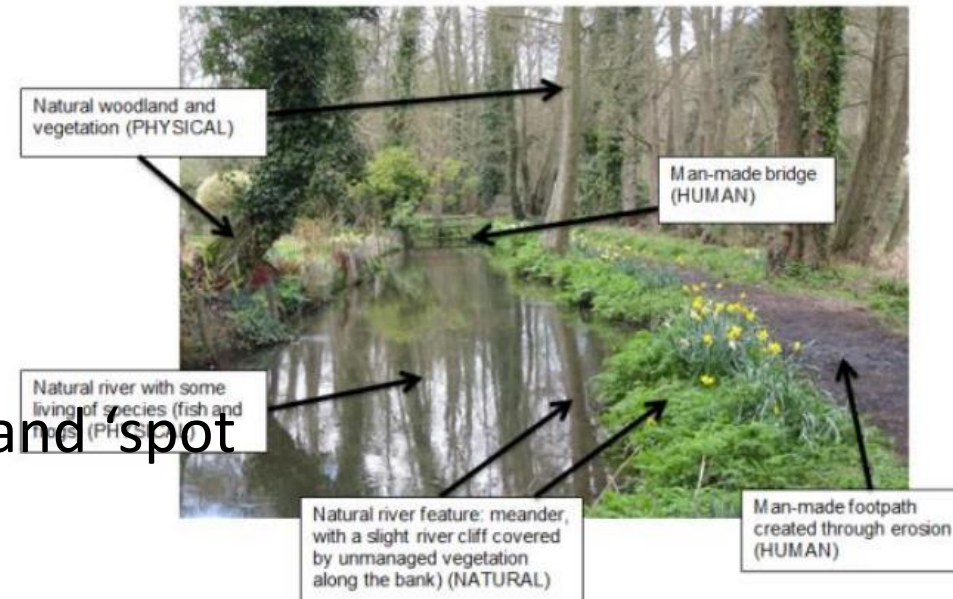
The main uses of photographs in geography lessons are to:

- teach photo interpretation skills
- to help children to find out about people, places and geographical features
- to encourage students to explore their own values and attitudes about people and places
- be a stimulus for geographical enquiry.

# Using Description

Encourage children to look at photographs carefully and *describe* what they can see before they begin interpretation. To do this consider:

- Activities that label geographical features or write descriptions of what children see in images.
- ‘Modelling’ these techniques with the whole class using a projected image so children understand what is expected before they create labels or describe themselves.
- Activities such as ‘observations’, ‘sketching’, ‘captions’, and ‘spot the difference’ to develop observation skills.



# Explanation

- Students develop *explanations* of what they observe. Consider:
- Using prompts such as, 'What does this picture show?' 'Where in the world do you think it is?' 'Why?'

What can you see? Write down any human and physical features you can see?



# Using history in geography

## Royston Heath, South Cambridgeshire



**Where is the potential for geography in this**

**picture?**  
Where could this be? What country? Is it in the UK or abroad?

What human or physical features can you see?

Did anyone spot the car? Where may that have been going to or coming from?

**Geography can support history. Are we providing the opportunity to teach these skills?**

## Researching the history

Out of view in the previous picture there are iron age burial grounds

The area is a legacy of roman occupation

The derelict building was part of the US airbase established during the Second World War

# Looking at changes in landscapes over time

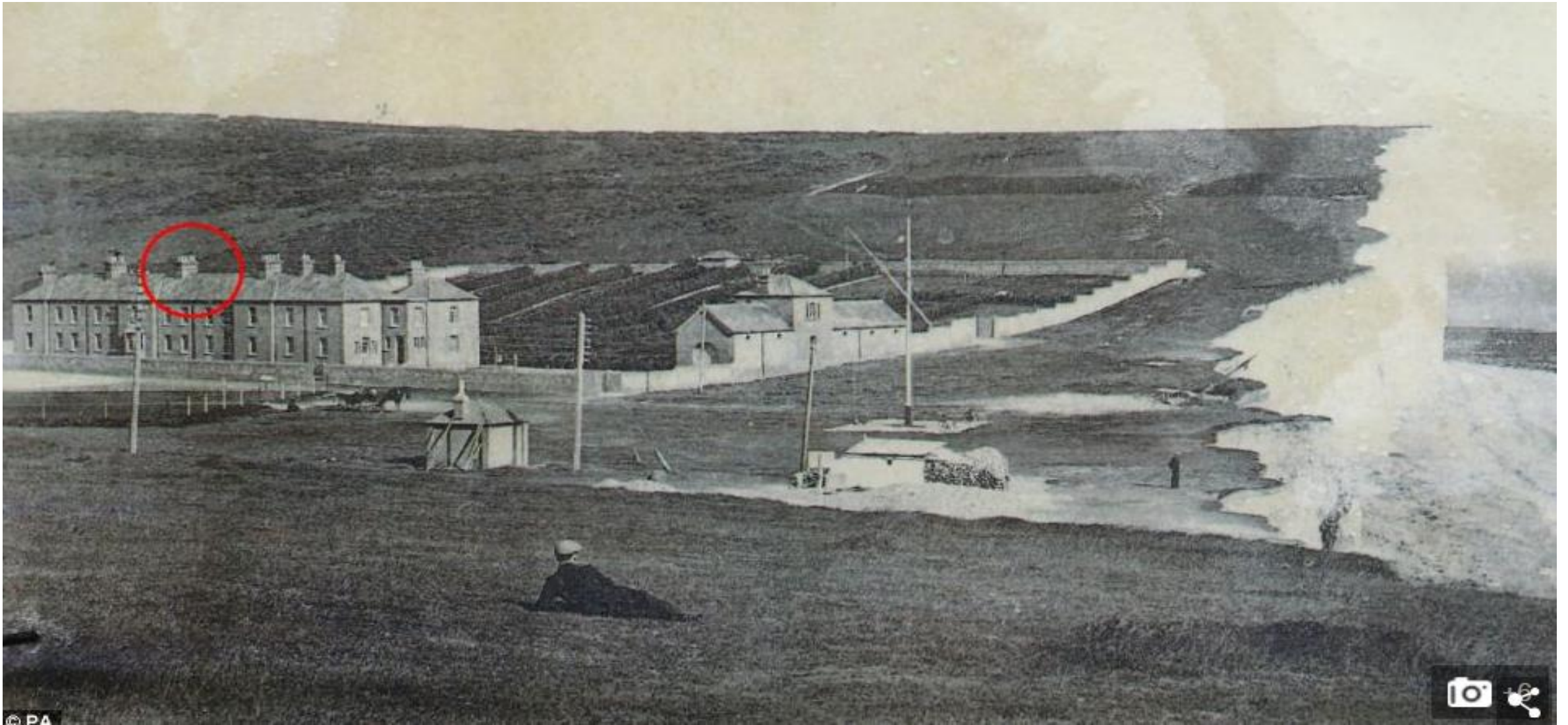
Look at before and now pictures

What geographical changes have occurred?

What period of time has it/is it happening over?

What can be done to prevent these things?

**A photograph of cottages at Birling Gap, East Sussex in 1905 shows the third chimney from the left separated from the sea by four other houses, a garden and large stretch of land**



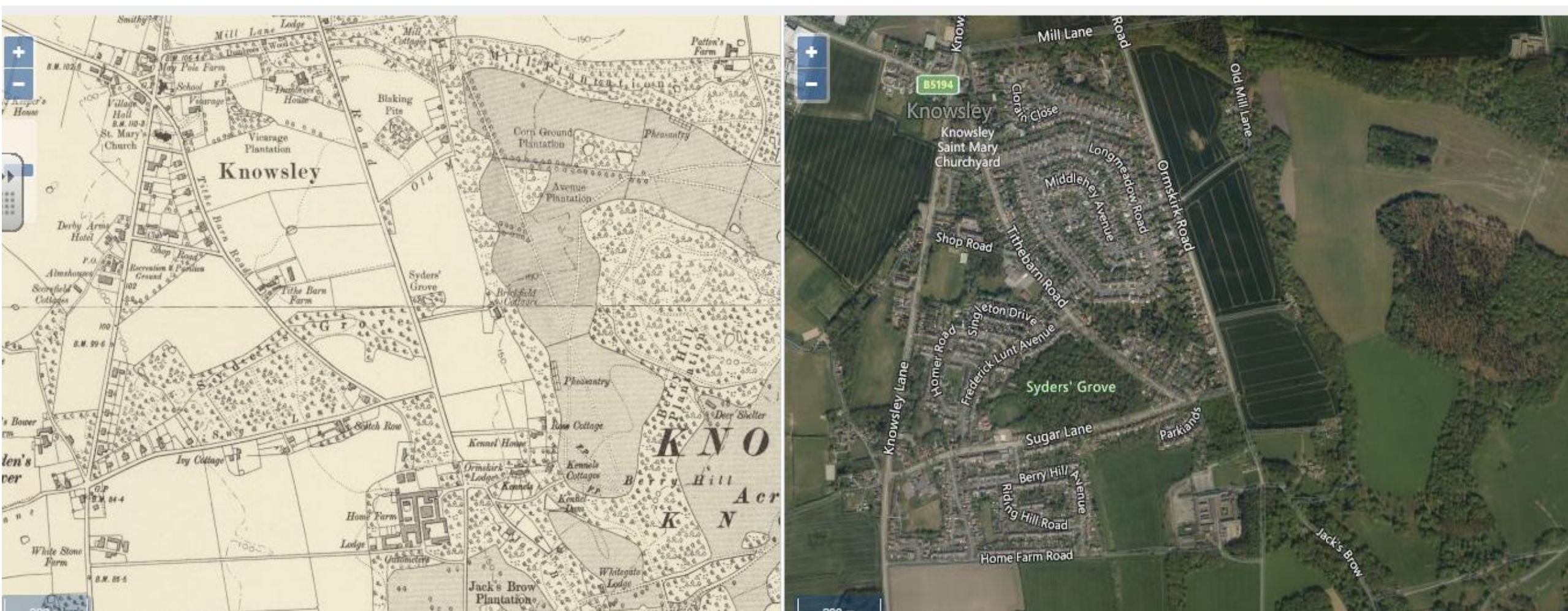
**These pictures now show the property with the same chimney teetering on the cliff-edge after the sea cut its way through all of the other homes.**



# Map skills (still using photographs)

# Use maps to compare geographical change

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom>



What has changed? There aren't any housing estates on the old map  
The old map shows more working farms  
No industrial estate just open land

# Using photographs to show changes in landscapes due to natural disasters



Satellite image showing the landscape before an earthquake



The landscape after an earthquake

# photographs

Interpreting photos is about asking questions. Take a look at the picture below. Here are some examples of the sort of question you need to ask about a photo like this:



**1. What is happening?** The obvious answer is that people are enjoying a walk in a mountainous landscape. You could then explain what geographical features make the landscape so remarkable.

**2. What impact does this activity have on local communities and the environment?** Looking at these two people near the mountain top, you might think the impact was minimal. But lower down the mountain there may be many more walkers. Large numbers of recreational visitors to this landscape may bring in money and jobs - but might also cause **soil erosion**, congestion, **pollution**, disturbance to wildlife and disruption to farming and/or local communities.

**3. How might the impact be reduced?** Answers include: restricting access to parts of the mountain, building paths and encouraging tourists to stick to them, and discouraging the development of tourist facilities that are inappropriate or too large-scale.

# Questionin

<b>Basic enquiry questions</b>	Where do you think this place is? What can we see people doing? What is the weather like? Would you like to live here? Why or why not?
<b>More focussed questions</b> (Sometimes the use of a magnifying glass will encourage children to look very carefully and closely at a picture)	What do you think 'X' is used for? Is it old or new? Why do you say that? Are there similar buildings in our area? Can you find: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a bridge?</li><li>• a hill?</li><li>• a small village?</li></ul>
<b>Questions to encourage thinking, viewpoints or feelings</b>	If you were in this picture how would you feel, what might you see or smell? In which picture do you think you would be most likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• need a sunhat?</li><li>• use a car?</li><li>• ride on an animal?</li><li>• get really cold?</li><li>• not understand a word of the language?</li></ul>
<b>More complex questions, such as research or prediction</b> These are higher order questions and need children to understand and feel comfortable with a number of situations and possible consequences of humans or physical actions	Can you find something which is the same in all the pictures? Which scene will change most in 20 years, 100 years? What would happen if the people here had electricity? How would their lives change? What would the effect of a train station be in this place?

<https://www.geography.org.uk/VG-Starter-Activities>

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/topics/resource-library-human-impacts-environment>