



# A New History of British Documentary

*James Chapman*

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Documentary was once described as 'Britain's outstanding contribution to the film', though most accounts have focused narrowly on the group of film-makers associated with the movement's figurehead, John Grierson. *A New History of British Documentary* looks at the subject afresh and offers the first comprehensive overview of documentary from early film to the present day.

James Chapman argues that the privileging of Grierson and the documentary movement of the 1930s in most standard histories has eclipsed the rich tradition of non-fiction film-making that existed in Britain during the silent period. It has also led many commentators to regard the period after the Second World War as a period of stagnation and decline for documentary. Chapman suggests instead that a full assessment of documentary's place in British film and television history should also consider pre- and post-Grierson documentary and the extent to which documentary practice has adapted in response to changing institutional and ideological contexts.

*A New History of British Documentary* not only offers a balanced assessment of the achievements of the documentary movement but also considers the place of alternative and oppositional documentary practices in British film and television culture.

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