**Granite**

The object was an object. To go somewhere and take a photograph. To observe, meditate and to expose film. Part of a week-long course with a master. To inculcate observation. Two encapsulate; hold; fix. Partly heavy enthusiasm, partly the big push. We had been at it for a week. Tired, ground down by effort but at the same time is related by concentrated effort.

We were at a place dedicated to photography, dedicated to masterwork and the production of image that had to be near the spirit. The previous night we had talked about our passion. Excited, exalted by the noble work, the shared need to grind images from the granite landscape. Around us there was dereliction and beauty; harsh landscapes, angry light.

Object.

We were taken to a disused quarry. Abandoned, probably dangerous to the unwary. To me the rotting landscape was an obvious target, something i had often approached before. But this was an attempt at something more spiritual, almost a dialogue with rock.

I had wondered about our mentor or and his theories, but I was here to open my own mind, not to question. We were to select a surface of fissure or detail to photograph. Once we had found a subject, we were to position our camera and to settle in front of the subject, close our eyes for a period of 20 minutes, then open them and make the exposure.

Meditation.

This was almost beyond me. We had had little sleep and it was cold. One was to sit blind in front of the rock then to have some deep experience. I fixed the equipment and then sat down on some plastic to avoid the damp. It was cold and this was not the way to do things. Observe, yes. Trial pictures maybe but this was almost drippy.

There is an annoyance in not seeing. My mind raced. The damp was gelatinous. The blind mind reviewed the previous days, the pace of working, the conversations, the shared enthusiasms, the immersion in a common art, previous production. Butt still cold. This was silly. Maybe everyone else is told that r has 20 minutes but they could slip away after two. Tempted to have a slight look around but minded to pull it off.

The mind slows down. Previous pictures came back to me, landscapes and the rotting materials I had photographed in Greenwich near the Thames, pictures on a tide line where rock and water met. Maybe granite from a quarry here. Was I put back to see sibling stone?

Exposure.

It was time. I came out of what by now was a trance. The rock and I were 20 minutes older. But this was a new rock. A slight fissure ran diagonally across, a fraction of lichen hanging on, a surface I had not seen before, a mystery of form. A complete miniature minister like an aerial photograph. I hurriedly took a reading and exposed the film, focusing and rechecking so that I must be correct with this landscape. I could not fail this wondrous pattern. The surface had to be correct, exposed in the best manner, the future negative perfect in retention of detail, an honourable record. I took the picture; made exposure variations, make sure. I looked back to the surface, the beauty of that crack, the tenacious vegetation. It was revealed and I was revealed.