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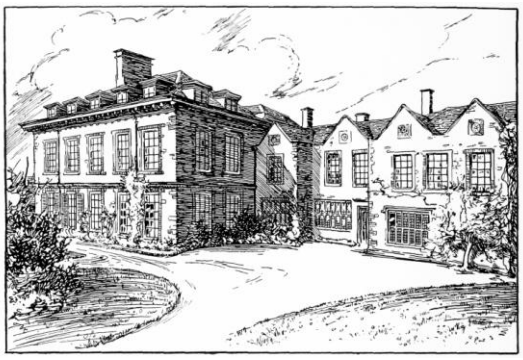
BA Photography in the Arts

Module;

Visual enquiries 1 research Evaluation

Situated in the middle of the peak district, surrounded by a canyon of limestone and the big famous Mam Tor, is this quaint, classic English hamlet called Castleton which has almost Half the population of England living within 60 miles around it. It is a gorgeous hamlet filled with classic little houses covered in moss and surrounded by old fashioned lamp posts that glow a bright orange hue, reflecting on the fast-flowing river that run through from the caves and the village. The shops have been there for many years selling their little trinkets and things that are associated with the village.

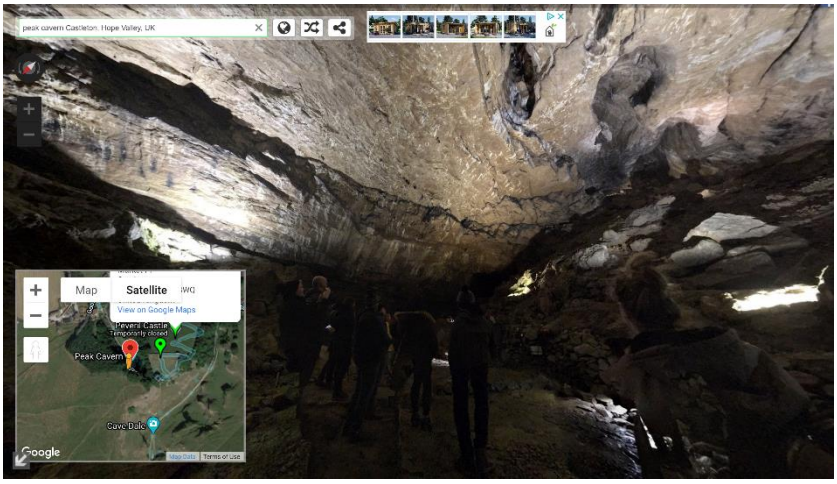


Castleton is a massive honeypot for tourists because of it being surrounded by the most beautiful hills and its majestic landscapes leaving the little hamlet left in a bowl and because of the history behind it. Its strange to think that because of lockdown it is not a thriving place anymore, its subdued and shut down which actually links it back to the days when Castleton was developed as a settlement by William the bastard (William of Normandy) in the 12th century when he built Pevril castle which was of a impressive size and strength, having walls that towered at 20 feet high and having a thickness of 8/9 feet. It was built looking over the forests to show that it was owned by the king but also so that the hunting rights could be protected. From up on the hilltops, it could be policed which is ironic as that's now what COVID-19 has done to Castleton too.

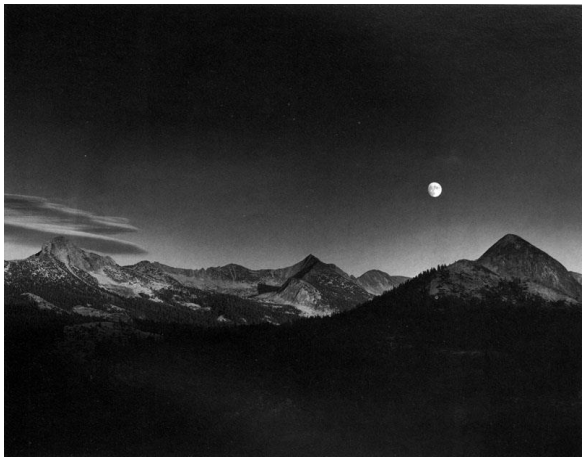
But the exciting part was, when Castleton or as It was known in the 12th century as 'castle' 'town, fell into despair all the villagers who were suppressed and vindicated, raided the castle and took the stones to build their own houses and village, and that is how these gorgeous little houses and cottages were made. unluckily for us it is now all ruins left on top of the opening of the peak cavern. It is still impressive t as it still has the 55-foot tower.

Castleton itself has been known for many things throughout the years, it had a massive peak in 1770s when the mining business became big, as it had 16 mines that were in operation, within this operation they were the most famous for finding both yellow and blue fluorspar. Whilst this was in two of the main big caves too there are all together which are big tourist attractions nowhere days, especially the Peak cavern... aka the 'Devils' arse'. The name of this cave originally had to be changed in the 1880s as a precaution not to cause any offense to Queen Victoria, but saying that all the locals, including me still call it the Devils arse.

beside of the massive mining operations that happened in Castleton, it is also known for rope making, lead mining, garlands, and blue john.



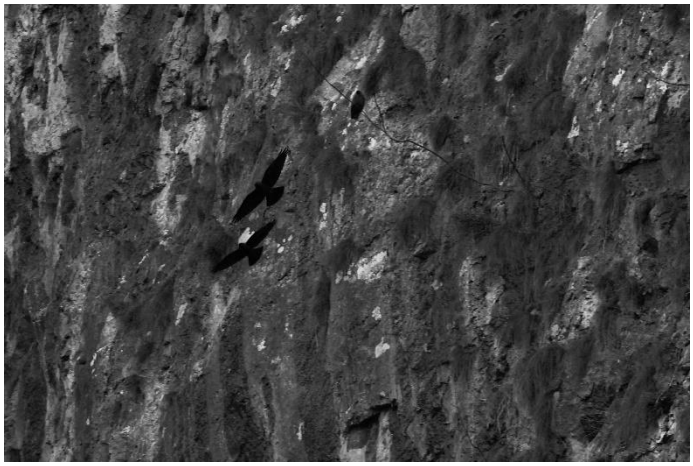
Throughout my research I have realized a lot of landscape photography is always in colour which adds so much imagination and movement to the imaged but when the landscape photography is in black and white it adds history, emotion and an earie sense to the place let alone the image. A photographer who has inspired the research into black and white landscape photography is Ansel Adams. Adams was an American photographer who turned out to be one of the most important landscape photographers of the 20th century, he focused on the untouched wilderness of America, like the national parks and other protected areas of America. His inspirations were the simplicity of images and the conception if the rich and luminous tonality.



The inspiration this artist gave me was incredible, he made the concept of showing history and the simplicity within a photo of a landscape exciting and valid. The fact that in the 1930s people though artists and photographers should be focusing their work on economic and political issues was something that made him stand out. He was so pure but sterile for his time but now the appreciation of the characteristics and health for the natural landscape is of the highest order.

When thinking about Castleton and how its history should be interpretated and represented, it should be in black and white as when you think of history its always set in stone, its set in black and white. Should it be

shown in a expressive or documentative, and for this I think documentative to show every aspect this place has to offer.



Taking this black and white style into concept, my second inspiration connected to the way that Castleton is Michael Kenna. Kenner is the guru of black and white photography; he is an English photographer from the 1953 who created contrast with his stark shades of greys. Kenner has been exhibited in museums and galleries throughout America, Europe, Asia, and France. He manages to find a way to invite you to see the world in a different perspective using his long exposures and locations and his free nature, he does not plan or visualize his images before he takes them, he gets what he gets.

His work has a range of interesting compositions and arrangements within the landscapes which exhibit rain, mist, snow, and clear blue skies but with the black and white style you do not get to see the colour of the blue or the colour of the bright yellow sun that gleams on some of the landscapes he has focused on.

"Black and white is immediately more mysterious because we see in colour all the time. It is quieter than colour." - Michael Kenna

The shadows that are increased when a photograph is turned into black and white can show a sense of drama that we might not have seen or associated with the place. Seeing the world through the lens of a camera is one of the rich abstractions and contrasts of life because immersing yourself into the beauty can bring so much joy.