



Hilltop Cloud

Time Travellers Club

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June-16

Dear Club Member,

www.hilltopcloud.co.uk

Occasionally a piece of writing sticks in your head. I first read Bill Bryson's "Life and Time of the The Thunderbolt Kid" not long after it came out in paperback. As an account of life in 1950's America it's a wonderful read, filled with all sorts of interesting snippets.

One of the things that sticks in my head, and judging by the reviews I've read online, everyone else's, is his account of the toilets in one of his home town restaurants. After every use they were cleaned using radioactivity. To our modern mind this sounds bonkers, we are (quite rightly) scared of radioactivity, and all too aware of what over exposure can do to our fragile bodies. This wasn't always the case, hence the radioactive toilets...

Atomic energy was seen as being exciting, useful, good for us, and using it was a sign of progress!

Also available on the market were such delights as radioactive toothpaste, perfect for killing bacteria. Radioactive face cream, to create a glowing healthy complexion. Or even a radioactive cake stand, because cakes always look better with a back-lit green glow.

It was also sold as being beneficial for health in all sorts of medicines, and health aids. From a water filter you could use to create your own radioactive water, to sheets of radium coated paper you inserted in a special case, and then used to irradiate your testicles or other glands. You could even buy radioactive suppositories, perfect for making sure the radiation was taken right to the very core of your body.

Children were also allowed to enjoy the fun of radioactivity as well. How about your own Radioactive Lab Kit, containing your very own samples of Uranium and Radium, complete with a Geiger Counter.

All this of course, didn't last, though radioactive sources still have their uses. Most Smoke Alarms contain Americium, if the particles emitted by the radioactive source are blocked by smoke then the alarm goes off. It's a very safe and efficient way of making sure we know when our houses fill with smoke.

So the colour this month is a bit of an homage to those carefree days, when everything was good for us!

Happy Spinning,

Katie