



Hilltop Cloud

Time Travellers Club

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October-15

www.hilltopcloud.co.uk

Dear Club Member,

Some colours can be downright dangerous... either for political reasons, or in this case because of the elements in the compound that produce the colours. During the 19th century modern chemistry was being hailed as the future of human kind, and it was thought that anything chemically synthesized must be in some way "better". The only problem was that many of these chemicals contained all sorts of nasty things that in certain concentrations were actually poisoning the people they were meant to be helping.

One such compound was Scheele's Green. If you look at a Victorian Room and see any green decoration the chances are it's Scheele's Green producing the colour. It was also used in clothing, and in paint. While the green it produced was wonderfully vibrant the colour comes from a compound containing Arsenic. In damp Victorian homes the wall paper often got damp and slightly mouldy, particularly as the paste used containing no modern anti-fungicides. The mould reacted with the green and gave off a gas containing arsenic. The wallpaper may well be to blame for all the swooning that went on in middle and high class drawing rooms. Some Victorian Women were exposed to huge amounts of Arsenic if they were wearing green dresses and sitting in green rooms, eating green sweets, while their children played with green toys!

Scheele's Green may also be to blame for the death of Napoleon Bonaparte, his rooms in exile on St Helena were decorated in his favourite shades of green. He died of Stomach Cancer, and Arsenic is linked to higher levels of cancer.

It took until the early 20th century for the pigment to finally be banned, even when it had been realized just how dangerous Arsenic is. This colour green really was a fashion to die for!

No such danger from the fibre in your parcel, while the colours do come from chemicals modern safety standards have removed all heavy metals from the acid dyes we use today.

Happy Spinning,

Katie