



**Hilltop Cloud**

*Time Travellers Club*

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May-17

[www.hilltopcloud.co.uk](http://www.hilltopcloud.co.uk)

Dear Club Member,

Jet jewellery rose in popularity during the Victorian era. It perfectly fitted in with the desire of that age to be “seen” to be doing the appropriate thing (ie. mourning a dead relative). But also showing off that you could afford to have jewellery that you had purchased just for a short period of time. Queen Victoria was partially responsible for this rise in popularity. Jet jewellery was the only thing the court could wear when in full mourning for Prince Albert. The rise in popularity had started before that however, events like The Great Exhibition allowed the skilled jewelers of Whitby to present their wares to a wider audience.

Jet isn't a precious gemstone, it's fossilized wood, that under very specific conditions gets compressed, and turned in a smooth, black, lightweight material. It can be carved with comparative ease, and also polished so that it catches the light. Jet is found all over the world, but the very best Jet comes from the cliffs around Whitby in North Yorkshire.

The Victorians weren't the first to use Jet, the first carved piece found dates from 10,000BC. The Romans were particularly fond of the material, when viewed from Rome the outskirts of the Empire, like Britain, would have seemed very distant. This mysterious black material would have been desirable for jewellery. It was also believed to deflect the evil eye, Pliny the Elder wrote "the kindling of jet drives off snakes and relieves suffocation of the uterus. Its fumes detect attempts to simulate a disabling illness or a state of virginity." I don't think my fibre will have the same magical properties.

After that Jet isn't really used a great deal. The combination of the rise of the Steam Train allowing for seaside holidays, and souvenirs, plus the demand for large scale mourning jewellery, led to a massive rise in popularity of jewellery.

I've tried to capture the intense darkness of the Jet, but with a tiny hint of sparkle. It will hopefully act as a lovely contrast to all the other colours you've been receiving over the past months. Don't forget, if you want to get a few more hints about combining this blend with other shades there's a dedicated thread over on the Hilltop Cloud Ravelry group.

Happy Spinning,

Katie