



Hilltop Cloud

Time Travellers Club

Dugoed Bach
Mallwyd
Machynlleth
Powys
SY20 9HR

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www.hilltopcloud.co.uk

Dear Club Member,

Colour doesn't have to come from pigment or dyes. I recently watched a repeat of a wonderful BBC series looking at the ancient manuscripts that were created for Medieval Kings of Britain.

In these books and scrolls what was written was only part of the whole picture. Every page is lavishly decorated with illustrations. The illustrations were a key part of the impression of the whole document. It would not only indicate who paid for the document, but also illustrate the what was being said. Sometime the illustrators would also sneak in minor details about themselves.

The colours of these illustrations are not complex, the palette that was considered appropriate was small. Blue, Red, Green and Yellow are the predominate shades. What really lifts these illustrations is the gilding. Gold was used heavily on these illustrations, and it turns these illustrations in to a shimmering, rich wonderful image. The effect for viewing them in flickering candlelight would have been magical.

The gilding is done using real gold, which is why the illustrations still look so beautiful today. Gold is so un-reactive that it doesn't tarnish, it won't react with anything in the air, so stays looking just as it did when first applied. The gold is beaten in to very, very thin sheets. A glue is applied to the areas that need to be gilded (often made from egg), and the sheet then laid on top. Only the areas with glue on them end up being gilded.

The finished effect was lavish, not least because very few people would see this gold. It's not like wearing gold, when everyone could see your status. This gold would only have been seen by the small number of people who were allowed to read the book.

Happy Spinning,

Katie