

WHITEHORSE WEAVERS' AND SPINNERS' GUILD

USE OF THE DRUM CARDER

The drum carder is certainly a most useful piece of equipment: blends colours to perfection, makes it possible to use hitherto unusable bits of fleece and certainly makes spinning easier and so much quicker. But drum carding is not a shortcut in the preparation of fleece, and is probably the piece of equipment most abused by spinners.

For successful results you should start at the beginning and wash your fleece. A soak in lukewarm water should be sufficient unless the fleece is very dirty or sticky, in which case soap should be added. **DO NOT RUB OR AGITATE FLEECE.** This will cause felting. The warmth of the water will cause the scales of the wool to open and the dirt will fall out. Gently squeeze out excess water and spread fleece to dry in an airy place. (Fleece may be placed in a pillowcase or net bag and put through the spin cycle of an automatic washing machine but do not wash fleece in machine.) If soap or detergent has been used fleece must be rinsed and the oil replaced wither by adding a tablespoon of olive oil to the rinse water or spraying with spinning oil before carding.

When fleece is dry it is necessary to open the locks or staples of fleece. The carding machine is not built to take the tremendous strain an overly dense and tightly packed arrangement would cause. Place small amounts of teased wool evenly on the feed tray where it is pulled in by the smaller roller. Feeding in too much fibre at once will cause the machine to jam or the small roller will become clogged with fibre.

To lift the carded web off the drum use a fine, strong needle (knitting needle will do). Insert under the fibres in the space between teeth where the leathers join. Gradually separate and roll batt off.

When all the wool has been through the carder once make two piles, strip each web in half, stretch it a little and put a strip from each pile through again. In this way you mix it and blend any irregularities. Even when not blending colours or irregularities this second carding is most important before spinning.

When spinning pull each strip gently into a long even roving.

Please clean carder of wool and vegetable matter before returning.

Thankyou