



### [Coulmore Organic Cheviot from Black Isle Yarns](#)

DK / 100g / 220m :: 4ply / 100g / 350m

£19 undyed :: £22 naturally dyed

Ravelry group members losaturnalia aka Caitlin, GemDavis, Woollyelly aka Ellena and Palaeopath, aka Aja all agreed to review this yarn as a mystery review. They were only told the weight and that it was organic, the rest was up to them. You can hear their thoughts and see my shownotes at [Episode 103](#). As they all left comprehensive reviews, too long for the shownotes, I thought I would compile them here, in full. Thanks to our great reviewers.

#### **Gem Davis**

Not having a huge amount of experience with different breeds I will compare this yarn to what I do know rather than trying to make a guess in the dark! It feels a bit softer than the Jamieson's Shetland Spindrift I have been using recently, and a lot smoother and more lustrous, but the variance in thickness is similar to this yarn. It's not anywhere near as soft as something like Blue-Faced Leicester, but has a similar colour and bounce to WYS Fleece in Ecru (undyed).

#### **Observances in Swatching**

Cast on 40 stitches with 3.5mm needles, knitting simple cables at different sizes. Size of cast off swatch: width: 4" height: 5"

Feels very squishy and bouncy, fairly soft but with a slight itch, and has a faint sheepy smell. I would be quite happy to wear against skin however perhaps not the delicate skin of your neck and face. The yarn has a slight curly halo, which gives it a nice woolly look, but also has a lovely shine. It's fairly loosely spun and has variances in thickness. The yarn is slightly springy to knit with and moves smoothly through the hand.



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## **Wash, Block, Wear Test 1**

Size after blocking: width: 4 ½" height: 5 ¼"

Soaked in lukewarm water for 10 minutes with wool wash and pinned out to dry. After blocking the shine stood out on the cables, which were also nicely defined. I placed the swatch under my waistband next to my skin, and soon forgot it was there. I then placed it around my arm, and I was more aware of it but I think that was because of bulk rather than itchiness. However, wearing it close to my neck it did feel a bit itchy. I think it would be suited to a jumper or cardigan, not as a scarf.

## **Wash, Block, Wear Test 2**

Size after blocking: width: 4 ¾" height: 5 ¼"

Soaked the swatch for longer this time with wool wash and laid out to dry on a towel. A second washing hasn't really changed the swatch, it has grown ever so slightly in width but feels just the same, and stitch definition is the same. To distress the swatch, I wore it in my boot. There's no pilling but it is slightly fluffier than before, and after being scrunched up it has returned to its shape well.

## **Final Assessment**

The wool has tested very well, I would like to use this again. It looks light and delicate with a beautiful shine but has a strength that would make it suitable to something that is used or worn often, like cardigans, jumpers, gloves or hats.

## **Aja**

It is a creamy ecru, tending toward a very subtle butter yellow but still quite white in the correct light. It is worsted spun, comprising of three plies, and is lovely and sheepy, but does not smell overmuch like sheep or lanolin. It does not feel like it has much lanolin in it, either — it's quite dry to the touch. I am hesitant to say whether it is hand spun or not, as a friend who is a very talented hand spinner saw it on my table while visiting and noted that he thought it was, due to very subtle variation in the singles and ply, but it's beyond me whether this is the case. On first impression, without having knit it, this yarn does appear to be a bit on the lighter side of DK toward sport. As a personal moment of sense memory recognition, it is very similar to the yarn my Grandmère used to knit me a cardigan when I was very small, and while I sadly eschewed it because it was too rough on my skin at the time, I am excited by the garment and accessory prospects this hank presents. The Hand-Squish-Grab of the hank is very subtly crunchy, but soft, with a springiness and liveliness. It feels as though it would have good memory, and likely not be an issue for my admittedly relatively sensitive skin. The fibers look well-organized, and semi-lustrous, though I do not think this is a lustre wool. If I tease out the fiber at the end of the strand, I can see it has a lot of body, and crimp, but is not very well-organized and wants to be lofty. The fiber separated from the ply and combed a bit with my fingers seems, again, quite dry in texture. It seems to have a 6-8 cm staple, but that is an impression, and not something I have specifically measured.

## **Observation whilst swatching**

For the first swatch, I knit a modified version of one of Norah Gaughan's rib-and-cable motifs from her Knitted Cable Sourcebook (#113). I found the yarn to develop a slight halo, with a very occasional fine guard hair to boot. The ribbing and cables are dense, but not overmuch, and those fibers that do protrude seem mostly flat against the fabric, rather than sticking outward like you might see in a longwool. The twist on the singles of this three-ply yarn is tight enough, but I found the dryness of the fibres made it so that the yarn frequently split even on my blunt wooden needles, and I had to pay attention to make sure I didn't drop a ply here or there. Still, this yarn, when it did hold together (and it generally did without issue), was very textural

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and bouncy, holding its shape without being overly plump. Pre-wash, the swatch was a little airy, but not knit too loosely. I suspected the stitches will bloom a bit.

My second swatch was again on 4mm needles, swatching a second of a 4-row repeat simple chevron lace stitch. The eyelets were perfectly defined even pre-wash, and the yarn stood of its own accord demonstrating the textural and architectural aspects of this stitch beautifully. I added a band of garter stitch atop this to see if the variation in ply might cause some visual discord in the uniformity of the garter, but it did not. Over this, I did a small bit of stockinette and this is where the subtle sheen really came out. I did not have enough to test a gansey knit/purl motif, as it only struck me on the last leg of swatching, but I imagine this would be wonderful at a slightly denser gauge for this use.



This is the swatch I wore under my clothes, as the other was going to be too bulky. Prewash, the stockinette measured 9 rows and 7 stitches to one inch. The stitches of both swatches were soft but not too soft— rather a quality of the yarn itself. After the first wash, for which I used some Kookaburra wash, the gauge in stockinette changed to 8 rows and 6 stitches per inch, and the textured parts of the swatches looked more organized, laying flat rather than rolling.

The texture of the fabric was still dry, with a slightly greater halo than before, and it seemed to me to be slightly rougher than it had in the hank. The lace opened up a bit, but still held a lot of its 3-dimensional qualities, and the ribbing on the rib-and-cable swatch relaxed but did not stretch out of shape. Worn against the skin under my bra strap for the day, I found it to be initially prickly, but this disappeared after a while and I barely noticed that I was wearing the swatch, though occasionally the bulk of it did make its presence known.

The second wash saw the swatch retained its size and shape well, and I did not notice a great change from the first wash, in gauge, character or wearing, though I had some redness on my skin after the second wear. That might have more to do with my being too warm that day, because I find yarns tickle and irritate me when I warm more than when I am cold.

### Final Assessment

This yarn is a workhorse, I think, and could easily fulfil anything you ask of it, assuming it is for sport or DK weight. It has beautiful stitch definition, a very subtle halo that does not overpower texture, and a very subtle sheen. If I had to guess what breed it was, I'd assume it was something like cheviot, as it is very similar to a primarily cheviot pullover I wear on the regular, and indeed wore during the swatching phase. I can see heirloom or working pullovers, gloves, scarves and hats knit out of this, but I think it would do best as a garment that is not worn directly against the skin, as the second wear did give me a small bit of abrasion. This yarn is best suited to cabled or textured

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knit patterns, or indeed to plain stockinette, but it does double-duty well as a large gauge lace yarn. It's been a very interesting yarn to try out, and refreshingly bright compared to my typical dark palette.

## Caitlin

### **Observances in swatching**

Felt very soft in the skein and slightly toothy. A very few guard hairs shed while winding. Slightly rougher handle while working with it. It glides fairly smoothly along my metal needles, though I do keep accidentally poking the tip between the plies. I started out with some textured stitches as I really like these and I rarely hear yarn reviews with textured stitches in the swatch. However, as I expected from the softness of the plies, it was too flat a yarn for the texture to be very obvious, so I quickly moved onto a lace diamonds pattern. Oh, my goodness, this yarn was made for lace! The stitches have opened up so much that it hardly looks like it needs any blocking! I finished off with a little 2x2 rib which shows up better than the textured stitches.

Size of cast off swatch: 5" by 5.5"

### **Wash, Block, Wear Test 1**

Soaked in water for ~13 hours while I'm at work. I blocked quite aggressively but the swatch only stretched to 5.5" by 6.25". The lace didn't open up too much more and the textured stitches became barely visible. The fabric itself is quite dense: it's only a small square but it doesn't feel like it will drape.

I barely felt the swatch when I first tucked it into my leggings and pretty much immediately forgot it was there. I would say absolutely no prickling at all on my tummy and only the tiniest it when held against my neck. However, the textured stitches, even the rib have flattened considerably and lots of little fibres have started to spiderweb over the YOs. This is probably due to the softness of the plies. Swatch size is now 5.25" by 5.75"

### **Wash, Block, Wear Test 2**

immersed in hand hot water for about ten minutes, no agitation. This time I let the swatch sit to dry without pinning it out and the swatch returned to its cast off size of 5" by 5.5". It feels denser and less likely to drape, which makes sense given the blocking method. As before, I barely noticed the swatch all day, which I wore tucked into my trousers on my hip/top of thigh. I distressed the swatch by folding it in half and rubbing it firmly between my palms. A little bit of pilling and even a tiny bit of felting! I could feel a small amount of resistance when I peeled it apart again.



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## Final assessment:

This is a lovely soft yarn which would be suited to hand wash-only items which didn't get too much wear, such a special baby garment. If I had been listening to the podcast while you were doing the Hapalong, I would have used this yarn! It produced a good, woolly and old-fashioned feeling fabric. By that I mean that while it was not at all prickly, it doesn't feel like super modern fibres, e.g. merino or BFL blends, it retains its essential sheepy-ness. If petting a skein of merino is like petting a rabbit, petting this yarn is like petting a horse. Still soft, but a different quality to the softness. I'd love to know the breed, I'm afraid I'm very bad at guessing, but it's softer and less prickly than a Shetland or Gotland, and sheepier than BFL or merino. I hope that gives people some idea! I don't think I would use this particular yarn again- I'm a person who galumphs, so all my knitwear has to stand up to some serious use- but I'd knit with the breed again in a heartbeat, if it were spun with a higher twist.

## Ellena

### Observances while swatching

Crisp and a bit silky. Gently pulling a strand, some elasticity and bounce back. Pretty soft to the hand, a little rougher to the face and neck, but no prickle. A few hairs sticking out, very slight variation in thickness, nice, non-yellowy cream colour. Slick through the fingers when knitting. But no visible lustre or particular halo.

Size of the cast off swatch - 23x9cm

### Wash, Block, Wear Test 1

No real difference in feel to pre washing. Zero prickle, didn't know I was wearing it. I wore for a week. Very slight halo developing, and it seems a bit more cohesive with the strands melded a little, but otherwise unchanged.

### Wash, Block, Wear Test 2

More pronounced halo after 2nd wash. Stitches melded even more. Fairly gentle rubbing together for about 30 seconds produced several pills.

Size of the blocked swatch - 23x10cm

### Final Assessment

I like the sturdiness of this wool. I think you could wear a cowl necked jumper or similar in it, near the neck, so long as it was loose. It'd be perfect for a gansey. It did pill some, but that might not go on forever. I feel that it would take dye like a dream, though I didn't get around to putting this to the test.



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