

Flaxmill TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

spinners, weavers and finishers
of FINE IRISH WOOL
and Linen.

Telephone: (028) 7774 2655

Mill Lane,
Derrylane,
Dungiven,
BT47 4QD.

www.flaxmill-textiles.com

Mail: flaxmill@gmx.net

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23rd Flax-Mill Open Day and Yard-Fest:

A tailor from Colombia, Ireland's only female blacksmith, a weaver from Germany

It's all hands on at Derrylane Flax-Mills as County Derry's only active linen-weaving-mill prepares to host its 23rd Open Day and Yard – Fest on Saturday, September 10th.

“Ireland's most spectacular private gathering”, as a Dutch journalist once called it, is set to bring visitors from all corners of the globe to the town land outside Dungiven. They will enjoy an unrivalled gathering of the best crafters from these shores; meet designers, artists, spinners, weavers, dyers and textile-workers from far and near.

A “world-premier” of what looks to become one of the most successful documentary-films ever to come from Northern Ireland is thrown in as an extra as is a session of Bikram – Yoga in the mill garden and many other treats.

Mill – owner Marion Baur is delighted with the state of preparations:

“After last year's absolute capacity crowd and electric atmosphere at both Open – Day and evening-concert we had to try very hard to top this. I think we have managed and will be able to please our visitors with an even more comprehensive and exiting display of the best products made here, unique demonstrations of old and new ways of manufacturing, great fun, the best of home-made food and a forum for meeting and exchanging information.

To host a first – time showing of some of the amazing footage, film-maker John Thompson and historian Bruce Clark have gathered during the past year for their new film “Linen People” is honouring for us and of course an extra bonus for our visitors.

The evening concert and session will be the most potent ever. Colum Sands is making an appearance for the first time since 2001 and his fusion on stage with Willie Drennan, German singer/songwriter Rainer Frankl and talented local harpist Dearbhla Mc Taggart has been creating huge interest internationally. At this stage we have booking for the concert from 9 different countries on our list.”

The owner of Flax – Mill has all reasons to be pleased. The full programme for the Open Day which is just out and available from the mill reads like a “who is who” in textile- and other crafts and the melting – pot of crafters, artists, media-people and textile-workers from far and near, the Flax-Mill-Open-Day has developed into seems to be growing year by year.

Here are some of the highlights:

- **Christine Boyle/Belfast** is returning after a break. The owner of the “colour and cloth” company who uses natural ingredients only for her price-winning dyeing will demonstrate linen-dyeing with things like blackberries, onion-peels and other products from the mill-garden.

- **Danna Herron/Gilford** is Ireland’s only professional female blacksmith. The daughter of forging/engineering legend **David Herron** will be setting up a large hand-bellowed forge and make sparks fly in tandem with her father. They will be joined by German Ferrier **Marius Eitelwein**.

- **Elisabeth Corrigan/Antrim**, Flax-Mill’s “commission-tailor, will show her new range of bespoke dresses. She opened her own shop (“Lizzienellie”) in Randalstown last year and will be accompanied by her daughter **Eimear** who is going to model some of Liz’s brand-new creations.

- **Flax-Mill’s new range** of cloth and finished products is out and will be on show. With hand- and machine-woven linen – some of it made with yarn from our own flax – in the centre, Marion Baur and her team will also show some new tweed from Irish wool and a unique blend of linen and silk. Many designers and tailors have announced their coming to see the new products. Textile-design students **Almha Mc Cartan (Dublin-College)** and **Miriam Johnston (University of Halle/Germany)** had an input in design and making of a new range of one-off scarves which will be ready for the day.

Last Minute news:

4 Spinners working on 4 wheels!

Alongside **Lynda Kelly** and **Eileen Patterson (Killeleagh)** who produce high quality yarn for Flax-Mill’s weaving operation two other spinners have just confirmed their coming to demonstrate. The 4 master-crafters operating 4 spinning-wheels “in line” and beside 3 of Flax-Mill’s working weaving-loom will make for a spectacular show. They will be spinning Alpaca (the animals live just a few hundred metres from the mill), Irish wool and Irish linen. Of course some of their unique products will be for sale.

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- **Ruth Walker is back!** The Welsh jeweller and glass-artist with a base in Ballyclare kiln-fuses coloured glass in a high-temperature oven and manufactures bespoke jewellery and window-decorations. She also weaves melted glass; her creations have been used by Marion Baur at international fashion-events. Ruth has been at several Open Days, had declined this year due her extremely busy schedule. Due to public demand she has changed her plans and just gave us confirmation that she will run her unique stall.
- **Ireland's oldest lorry on the road** will return. The 1929 Morris flat-back is owned by Craig Mathew/Garvagh and will bring some of the new crop of flax home to Flax – Mill. The “old lady” has been a feature at the Open Day and will be accompanied by many classic cars.
- **Flax-Mill's contribution to “the year of food” is an international one!** The much loved “catering-brigade” is jetting in from Berlin. Headed by friend of Flax-Mill, **Andreas Stoib** they will produce such treats as “sunken apple cake”, a 13 metre long buffet for the evening – guests, a huge selection of salads from the gardens, “tomato – butter a la Steff” and other goodies.

The organisers are urging people to book their place, especially for the evening event. Marion Baur:

We have always had busy Open Days and the gig in the evening had to be limited in numbers every year. This time demand is huge, the number of visitors from abroad exceeds anything we have experienced. Whilst we strongly recommend visitors for the day to let us know they are coming, concert and session are a definite “invite only” affair this year, otherwise we couldn't cope with the numbers. We try our best to cater for as many as possible but in order to do that right and to the detail we provide people have to book for the evening. They will not regret what they are getting.”

Important notes for editors:

- **This press-release is free for immediate publication.**
- **Open Day and Yard-Fest are private events; the owner reserves the right to refuse admission at all times.**
- **There is no cover-charge.**
- **For all up-front interviews, photo-shootings etc. please contact Hermann at Flax-Mill as soon as possible: 02877742655 or flaxmill@gmx.net**
- **Photographers are welcome, recording at the concert requires special permission as does all filming.**
- **Due to many request by journalists from abroad, both Colum Sands and Willie Drennan will be present during the Open Day and prepared for interviews. These have to be booked (contact Hermann).**