

Flax mill TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

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

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FLAX-MILL-NEWS-FLAX-MILL-NEWS-FLAX-MILL

All hands on for the 22nd Flax-Mill Open Day and Yard-Fest on Saturday, Sept. 12th!

The old Flax Mill in Derrylane, outside Dungiven is a hive of activity with less than one week to go to what a Dutch journalist once described as “Ireland’s most spectacular private gathering”.

Helpers from Germany, England and South Africa have already landed – with more coming during the week – to get county Derry’s only active linen-weaving-mill ready for large crowds of visitors from far and near next Saturday. All day, a number of hand-picked master crafters will demonstrate their skills and offer their high-quality products for sale. Mill owner Marion Baur is delighted with the state of affairs: “We have managed to put together a programme for the Open Day and the concert in the evening which is set to please our visitors, no matter where they come from. People travel thousands of miles to meet here, to exchange experience and have a good time. As every year we will bend backwards to make it an unforgettable day for them.”

Here are some of the highlights of both Open Day and evening gig:

- **Marius Eitelwein**, master-blacksmith from Tauberbischofsheim, Germany, will be making the sparks fly on the big forge all day. The man who keeps 400(!) horses in shoes in his home-area is travelling from Germany to demonstrate his unique skill. He will be joined by **Collin Dawson** from Tempelpatrick. Collin runs Patterson’s spade mill, Ireland’s only water-driven spade-making facility.

- **Dr. Lynn Hulse** from London is one of the most respected hand-embroiderers in Europe. The absolvent of the Royal School of Textiles will be running a workshop and a stall at the Open Day.

- **Eileen Patterson** and **Lynda Kelly** from County Down are amongst the highest rated spinners in Ireland. Both will be demonstrating yarn spinning, working two wheels.

- **Emma Porter** from Berlin was taught weaving by Marion Baur. She is travelling over 2. 000 kilometres to return to Flax Mill where she will be working one of the looms during the Open Day. Marion Baur has designed one of her bespoke warps of Irish linen and Emma will be weaving Alpaca yarn (the animals live less than half a mile from Flax-Mill and visitors will be able to view them) into the linen. She will be joined by two other weavers who work for Flax Mill.

- **Dozens of classic cars.** Two clubs of classic car owners will be visiting the Flax Mill Open Day with their beautifully restored and kept cars, amongst them a “De Lorean”.

- **Bruce Clark**, historian, journalist and son of Ireland’s “oldest family in linen” will be giving a talk on the division of labour in the linen industry. Last year, the old mill cottage couldn’t hold half of the people who wanted to hear Bruce speaking, this time; Marion Baur has asked interested visitors to announce their interest “up-front”. It is so large that the mill-owner has asked Bruce Clarke to speak twice if needed.

These are but a few of the highlights during the day. The evening gig will see a capacity-crowd of invited music-lovers.

The main acts on stage are all female with one of the most up-and coming singers/songwriters in Ireland, **Mandy Bingham** opening the show. She will be followed by **Isabel Neuenfeldt**. The famous singer/accordionist from Berlin is taking her first trip to Ireland – for the one concert only – and has asked to meet an Irish musician on stage. **Dearbhla Mc Taggart** from Dungiven is the one. The rising young star on the Irish harp will be featured as a special guest and the two artists are planning to play a piece together. This unique fusion has caused very big media-interest and will be filmed. Marion Baur is very excited about the fusion: “It has always been our aim to get artists from different backgrounds and of different styles Together – the huge stage- personality Isabel Neuenfeldt and the very young and talented Dearbhla Mc Taggart, that’s the most fascinating get-together on stage in the 22 year, long history of the Yard-Fest.”

Aoibheann Devlin, fiddle-wizard and harp-player from Toomebridge will finish the gig on stage. She is sure to set fire to the audience and has put an all-female band together for the occasion.

There will be men on stage: **Hermann Glaser-Baur** and one of the most known artists in Northern Ireland, **Willie Drennan** are going to share comparing - the “bard from Ballymena” will be sure to have a musical surprise or two in the back of his hand: “It is a great honour for Flax-Mill and indeed for the performing artists to have Willie doing the compare-job and I would bet any amount, he is going to play at some stage in-between”, says Marion Baur.

Ireland’s most famous session in the old gas-lit barn will follow the concert and is set to last well into “the wee hours”.

As every year, there will be superb home-made food, locally roasted coffee and many other treats for the many visitors all day and for the evening event.

The organisers urge people to book ahead, Marion Baur says: “The evening-event is as good as booked out; we can only take people who have announced their coming.” For details, please ring the mill: 02877742655 or send us a mail.

Last minute news:

>**Mark Cooper**, who is involved with the “Belfast Poets” and has recently won the National Poetry Competition, will be reading on stage!

>**Bernard S. Davis**, radio-presenter and photographer from Birmingham is bringing some of his famed black and white pictures, taken at last year’s Open Day and Yard-fest for an exhibition. “Gathering” is the title of the pictures; Flax Mill is going to use the mill cottage for an exhibition.

NOTES for editors:

Open Day and Yard Fest is a private event and the owner reserves the right to refuse admission.

There is no cover charge.

For the evening event, guests must have an invitation, no exceptions can be made.

Photographers, interviews, filming are welcome but must be pre-announced to Flax – Mill, again: No exception. For pre - arranged interviews with Isabel Neuenfeldt, Flax-Mill can provide a translator.

For all details, call Hermann at Flax Mill.