



The Delta Millers' Newsletter

The Gist of the Grist

Spring/Summer 2022

OPEN FOR 2022

We are pleased to announce that after being closed for two years due to COVID-19, we will be open this season, starting with a re-opening ceremony at 11 am on Saturday, May 21. We invite everyone to come out and show your support for the Old Stone Mill. At 1 pm on that day our millstones will start to turn, converting heritage Red Fife wheat into flour.

We've been very busy during the COVID-19 shutdown with a number of initiatives, including new interpretive signage, new displays, an improved mill shop, and better visitor flow inside the mill. We are maintaining our "no admission fee" policy to ensure full public access to this remarkable heritage site. Visitors will enter into a mill shop that now shows more heritage character – part of our effort to provide them with a "step back in time" heritage experience when they come to the mill. They can then take advantage of a free guided tour or do a self-guided tour.

You'll have to visit the mill to see everything that we've done. Visitor comfort has been improved with the addition of 10 box benches (built in 2020) throughout the mill – providing lots of sit down spots. One such spot is on the third floor by a table that will have copies of our heritage books that a visitor can peruse. Also on the third floor is a new Special Exhibit area, presently featuring a Mills & Stills exhibit. Just around the corner from that is a replica hopper-boy, an invention designed by Oliver Evans in the 1780s. Details of this exciting new addition to the mill can be found on page 4 of this newsletter.

Our "new" Blacksmith's Shop should be ready for public access sometime in June or July. We'll have a separate grand opening when the renovated shop is completed. More details about this can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.

We look forward to greeting visitors from far and wide this summer. Even if you've visited the mill before, you'll want to come out and have a full tour to see everything that's been done. We've put in a lot of work during the shutdown, now it's time for everyone to appreciate this remarkable piece of Canadian heritage.



Getting Ready To Grind

A view of our millstones pulled apart this spring in order to do some needed repairs. The runner stone is hanging on the crane with the bedstone sitting on the husk (foundation) surrounded by its wooden collar. These stones, when in operating position, are hidden under a wooden vat. But we have a second set of stones in our "Dressing the Millstones" display that shows the stones in this configuration so that visitors can learn about them.

GRAND-RE-OPENING

Saturday, May 21, 2022

Ceremonies at 11 am with the millstones starting to turn at 1 pm. See you there!

President's Letter

Well here we go! After being closed to the public for two years we are excited to host the grand re-opening of our Old Stone Mill on May 21, 2022.

At 11:00 a.m. we will start off with welcome speeches by some of our guests who will be joining us on this special occasion, followed by a celebration cake and refreshments. If you feel so inclined please dress in period costume to make the day more authentic to the 1810 Regency period when our mill was built.

Chris Wooding, our miller, will be on site at 1:00 p.m. to do a grinding demonstration and fresh flour will be bagged for sale. Guided tours will be provided to show off the many repairs and upgrades that have been done while we have been closed.

As our 1810 Mill continues to surprise us and tell her story, we are excited to show off all that has been accomplished during the shutdown. Thank you to our Exhibits and Cultural Integrity Team that consists of Katherine Killins, Anna Greenhorn and Ken Watson, who have worked hard to improve the heritage experience for visitors to the mill.

Thanks and congratulation to Jared Hayes for his new book, "From Mill to Museum: The Grassroots Preservation Effort for the Gristmill in Delta, Ontario, Canada", which details the early years of the Delta Mill Society. It will be available on our website and in our mill shop this summer.

We continue with our collections inventory process that was started in 2020. We have rehomed several items that were stored in the Drive Shed, we have done an inventory of items that are still being stored in Art Cowan's barn and we continue to inventory and document our artifact collection on the upper floor of the Old Town. Thanks to Collections Chair Sally Wanless for taking the lead on this project and to our collections staff, Rebecca Rothwell, for all her work last year and now continuing this year.

Events are starting to happen once again at the Old Town Hall. The season started at the Maple Syrup Festival with our Ginormous Used Book Sale, a partnership between the Delta Mill Society and the Rideau Lakes Public Library. Thanks to Liz Priebe, Moel Benoit, Lisa Martin and all the volunteers that made it all happen. Coming up we are hosting a Festival of Small Halls Concert on May 27th with Jessica Pearson and the East Wind; Mary's Merry Minstrels Concert will be held on June 18th and we are planning other events throughout the year. If you are interested in renting the Old Town Hall for an event please contact Liz Priebe.

Another project on the go is the conversion of the Drive Shed to the Blacksmith's Shop that will include displays and two forges. Thanks to Art Shaw for taking the lead on this project. Once it is ready for the public we will host another special opening celebration.

Thanks to our Treasurer, Sharon Okum, for keeping track of all our finances. It is a big job especially when dealing with payroll for our summer staff and our special projects.

So, if you haven't been in a while or have never been, please try to make a visit to our Old Stone Mill and be taken back to a special time in the history of our community.

Cathy Livingston, President, Delta Mill Society



An Avid Reader

Our very own Anna Greenhorn always arrives early to the Ginormous Book Sale in the Old Town Hall to pick up a few good reads.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Old Stone Mill is owned and operated by an all-volunteer group, the Delta Mill Society. We have no staff other than grant-supported summer students and depend on the generosity of time provided by our volunteers. Directors Liz Priebe and Lisa Martin are maintaining a list of potential volunteers, people who have expressed an interest in helping out. If you would like to volunteer, in any capacity, please contact us. You'll find volunteer information on our website (www.deltamill.org).

FROM MILL TO MUSEUM

The Grassroots Preservation Effort for the Gristmill in Delta, Ontario, Canada

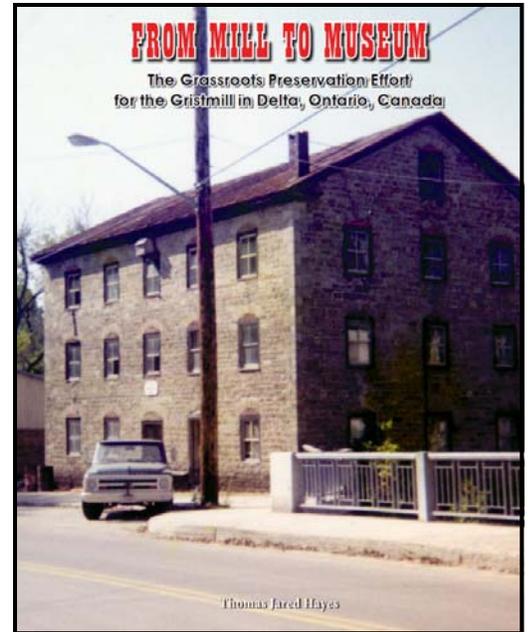
by Thomas "Jared" Hayes

The summer of 1973 was a season of high spirits in the village of Delta, Ontario, located 60 kilometres north of Kingston and 120 kilometres south of Ottawa. On July 21, hundreds of locals and visitors gathered in celebration of the successful preservation of the old stone gristmill standing in the center of downtown called the Delta Mill (Mill). Built between 1810 and 1812, it was the oldest remaining building in Delta and connected the past with the present. Since the rest of the village later developed around the Mill, most of the residents had developed a sentimental connection to the building and now viewed it as a local landmark. H.J. Mitchell, a federal civil servant, was the head speaker at this celebration:

"It is my pleasure today to represent the Honorable Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, who, unfortunately, could not be here at the commemoration of the Old Stone Mill. This pretty little town of Delta seems the perfect setting for this superb example of the architecture of early Upper Canada. Removed from the hyperactivity of the city, one can evoke images of pioneer days when the gristmill was a necessary function of the community which needed its wheat ground into flour."

The preservation effort for the Mill began in 1963 and ended in 1973, bringing the "pretty little town of Delta" into national discussions about Canadian heritage. In 1960, the final owner, Hastings Steele, reached the difficult decision to shutter the doors to the building. Although the Mill was in dismal condition after a long period of disrepair, the sentimental Steele could not watch it fall into ruin. On the night of August 23, 1963, he met with four fellow preservation enthusiasts at the Mill: Albert Fry of Soperton, Elizabeth Robinson of Toronto, Mildred Sweet of Delta, and Robert Tuck of Chicago. While not permanent residents of Delta or the surrounding area, both Robinson and Tuck spent most of their summers in the area as cottagers. After thoughtful consideration, his solution for preserving the Mill was to deed it to the four preservationists to hold it in trust on behalf of the citizens of Delta. This transfer of ownership was on the condition that the building be transitioned from a mill into a museum to teach visitors about milling and local entrepreneurship.

Soon afterwards, the preservationists formed the Delta Mill Society (founded in 1963 and incorporated in 1972) to better focus their efforts to accomplish this monumental task. The high costs associated with the restoration necessitated the creation of a fundraising campaign, which was originally slow to reach its goal of \$25,000. During their search for funding, the preservationists contacted the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), which recommended the designation of the Mill as a National Historic Site to Minister Chrétien, for architectural and historical reasons. Chrétien was the Minister responsible for the HSMBC and he quickly offered full approval. The widespread attention surrounding the Mill after its designation attracted enough government grants and public donations to cover the costs of the restoration, culminating in a grand celebration to mark its successful preservation in 1973. Not only was the survival of the Mill assured, but the restoration was also far enough along for the preservationists to provide the attendees with tours of the building on the day of the grand celebration, fulfilling their original agreement with Steele. For the full story on the preservation of the Mill, you can read my new book, *"From Mill to Museum: The Grassroots Preservation Effort for the Gristmill in Delta, Ontario, Canada"*. A printed version will be available for sale at the Mill this summer and a PDF of the book will be available for free on the Delta Mill Society website. Thank you for reading.



Our Hopper-Boy

In the fall of 2019, Dustin Smith visited the Old Stone Mill. He was in the Heritage Carpentry and Joinery program at Algonquin College and he was in search of a heritage carpentry project. Fortunately for us, Anna Greenhorn happened to be at the mill. The exhibits committee had already identified a significant want for the Old Stone Mill, a hopper-boy. When Anna explained what a hopper-boy was, Dustin took it on as his heritage project, to build a wooden machine designed almost 250 years ago.

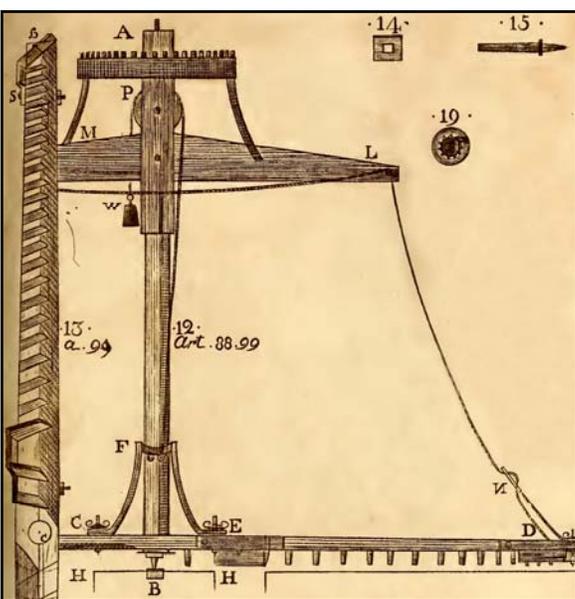
Back in the 1780s, American inventor Oliver Evans came up with the design for a machine to cool and dry the hot and sticky flour that came from the millstones. Formerly that flour was manually raked out by a person, usually a boy, known as a hopper boy. Evans came up with an ingenious design to mechanize that job, a rotating arm with an attached set of paddles that would slowly (less than 4 rpm) turn in a circle, the flour going from the outer edge to a hole in the floor near the centre of the hopper-boy where it would drop into a chute leading to the bolter on the floor below. By the time the flour reached the centre, it was cool and dry, ready to be bolted.

A hopper-boy, when built to Evans' original specifications, is a complex build. Dustin wanted to build it following the exact Evans' design, the only difference being that ours would be 8 feet long, as opposed to the original 12 to 14 foot long hopper-boy, in order to fit in the space we have available and make it a manageable carpentry project. COVID-19 and the complex nature of building an authentic replica caused delays. The project got back on track last fall with Art Shaw helping to solve some carpentry problems and agreeing to do the required metal work and assist with installation.



Replica Hopper-boy

Art Shaw (left) and Dustin Smith dry fit the hopper-boy



Oliver Evans' Hopper-boy design

This is a diagram of a hopper-boy from Oliver Evans' 1795 book. In addition to the replica, we will have an interpretation panel explaining exactly how it worked.



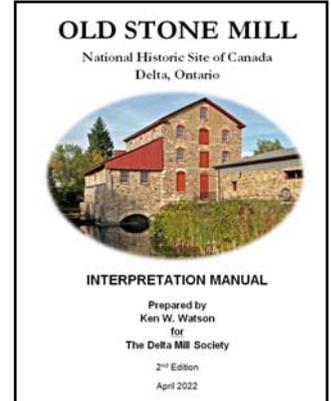
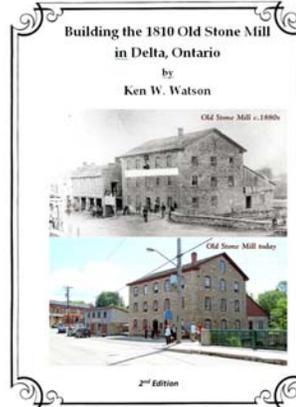
A Complex Build

Dustin followed Evans' specifications which include the shape, orientation and spacing of the paddles on each side of the arm of the hopper-boy. These paddles are friction fit into the arm (no nails or glue) since they are designed to be easily replaced. The outer and inner paddles can be switched in orientation depending on the miller's needs (the reason for the extra slots on the arm). It's an ingenious design that helped to mechanize the milling process and reduce costs.

Our Heritage Focus

The Delta Mill Society are the custodians of a remarkable piece of Canadian heritage, a National Historic Site with a heritage building on its original landscape. The 1810 mill is the oldest building still standing in its original form in this region. In 1963, when mill owner Hastings Steele deeded the mill to four trustees, his wish was that it become a museum of milling technology. When the DMS incorporated in 1972, our "objects" were to preserve and present the Old Stone Mill. The process of interpreting the mill itself took off in 2004 under curator Paul George, who worked at focusing interpretation on the history of the mill. Most of the interpretation work at that time was done on the first floor of the mill. It was very well thought out and still stands the test of time today.

In 2017 the heritage interpretation committee looked at the mill in its entirety and developed tour flow, exhibits and signage that spoke to the design and use of the mill, particularly as an Oliver Evans' automatic mill. Visitors to the mill in 2022 will see the results of that work. We're now interpreting the mill from top to bottom, following the process flow from raw grain to fine flour as it would have been done in the early 1800s. This is in addition to our interpretation that talks about the chronology of mill, the owners through the years, and of the mill's significance to the growth of Delta and surrounding area.



NEW FOR 2022

Ken has created a 2nd edition of both his "Building the 1810 Old Stone Mill" book and the Mill's interpretation manual. Both are available as free PDFs on the history page of our website. A printed version of the book will be also available for sale in the mill shop this summer.

The Blacksmith's Shop Project

We are now on the home stretch of renovating the Blacksmith's Shop. As of this writing, the old forge has been dismantled and a new one is being constructed. Work on the large display cabinet is progressing well and our vision of a place where the public can learn about the heritage art of blacksmithing is becoming a reality.

The "new" Blacksmith's Shop will have both a main forge and a training forge. There will now be adequate space for the public to watch and learn how blacksmithing is done. A large display cabinet and interpretive signage will speak to this heritage art, including its relationship to the 1810 Old Stone Mill.

We don't yet have a public opening date. The final work has to be approved by Township building officials and the new forge has to be fine tuned to make sure it is working as it should.

Once that is done we'll set an opening date, invite local blacksmiths for a "hammer-in" of the new forge and welcome the general public to view the result of over a year of intensive work.

Thanks again to Art Shaw for taking on the mammoth job of volunteer project manager—it could not have been done without Art at the helm.



Many Hands Make Light Work

Art put out the call and over a dozen volunteers answered, gathering on a cool end of February day to do the mammoth job of clearing out half the Drive Shed of heavy artifacts in order to allow construction to proceed on the "new" public friendly Blacksmith's Shop which will occupy half of the main floor of the building. Given the amount of material to be moved, Art figured it would be an all-day job. But with the wonderful volunteer turnout, the job was done by noon.

2022 Special Events

(see www.deltamill.org for more details and updates)

OLD STONE MILL 2022 Milling Schedule (starting at 1 pm)

Day	Date
Saturday	May 21
Saturday	June 4
Saturday	June 18
Saturday	July 2
Saturday	July 16
Saturday	July 30
Saturday	August 13
Saturday	August 20
Saturday	September 3
Saturday	September 24

FESTIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET Saturday, November 19

Presently in the planning stages, the market will feature handmade craft vendors and a canteen.

DELTA'S YULETIDE MAGIC November-December

Celebrating the Season (lights in Lower Beverley Lake Park) has been permanently closed. However, many of the lights and decorations are being moved into the village to create a new Christmas season display, Delta's Yuletide Magic. We'll have more details in the next newsletter.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Monday, June 20, 11 am Old Town Hall

We will have a business AGM starting at 11 am on Monday, June 20, followed by a luncheon.

Everyone is welcome!!

DELTA FAIR Thurs-Sun, July 21-24

The Old Stone Mill will be open as Delta hosts the 192nd annual Delta Fair. Lots of activities throughout Delta—come and celebrate one of Ontario's oldest fairs—see www.deltafair.com

DELTA HARVEST FESTIVAL Saturday, September 24

The Delta Harvest Festival will celebrate the bounty of the fall harvest. We'll have full details in our next newsletter.

SEASON OPENING Saturday, May 21

Grand re-opening of the mill at 11 am. Milling at 1 p.m.

The mill will be open for tours from 10 am to 5 pm daily until Labour Day.

Leeds Heritage Day Saturday, May 28

The Old Stone Mill and many other area museums will be open as part of Leeds Heritage Day.

MUSIC at the Old Town Hall

Friday, May 27, 7:30 pm—Festival of Small Halls presents *Jessica Pearson & The East Wind*.

Saturday, June 18, 7:30 pm—*Mary's Merry Minstrels*

Friday, October 7, 7:30 pm—Festival of Small Halls—*artist TBD*.

Friday, December 10—Delta's Yuletide Magic Concert—*artist TBD*

More Events & Event Updates

We're always working on new things including more music at the Old Town Hall. We'll have information about these, as well as updates on our current events, on the events page of our website. We also announce each of these events on our Facebook page. See:

www.deltamill.org or www.facebook.com/DeltaMill/