



The Delta Millers' Newsletter

The Gist of the Grist

Spring/Summer 2025

THE END OF AN ERA and RENEWAL

It is with deep sadness that we note the passing of Anna Greenhorn on April 3. Anna was a stalwart of the Delta Mill Society for over 52 years. You'll find a tribute to Anna later in this newsletter. But, also in April, the board voted to put our young Office and Collections Manager, Rebecca Rothwell, onto permanent employment status (previously under contract). This is a benefactor supported position, so it doesn't impact on the finances of the Delta Mill Society. Rebecca, who started in this position on October 1, 2024, is still on the very long learning curve. But, as I noted to the board, she's now indispensable to our large operation.

We've been extremely busy since the last newsletter with lots of things happening. As Rebecca has found out, we're as busy in the winter as we are in the summer. The DMS has many moving parts including administration where behind-the-scenes work includes accounting, grant applications and compliance, summer staffing advertising, inventory, contracts, rental agreements, CRA compliance and much more. While we have monthly board meetings, except for December, the bulk of our work is done outside of those meetings, the daily work needed to keep the DMS running.

In December, an important job was the grant applications to Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) and Young Canada Works (YCW), the two summer staff grant programs that we use. We had Rebecca at the office computer doing the on-line applications with the old folk (Sharon & Ken) looking on. Ken prepares the applications in advance, but they have to be entered into the appropriate spots in on-line systems that change a bit each year. This year our CSJ application went smoothly but we ran into issues with YCW, with the government system



Anna Greenhorn
1929-2025

producing an error partway through the application process (always a different spot – so no predicting it). This happened four times over two days before we switched from Google Chrome to MS Edge which solved the problem. I've noticed this with other federal systems, security improvements sometimes cause an issue with Chrome. In the end our YCW application was successfully submitted.

In January we start advertising for summer students using our website, Facebook, the Delta Pilot and employment systems such as the KEYS job board. We also had Rebecca directly contact the history departments of Queen's, Carleton and the University of Ottawa to let them know we offer jobs summer as museum interpreters. We prefer university students who are mature and can gain an understanding of the role they play as representatives of a National Historic Site of Canada. University students are also available for our full summer season. We can and do hire high

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday, June 16, 2025
11 am at the Old Town Hall

school students. We are still evaluating applications for our final two positions as of this writing, so it is uncertain what we will end up with. Staffing selection is done by our summer student selection team headed up by Katherine Killins. Applications are reviewed and potentially suitable candidates are then interviewed.

Also in January we start our accounting review process, including working out how each of our operational centres – Old Stone Mill, Old Town Hall and Blacksmiths Shop – performed in terms of net revenue. Plus the general accounting which is a bit of a process that includes a third-party review. While Rebecca is a university graduate (BSc in Geology from Queen's), how business accounting is done was brand new for her. This has occupied much of her time including our move to a new system using Excel to more efficiently pre-process our accounts before the information is entered into our accounting program. I think Rebecca may be getting tired of my "by this time next year" comments as she climbs that steep learning curve – but it's true – what seems like a lot of work now will become, this time next year, less (more efficient) work as these routines become second nature to her.

Future Proofing the Delta Mill Society

A job I tasked Rebecca with last fall was to do up procedure guides for everything we do – to document these procedures on paper so that we have a detailed record of how to do each procedure – and there are dozens of those, mostly related to things that Treasurer Sharon Okum does. Rebecca's main role is that of Treasurer's Assistant. Rebecca has also been compiling a yearly deadline list (payment schedules, application deadline dates, etc.) to make sure nothing falls through the cracks. It's part of a strategy I've implemented to future-proof the Delta Mill Society. To put the need for this in perspective, I use "what would happen to the DMS if either Sharon or myself got run over by a truck" – detailed procedure guides will be invaluable in getting a new person up to speed. They also help us since some of these procedures are only done once a year (i.e. grant applications) and you have to re-learn these systems.

In terms of future proofing, a big project that I tasked Rebecca with was to organize our move from Bell internet and telephone to WTC using their fibre line in Delta. This was a move we started last spring (2024) but then it got

stalled since there were many complications. One complication was our fire monitoring system in the Old Stone Mill which could not be put on VOIP telephone (which is the only type WTC offers). That was solved by putting it onto a cell system which the fire monitoring company prefers. It's the system used when we put in fire monitoring into the Old Town Hall in 2022, but it was more complex for the mill. Rebecca and Moel worked this out and we had that job done in January in preparation for the move to WTC.

In December, I moved our website from Bell to a new hosting service which gave us a much larger website, one with security (https) which Bell didn't offer, and which was much less expensive than Bell. In terms of future proofing, in addition to the extra capacity (which I've yet to take advantage of), it will allow a future move to a template site. Our current site is an older style custom site since one of the things I do is build websites, but if I wasn't able to do it, the site could be changed to a template site that anyone could do. We're not doing that anytime soon since that would be a very large project all on its own and it isn't needed at this time.

The move to WTC ended up being done in two stages. The Old Town Hall was done in January and it was an easy installation. But the mill was a different beast since an absolute requirement on our part was to have the lines hidden so as not to mar the heritage appearance of the Old Stone Mill. As a side note, we can thank Anna for fixing up that problem in the pre-restoration era (pre-1999) when we had hydro and telephone conduits on the outside wall of the mill. Anna insisted these be hidden and underground conduits were used. In January, when WTC looked at it, it appeared to be a challenge. We decided to wait for warmer weather and scheduled the mill install for April.



Installing high speed fibre into the Old Town Hall

In April, Moel did some pre-install investigation since it was thought that the fibre line would have to be taken through the Blacksmith Shop and from there to the mill. WTC had suggested taking the cable through the main floor of the mill but my requirement was to keep the cable hidden and route it under the mill and into the mill shop. Moel located the conduit that led from the Blacksmith Shop and into the "basement" of the mill, including a second empty conduit. He got those set up to use. Under the mill was a bit of a trick since the base of the mill follows the bedrock profile, so there is only a few feet of clearance at the north end under the mill shop. Moel got poly pipe to put the fibre cable into set up for that part of the run.

On the installation day, Rebecca, Moel and myself went around with WTC looking at how it could be done. While possible, the phrase "there has to be an easier way" was used a lot. I took one of the installers under the mill to show him the route – easier for me to do that, I'm shorter than Moel :-). As we went back and forth on options, it was noticed that the Bell telephone conduit on the pole by the bridge was open. It had our previous, no longer needed, phone line going right into the mill shop. WTC has expertise in fishing lines through conduits, so problem solved. Moel then headed off to help with the book sale setup that was happening that day in the Old Town Hall, I moved on to other jobs and Rebecca stayed with the WTC installers to oversee the installation of the required equipment in the mill shop.

We now have high-speed internet in both the Old Town Hall and the Old Stone Mill. In addition to serving our visitors and our needs (i.e. reliable internet for the Square credit card processing system we use in the mill shop) it will allow future digital opportunities. The Government of Ontario is now requiring museums to have a "digital strategy" as a prerequisite for their Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG) grant. We don't qualify anymore for CMOG and so we only get \$1,148 every year from the overly complicated Heritage Organization Development Grant (HODG) program, our only support from Ontario. But the foundation of any

digital strategy is reliable high-speed internet, which we now have.

Financial Support

While the finances of the Delta Mill Society are backstopped by a benefactor, a goal is to try to be as sustainable as we can be. The reality today is that this is not possible though normal fundraising, those days are long past (I've detailed why this is in previous newsletters). So another avenue we are now pursuing is to solicit financial help from foundations. Gus Brown has kindly been helping us with this. We've prepared a solicitation letter and Rebecca has sent this off to 50 different foundations. We're asking for \$40,000 which is the overall hole in our budget (even with all our grants, including our Township of Rideau Lakes community grant).

We don't expect to get that amount but do hope that perhaps we'll get \$5K here and \$5K there. This is not the ideal time of year to do this, so expectations are low. The fall is better, but doing it now will hopefully put us on those foundations radar and set us up for some positive results when we repeat this round of requests this fall.

In terms of general grant support, we also face a problem that most grants available from government are project specific (you must have a project) which doesn't help us. We need operational support, staffing funding shortfalls, insurance (now at \$20,000 per year), utilities, building maintenance and the like.

This is just a small snapshot of what happens behind the scenes, including what is required to have a smiling young face say "welcome to the Old Stone Mill" as a visitor is greeted by our summer staff on any day between the May Long weekend and Labour Day.

Events

November saw our annual Holiday Craft Fair and in December we hosted a birthday celebration for Anna Greenhorn who had just turned 95. We also held our very popular Christmas Concert in the Old Town Hall, a wonderful event featuring local musicians. Thanks to Liz and her helpers for that. Moel and his team of helpers also had the Old Stone Mill beautifully lit up from mid-November to early January.

The Delta Maple Syrup Festival in April was very busy despite the cooler weather. We had a few hundred

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It's membership renewal time. A membership form has been included. Your support of the Delta Mill Society is both needed and much appreciated. If you've lost your form or if someone new wishes to join, our membership/donation form is on our website.





Here we see Mike Armstrong watching Megan Carter striking hot metal with sparks shooting out in a flat trajectory. We have seated visitors wear safety glasses during this procedure. If you're viewing this in a PDF, zoom in to see the effect.

visitors during our Saturday opening of the Old Stone Mill. We had a good crowd watching our milling demonstration done by our farmer and miller Chris Wooding with volunteer helper Braeden Elliott. The Blacksmith Shop was busy with Megan Carter and Mike Armstrong hammering away and Art Shaw helping to explain the process to visitors. Our used book sale, which we do jointly with the Rideau Lakes Public Library (we share the proceeds 50:50) was the best ever. It's a mammoth undertaking, organized by Liz (DMS) and Vicki (RLPL) with many volunteers helping out with the set-up and tear-down (a total of 39 this year by Liz's count).

April also saw a Celebration of Life for Anna Greenhorn in the Old Town Hall. As expected, this created a traffic issue in Delta, with hundreds of people attending. Anna touched a lot of people. Anna's two main loves, outside of family, were the Old Stone Mill and the library. A life-long reader, Anna was also a fast reader, she could consume a book in a day. Liz and Vicki came up with the idea of holding a guessing game for how many books Anna had read in her lifetime with a reward of a library tote bag and a gift certificate for a 1 kg bag of Old Stone Mill Red Fife flour. The number they came up with was 7,523. This was done both at Anna's Celebration of Life and at the book sale.

There are lots of events are happening this summer, including a new Summer Solstice Event in Delta (June 21 – mark your calendars) and Doors Open Rideau Lakes (August 16 & 17) when in addition to our regular milling

and blacksmithing demonstrations, we plan to have a quilt display in the Old Stone Mill and a Makers Market in the Old Town Hall. See the events page on our website (www.deltamill.org/events.html) and follow us on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/DeltaMill) where you can always find the latest information.

Maple Syrup Factory

We've always had an issue with the Maple Syrup Factory, a long abandoned ugly cement block building adjacent to the Old Town Hall. The former owner, Mario, would let it go into tax arrears and then appear at the last minute to pay those. At one point he put it up for sale simply to avoid the township declaring him in default. He also owned the Russell Building which was declared a public danger in 2019 as it literally started to fall apart. Mario didn't do the required repairs and it ended up in the township's hands and had to be demolished.

The same thing has happened with the Maple Syrup Factory. Former TRL CAO Mike Dwyer provided a recommendation to council that the township acquire the Maple Syrup Factory from Mario (who was in arrears both on taxes and on the required maintenance to prevent it from becoming a public danger). It was a very well reasoned argument that council accepted – which was a very good decision on their part.

The township completed all the required environmental studies last year to show that there were no



Part of the volunteer crew setting up the book sale in the Old Town Hall with Moel on the left and Liz in the far background. In total, 39 volunteers helped during the setup, the event and the subsequent cleanup.

dangerous chemicals that had leached into the soil around or under the building. With those done, it cleared the way for building demolition. While we (Delta Mill Society) asked the township that we be kept in the loop on this, we haven't been, we learn about what's happening via social media and word of mouth.

We are quite literally the attached neighbour to the Maple Syrup Factory – part of the factory is physically attached to the Old Town Hall. This has caused us problems over the years including water infiltration into the Old Town Hall and vandalism. The township is highly aware of this issue and of their responsibility to ensure that the demolition does not negatively impact the Old Town Hall. The township is also responsible to do repairs to any damage that this attachment has caused. So we assume that it will all be properly done.

But we also have another big issue that the demolition could help solve, the issue of parking for the Old Town Hall. We've always had an issue with this given the limited parking space and the safety issue with the blind corner leading to/from Lower Beverley Lake Park. When we hold an event in the Old Town Hall, particularly a community event such as a concert or play, parking becomes a major issue. We've lobbied the township to convert the area of the Maple Syrup Factory into an off-street parking area to eliminate this problem. That apparently is not going to happen, so we'll continue that lobby once the Maple Syrup Factory is gone.

On a heritage note, these demolitions continue to improve the heritage character of Delta. The demolition of the Russell Building restored the view of the Old Stone Mill. I live 30 minutes away from Delta and drive in via



Heritage View Restored

The image on the left is from 2018 (Google streetview) showing how the Russell Building blocked the view of the Old Stone Mill. The right photo from 2020 shows the heritage view restored after the building was demolished in 2019.

King Street on the north side of the village. Every time I drive in, I see the spectacular view of the Old Stone Mill that was previously hidden by the Russell Building. It always reminds me of the reasons we do all this volunteer work to protect and present the Old Stone Mill – the mill is a national treasure and now it stands out as a feature building in the village.

The same will happen once the Maple Syrup Factory is demolished; the original view of the Old Town Hall will be restored as a feature heritage building in Delta. It is these bit-by-bit changes that are dramatically improving the heritage character of Delta, which has both heritage and economic benefits to the village and to the Township of Rideau Lakes.



The left photo, taken during the 2025 used book sale, shows the Maple Syrup Factory (ugly white building) which is literally attached to the Old Town Hall. The photo on right is a colorized version done by Glen Russell of a c.1910 photo showing what we hope to return to, the Old Town Hall, which was built in 1879/80, as a feature heritage building in Delta. The cars also show our other problem, lack of off-street parking for the Old Town Hall which is an issue during community events.

Exhibits

I will close with a few notes about a couple of planned new exhibits.

Wheat Field: We plan to plant a small wheat field on part of the Russell Greenspace in the area by the fence line on top of the old Russell Building foundation. Chris Wooding our miller, operates an organic farm off of Lower Oak Leaf Road (Ironwood Organics). He grows the heritage Red Fife wheat that we mill into flour and he will be helping us with this exhibit. Last year we tried growing wheat in small planters in the mill, which didn't really work out. So we went back to an original idea of having an actual field. It will be an area about 10 feet wide by 40 feet long. It will quite literally be living history, people will be able to see heritage wheat growing. We'll tie that in with our milling of that wheat (the main story of the mill) and also with the agricultural display we have on the 2nd floor of the mill.

We were uncertain about the amount of available soil, but once the ground had thawed Chris probed it with a device he has that measures the depth and compaction of soil. It is generally okay, suitable to be rototilled and suitable for proper Red Fife wheat root development. Red Fife, as a heritage wheat, grows taller than modern high yield wheat, it should grow to about the height of the fence line. It will be wonderful for people, particularly youth, to see actual wheat growing and then to see how that wheat is processed into flour in the mill. Chris will be setting up and seeding the field, Rebecca will oversee maintaining it.

Photo Exhibit: We also plan to swap out our Mills & Stills exhibit, currently in our special exhibit space on the 3rd floor of the mill, with a new exhibit featuring enhanced, enlarged and colourized versions of the few

historic black and white photos we have of the mill dating back to the early 1870s. This past winter I helped Glen Russell with a Rideau Canal exhibit he was creating on behalf of the Elgin and Area Heritage Society. For anyone who went to see the Pennock photo exhibit created by Glen and on display at the Red Brick Schoolhouse last summer, you'll know the spectacular results that Glen can achieve, starting with an original black and white image and ending up with an enhanced colourized version.

As a return favour, I asked Glen if he could do the same with some of the old photos we have of the Old Stone Mill, the Old Town Hall and the Jubilee Block. While I have similar digital enlarging and enhancing skills to Glen, I have no skills at colourizing, it's just something I've yet to learn how to do. Glen is a master at this and the results are amazing. Two displays are planned, one with period photos of the mill and one featuring restoration photos, which I'm enlarging and enhancing (most are already in colour).

I don't know at this time when this exhibit will be ready – other priorities (such as keeping the DMS going) have been getting in the way – but, for sure sometime this summer. Also this summer, the Rideau Canal lockstations heritage photos will be on display at the Red Brick Schoolhouse in Elgin, planned for weekends in July and August. I've seen what the digital panels look like, it will be a "must see" for anyone with any sort of interest in the Rideau Canal (photos range from 1865 to 1930).

To close, as Anna would say, it's "onward and upward" in terms of DMS activities. Anna ended every phone call with a bright "toodle-oo". So, in memory of Anna – toodle-oo!

- Ken Watson, President, The Delta Mill Society



This c.1930 photo shows the before and after results of enhancement and colourizing by Glen Russell.

REMEMBERING ANNA GREENHORN

by Ken Watson

Ed note: this is a slightly expanded version of an article I wrote for the June/July 2025 edition of the Delta Pilot.

Anna passed away peacefully on April 3, 2025. She'd celebrated her 95th birthday in December 2024, including a large gathering in the Old Town Hall. As Anna used to say "I'm 29 I was born in 1929".

Anna was a volunteer with the Delta Mill Society for 52 years. Anna's incredibly positive attitude to life was a driving force for the Delta Mill Society. Her emails would often end with "onward and upward" – there was no problem that we (the Delta Mill Society) could not overcome. The DMS has faced a lot of problems over the years and has overcome them all – much due to that positive can-do attitude.

Anna joined the Delta Mill Society after meeting Myrla Saunders who asked her to volunteer with the DMS. In Anna's own words "Initially I thought I would be baking cookies or something alike but by the second meeting I was already appointed as the Treasurer." Clearly the board recognized Anna's many abilities – there was no job she couldn't tackle and do well. After serving as Treasurer, she became the Secretary of the DMS, a position she held for many years. Board meetings were held at her house in Philipsville and were always fun to attend.

Anna was a natural communicator and loved telling the stories of the mill. She became the lead oral interpreter for the DMS including ensuring that our summer students properly presented the mill to the visiting public. On an early visit to the mill she fell in love with the five-sided ridge pole, handmade from a single piece of local white pine. It's a Dutch architectural design. There are also English wind braces and German queen beams and Anna wove this information into a story of the architecture from these three countries working together in harmony. To quote Anna about the English wind braces against the Dutch ridge pole, "The Dutch people could just as well have said 'you English keep your hands off our Dutch architecture', but they didn't and look how it turned out". It's just one example of how Anna could take what could be a dry delivery of facts and make it into an interesting story that visitors will remember. It's what we strive for in mill interpretation – Anna was certainly one of the best at that.



Anna about to cut the cake (made by Katherine Killins) at a public celebration of her 95th birthday in December 2024.

On a personal note, I started to volunteer with the DMS in 1997 by building a website for the association. My initial contact was Peggy Fry, but I soon got to know Anna. It was Anna who sweet-talked me onto the board in 2001. One of Anna's abilities was that she could talk anyone into doing anything – how can you say no to Anna? Except I did. I initially declined since at the time I was attending too many meetings with my other volunteer work. Anna had a solution for that "Oh Ken, you don't have to attend meetings, but we need your skill



This photo, taken at a socially distanced DMS board meeting during COVID in November 2020, shows how Anna, even masked, could express her joy. Anna's favourite colour was red and her favourite bird was a cardinal—note that she has a cardinal brooch affixed to her mask.

sets on the board". Anna and I called this "don't have to attend meetings" the "Watson Clause". Of course, that lasted less than a few months. When there were issues of quorum in the winter due to driving conditions, I said I could attend to ensure quorum. That was it for me – I was now attending every DMS meeting.

DMS meetings while Anna was Secretary were held at Anna's house in Philippsville. These were by far the best board meetings I have ever attended, sitting around Anna's dining room table with a good group of people. Anna would always have a plate or two of "nibblies", plus fresh brewed coffee. I looked forward to attending each meeting.

Anna kept the board on track with our main mission to protect and present the Old Stone Mill. It was in the mid-2000s, after we completed the massive restoration of the mill (1999-2003) that Anna reminded the board that a goal of the DMS was to have the mill operating by its 200th anniversary in 2010. Several of the board members, including myself, weren't aware of that goal (set before my time) – so after long discussions over several meetings about what was meant by "operating", it was concluded that it meant the ability to produce flour using period French burrstones. We were very fortunate at the time to have a professional curator, Paul George, who was managing our Trillium grant

programs. Paul started the search and three years later we ended up purchasing the millstones and bolter you can see in the mill today. Paul arranged for the installation of these (a big project) and we were grinding Red Fife wheat in October 2010, our 200th anniversary celebration year. And we can thank Anna for that initiative.

While I could go on (and on) about Anna, I'll close here with a final note that while Anna will live on in our hearts and minds, she will also live on in video on the Internet. In 2018, we had one of our summer students, Nick, do videos of Anna telling some of her stories. They are a little bit rough (Nick's first time) but I edited these and posted them to YouTube in 2019. You can see them on our website in the Photos section (www.deltamill.org/photos.html). You'll see a listing of "Anna Explains" videos. It is best to click on the YouTube link on the video on our website to see them in full resolution on YouTube. My personal favourite is "Buster the Rat" since it is so typical Anna, but they are all fun to watch. They capture Anna in her element as a storyteller.

Anna will of course be featured on our donor board display in the mill and we are looking at the best way to permanently feature a photo I took a few years ago of Anna on a mill bench at Harvest Festival with that infectious smile of hers – just a look of Anna joy and welcome.



History of the Mill Part 4 – The Delta Mill Society's Early Years



This early 1960s photo of the mill shows one of the many problems, a crack extending almost bottom to top along the south wall of the mill.

In 1960, mill owner Hastings Steele closed the mill. At this point he was just operating it as a store – flour, feed and saw milling had ceased prior to that. As recounted in our Fall 2024 newsletter, in 1961 the Ministry of Natural Resources took over water control, acquiring ownership of the mill pond, bywash and turbine hall. In 1962 they built a stoplog dam upstream of the bridge, removing water control from the mill. In 1963 they demolished the old stone bridge (built c.1870) and replaced it with the current concrete bridge.

Hastings, who lived in a house (since demolished) just across the millpond from the mill, was now left with just the mill which was in rough shape. There were some in Delta who considered it an eyesore and wanted it torn down. But it represented an important part of Delta and Canadian national history, it was a survivor of a now bygone age and Hastings didn't want to see it torn down. A small group of individuals started to talk with Hastings about how to save the mill. Hastings had a vision of the mill as a museum of milling technology, something that would show future generations what the mill represented in the eras it operated.

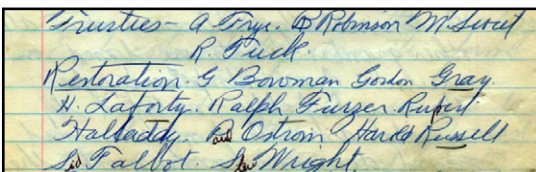
A deal was reached in 1963 and on August 28 Hastings signed the deed for the mill over to four trustees; Elizabeth Robinson, Mildred Sweet, Albert Frye and Robert Tuck. They formed the initial core of the Delta Mill Society. It's to be noted that not all these trustees were local to Delta. Then, as now, the Delta Mill Society has attracted heritage people from outside of Delta due to the national significance of the mill to Canada.

We have a minute book from 1964 which shows that dozens of volunteers were now involved in helping to save the mill. The Society held its first public meeting in September 1964. It started off with the singing of our national anthem and then moved on to presentations and

business. The business was to form working committees, including restoration, finance, area park, publicity & research, and museum. Several of the names on those committees will be familiar to those in Delta today; Gray, Russell, Halladay, Morris, Laforty, Green, Coon, and many more – over 40 names show up on these committees.

The Delta Mill Society had already reached out to Douglas R. Hough, Curator of Buildings and Machinery at Upper Canada Village, for professional advice on how to restore the building. Hough's October 1964 Phase 1 plan had 8 steps, and it indicated the poor condition of the mill. It included items such as strengthening the foundation, using steel rods and plates to prevent the walls from buckling and rebuilding the arches over the tailraces. He also noted the "urgent need" for a new roof using heavy duty cedar shingles as well as the need to fix all the windows.

To follow Hough's recommendations was going to be expensive and the issue became financing but with Canada's Centennial coming up there was a potential opportunity for a Centennial Grant which was one of the September 1964 presentations. The Township of Bastard and South-Burgess was also involved and although they didn't offer any money, there

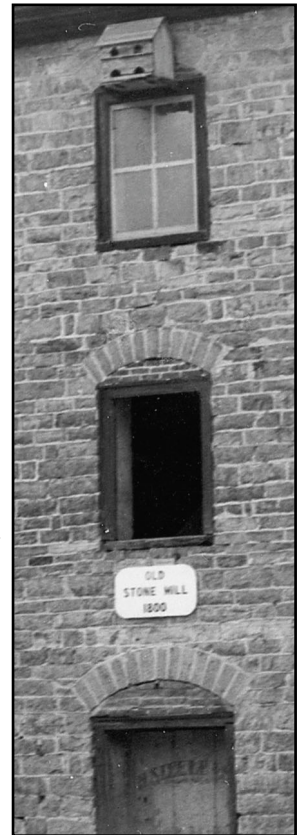


An extract from the 1964 minute book showing the trustees and the members restoration committee.

were council members on all the committees, and the township hosted several of the committee meetings.

Getting financial support was a main theme in this period as was the work that needed to be done.

While the DMS back then was volunteer rich, it was cash poor. In July 1965, an appraiser



In this crop of a c.1970 photo, the brick tympanums over the 2 x 2 pane windows can be seen as well as the birdhouse (which we still have). We also see that the DMS believed at this time that the mill had been built in 1800.

estimated restoration costs would be \$17,000 (\$170,000 in 2025\$). It was noted that this shut down the whole restoration project since township council was not interested and Centennial funding (which would have come via the township) was never received. Finances continued to be tight, in the early 1970s the DMS's bank balance was \$400 – the DMS was still struggling to find funding. During this period the four trustees continued to hold title to the mill while work was done to find a solution to the financial issue. But finances didn't hold the DMS back from moving forward.

National Historic Site Status

A momentous accomplishment of the DMS in this early period was obtaining National Historic Site (NHS) status for the Old Stone Mill. NHS status is not easy to come by, it must be shown that a heritage site has national significance. The only other NHS in the Township of Rideau Lakes is the Rideau Canal. Work towards this started in the mid-1960s, with the Commemorative Integrity Statement for the Old Stone Mill written in January 1969 and NHS designation being given in February 1970 by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC). The mill received its plaque in a public ceremony in 1973.



This mid-1960s photo of the west side of the mill shows the sorry state of the turbine hall and the rusting galvanized steel roof of the mill. The sawmill, which was attached to the mill, has been mostly removed by this time, just a bit of the flooring remained.



National pride was on display as an audience, in the area of today's Millstream Park, listened to speeches during the July 21, 1973 NHS plaquing of the Old Stone Mill. A portion of the first floor of the mill was opened to the public on that day.

1812 stone mill in Ontario, an architectural gem that speaks directly to the pioneer development of Eastern Ontario. We maintain the mill in a state of "Commemorative Integrity" which is a moral requirement of NHS status. It is to be noted that NHS status does not mean federal funding for the mill. That remains a significant issue in Canada since privately owned NHSs have no pool of funding they can tap into, with the sole exception of the Parks Canada cost sharing program for restoration work which will be described in the next newsletter.

As a brief aside, NHS designation is based on the HSMBC minutes – so our designation date is 1970. But you'll see 1973 in some spots, since our plaquing ceremony was held in 1973. Plaquing is not designation, but it is quite commonly confused as a designation date. As a further aside, our youngest board member, Jared Hayes, did his Masters of History thesis on the early years of the Delta Mill Society. Part of his research involved digging up the HSMBC minutes which had been signed by Dr. Christina Cameron. Since I happen to know Dr. Cameron from my volunteer work on the Rideau Canal (her career was with Parks Canada), I was able to invite her over to the mill in 2020 to meet Jared. I also

In a nutshell, the NHS status was awarded to the mill since it is: a) one of the oldest surviving mills in Ontario; b) a fine example of early Canadian architecture and c) a reminder of the pioneer industrial development of eastern Ontario. There is a lot more in the details of the HSMBC minutes. The mill is the only surviving pre-



This photo taken in the fall of 1972 shows scaffolding going up on the south side of the mill as repairs were started. Note the cemented in turbine hall tailrace. It was supported at the bottom by a large iron beam. Turbine tailraces do have to be partially sealed (originally with wood) to force the water through the turbines, but this cement work indicates the failure of the stone arch that originally supported the stonework above it.

At that time we see the first official board of the newly incorporated DMS with Dr. Robert Tuck, President; Harold Russell, Vice-President; Mildred Sweet, Treasurer; Myrla Saunders, Recording Secretary; Elizabeth Robinson, Corresponding Secretary; Richard Ussher, Comptroller; and general directors Albert Frye, Howard Jones, and Ronald White.

In the fall of 1972, scaffolding went up on the side of the mill as rescue work began. The initial work was to stabilize the building, including shoring up the main floor supports (under the mill). Tie rods were installed to keep the walls intact. With the building stabilized, additional restoration work continued through to 1974 and included replacing the galvanized sheet metal roof with cedar shingles and replacing the 2 over 2 pane windows (a change to the original mill windows that started in the 1850s) with the original 1810 design of 12 over 8 pane windows. The brick tympanums above the window lintels, which had been done by Walter Denaut in the 1850s, were replaced with wooden ones (except for a couple above the doors in the south wall). The turbine raceway exit (tailrace arch) which had been sealed by concrete was opened and the arch rebuilt. Details are scant since we have poor documentation of this work, few records of this work are in the present day DMS files.

Also in this period, MNR reinforced the bywash with concrete to stabilize it as the water bypass, a role it continues to play to this day. Although the records are fragmented, it appears that the DMS did about \$35,000 (\$230,000 2025\$) of work in the 1972-74 period. It was noted in 1974 that \$10,000 (\$55,000 2025\$) of work still needed to be done. In 1978 the DMS borrowed \$2,000 (\$9,000 2025\$) to do stonework safety repairs. Work continued as dollars and volunteers permitted.

asked her about the mill's 50 foot long ridgepole (Dr. Cameron was Chair of Built Heritage at McGill University at the time), but 1810 mill construction is not one of her areas of expertise, so it remains a bit of a mystery in terms of how exactly they installed it.

Incorporation & Rescue Rehabilitation

On August 17, 1972 the Delta Mill Society was incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization. On September 5, 1972, the four trustees deeded the mill over to the newly incorporated society. This allowed rehabilitation to begin. At this time, MNR, who still owned the Turbine Hall, deeded it to the Delta Mill Society based on the heritage work planned for the mill. Our NHS designation already included the Turbine Hall.

The 1972 incorporated objects of the association (the legal mandate) were:

To preserve as an historic landmark the old stone mill at the village of Delta, in the said United Counties of Leeds and Grenville; to promote interest in the historical development of the Delta mill; to provide a suitable repository for irreplaceable objects marking the historical development of the Delta mill; and subject to the Mortmain and Charitable Uses Act and the Charitable Gifts Act, to accept donations, gifts, grants, legacies and bequests.

"I am delighted to hear of your efforts and those of the citizens of Delta to restore your historic stone mill built in the year 1800. Efforts such as yours will help Canadians preserve the precious heritage of our past."

Pierre Elliott Trudeau

"I appreciate your efforts for the preservation of historic sites in this fast moving world of to-day. If strong local representation is made and a fund-raising campaign is sponsored by the community, the Heritage Foundation may make a donation to the campaign."

William Davis

Fundraising

Fundraising in the early 1970s included obtaining statements of support. While not much happened in terms of government help, donor support from this fundraising campaign did allow rescue restoration to begin in 1972. At that time the DMS thought the mill was built in 1800, hence that reference in P.E.T.s statement.

In 1978 the Mill was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. That designation is very architecture centric and is quite dated (several errors of fact) so we don't promote it. Our NHS designation is much more significant and accurate in terms of facts (although it too has a few errors).

This ends History of the Mill Part 4. Part 5 (next newsletter) will begin with a portion of the mill opening to the public for a full season in 1985. In 1986 an opportunity came along to do a proper restoration of the mill which is a big story all on its own.

- Ken Watson

History of the Mill Mythology

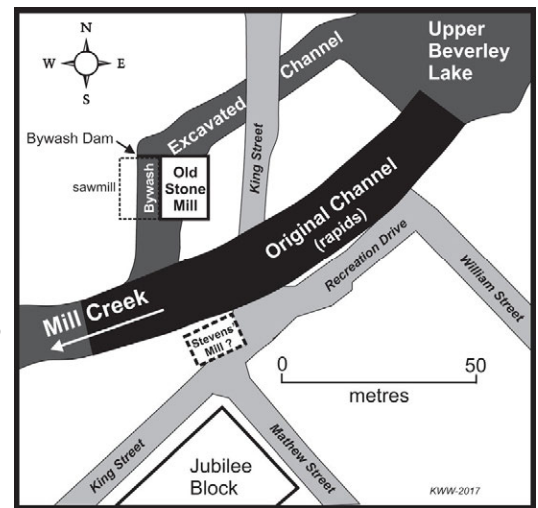
In the previous article about the early Delta Mill Society, it was noted that much of the mill's history at that time was incorrect. This is because the DMS at that time relied on local lore, anecdotal history that was generally wrong. Delta, like any small village (or quite frankly any human settlement on earth) is full of incorrect anecdotal history. Human memory is faulty and our brains don't like information gaps, so it makes things up which we later perceive as real memories. Even first-hand accounts are often incorrect, particularly when the person recounts it years later (as we see in books such as Leavitt's 1879 "History of Leeds and Grenville Ontario" which is full of errors). Anecdotal history has this problem as well as a problem with people putting the wrong things together (the 2+2=5 problem which exists with much anecdotal history).

So, just a few examples related to the Old Stone Mill that the early DMS in some cases thought as being facts. The biggest one is the mistaken belief that the Old Stone Mill was built on the site of the original Stevens' grist mill – it wasn't. That it was built in 2 stages with the upper storey built later is also incorrect. That the Old Stone Mill dam created Upper Beverley Lake and flooded 2,000 acres of farmland. It didn't, the quick fact check was to measure the size of the lake which is 1,350 acres. It's actually a bit higher today than it was in the past with the 1962 MNR dam. Upper Beverley Lake was originally 2 smaller lakes, enlarged by Abel Stevens' c.1796 dams and then further enlarged by the Old Stone Mill's 1810 dam. The actual flooding number attributable to the Old Stone Mill is closer to 700 acres, most of that pre-existing swampland, not farmland. That John Beverley Robinson funded the 3rd floor construction (he didn't). That the mill had no adjacent dam (it did, we have photographic evidence dating back to the 1870s plus the physical landscape today that says it did in 1810-11). That Jasper Russell and Isaac Whaley were two of the masons who worked on the mill – they weren't. The list goes on and on.

I've detailed a few of these in the Mill's interpretation guide which you can download from our website – see the "History – A Cautionary Tale" section. The most accurate story of the building of the mill, as we presently know it, is also detailed in my book "Building the 1810 Old Stone Mill in Delta Ontario", 2nd edition written in 2022, with a printed version available for sale in our mill shop and a PDF version available as a free download from our website. Wade Ranford's 2006 book, "A History of Grist Milling in Delta", which also debunked several myths and provided the first accurate chronology of the mill, is also available for sale in our mill shop and as a free download from our website.

These myths about the mill were all prevalent during the early DMS period since that's what local lore said and many people take local lore at face value. Historians generally know better (not all), but as a scientist and a heritage researcher (and family genealogist), I take a different approach to history which is to fact-check everything.

I've noted the fact check about Upper Beverley Lake (to measure the size of the lake to debunk the anecdotal tale—I also did a bathymetric survey of the lake to prove that the old (1794-95) maps were correct), but another good example



The original Stevens mills were located adjacent to the original rapids. The rapids were buried in 1810-11 with the material excavated from the new water channel that was built to the Old Stone Mill.

is the Russell/Whaley as mill masons story, which was printed in a 1950s newspaper article and has its origins (best that I can figure) in the mistaken assumption that the stone bridge in Delta, which was replaced in 1963 by the current bridge, dated back to the building of the Old Stone Mill. It didn't, that bridge, which many in Delta will still remember, was built no earlier than the late 1860s. Initial fact checking included a bit of genealogical research into Russell (born 1815) and Whaley (born 1809/10) which clearly showed they couldn't have been masons in 1810. But they certainly could have been masons c.1870 when the stone bridge was built (replacing an earlier stone/wooden bridge). If you assumed the stone bridge was built at the same time as the Old Stone Mill and had information that Whaley and Russell were masons who built that bridge (I've never researched that and so I don't know if that is true), then the erroneous conclusion is that they were masons that also worked on the mill which is an assumption piled on an assumption. It's a very typical example of how anecdotal history is generally wrong – it may have its roots in some facts, but ends up with a completely incorrect set of assumptions to build the anecdotal tale.



A c.1960 photo of Delta's stone bridge. This bridge was built in about 1870 and it was demolished in 1963 after the new dam was built just upstream in 1962. The Old Stone Mill is visible in the background. The small opening in the bridge only allowed a maximum flow of water that could be handled by the mill's bywash, ensuring that the first floor of the mill, where flour was packed, stayed dry. The level of the water in the foreground (level of Upper Beverley Lake) was at that time the level of water against the side of the mill (the millpond).

The real problem with this for the DMS in terms of presenting accurate fact based history, is that while we (humans) are really good at learning new things (big brains), once an idea gets into our head (true or false), it is hard to get rid of. So it's much easier for us to accept new facts than to debunk embedded "facts" that are incorrect. It also takes a lot more proof to convince people and even then, you're not going to convince them all. In my heritage work, it takes me far more time to debunk a mythological "fact" than it does to document a new fact. A classic one for instance on the Rideau Canal is the myth that workers who died during the construction of the canal were buried in unmarked graves. They weren't, funerals were held and graves marked, but I still see that incorrect "fact" being repeated to this day.

With the DMS, things started to slowly change in the 1990s with more high-quality research being done including archaeology and conservation work research. A real milestone was Wade Ranford's work in the early 2000s, which sorted out the mill's chronology, including debunking many anecdotal tales with facts. Wade didn't get it all right, but it was huge leap forward in our factual understanding of the history of mill. We will never figure it all out, there will always be mysteries surrounding the mill (such as the name of the millwright who actually designed and built it), which is part of the fun of doing heritage research. But as time goes on, anecdotal tales about the mill are being replaced with fact-based history – a goal in all the heritage research that I do.

- Ken Watson

HELP !!!

We can use some more volunteer help. Our most pressing need at the moment is maintenance. We have several outstanding jobs including wooden sill repair/replacement at the mill, repointing the stonework on the outside of the Blacksmith Shop and several fix-ups in the Old Town Hall. This type of work is never-ending with our three heritage structures. So, if you've got carpentry or stone masonry skills and are willing to volunteer your time, please let us know. We also are in need of a contractor to build a gable on the front porch of the Old Town Hall (we have the design and building permit in hand) and also to fix/stabilize/clad the front chimneys on the Old Town Hall. If you know of a contractor available to do this kind of work, please point them our way—drop us a line at deltamillsociety@gmail.com or give us a call: 613-928-2584.

2025 Special Events

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

OLD STONE MILL 2025 Milling Schedule (starting at 1 pm)

Day	Date
Saturday	May 17
Saturday	June 7
Saturday	June 21
Saturday	June 28
Saturday	July 12
Saturday	July 26
Saturday	August 9
Saturday	August 16
Saturday	August 30
Saturday	September 27

BLACKSMITH SHOP 10 am to 2 pm

Day	Date
Saturday	May 17
Saturday	June 21
Saturday	July 26
Saturday	August 16
Saturday	September 27

Saturday, September 13 will be the *Ontario Artist Blacksmith Association (OABA) Hammer-In*, with blacksmiths across the province attending.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Monday, June 16, 11 am Old Town Hall

We will have a business AGM starting at 11 am on Monday, June 16.

Everyone is welcome!!

DELTA FAIR Thurs-Sun, July 24-27

The Old Stone Mill will be open as Delta hosts the 196th annual Delta Fair. See www.deltafair.com

SEASON OPENING Saturday, May 17

The mill will open for the 2025 season, 10 am to 5 pm daily until Labour Day. We will have a milling demonstration starting at 1 pm and the Blacksmith Shop will be open.

SUMMER SOLSTICE Saturday, June 21

This is a new Delta event. We will have blacksmithing and milling demonstrations on that day.

DOORS OPEN RIDEAU LAKES Saturday & Sunday, August 16-17

Old Stone Mill: the mill will be open both days with a special quilt show on both Saturday and Sunday. We'll also hold a milling demonstration on Saturday at 1 pm.

Old Town Hall: A Maker's Market will be held on Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm.

Blacksmith Shop: Demonstrations from 10 am to 2 pm on Saturday.

DELTA HARVEST FESTIVAL Saturday, September 27

The Delta Harvest Festival will celebrate the bounty of the fall harvest. Details TBA.

CRAFT SALE November 15 CHRISTMAS CONCERT December 20

Both events will be held in the Old Town Hall. Details TBA.

More Events & Event Updates

We're always working on new events. We post this information to the events page of our website and on Facebook.

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

