



The Delta Millers' Newsletter

The Gist of the Grist

Fall/Winter 2015

A Full and Successful 2015 Season

Well, here we are about to wrap up the 2015 season at the Old Stone Mill.

The Mill closed on Labour Day, drawing that part of our work to a close. We still have three major events on our calendar but the intense activity of being open 7 days a week, 7 hours a day is done! That we are able to be open every day of the week from May 24th to Labour Day is a testimony to the dedication of Anna Greenhorn and Ruth Sheridan-Griffith and their core of volunteer interpreters and summer student staff.

This summer season has gone well. It kicked off with the visit of the Rideau District High School exchange visit, which rapidly led to the Maple Syrup Festival. The Mill was open and grinding for the latter and the Old Town Hall hosted a massive book sale. May was also a busy month. It saw "Mrs. Walter Denaut" hosting a new event for us, a Victorian Tea Party on Mothers' Day. There was also our opening weekend and a Cabaret Night in the Old Town Hall. Both the Old Stone Mill and the Old Town Hall participated in the Brockville Doors Open, with the latter hosting ploughman lunches for the many visitors.

The Delta Mill Society's Annual General Meeting was in June. Sir John A. himself attended with Lady Agnes and regaled the room with tales of his exploits in the area when he and D'Arcy McGee were running for office. In July, we hosted a very successful Fish Fry. Lisa Flanagan's Children's Theatre Group used the Old Town Hall as a rehearsal site for two weeks before putting on a gala performance on the last Friday night. The 185th running of the Delta Agricultural Fair occurred towards the end of the month with the Mill open and demonstrating.

The Mill closed on Labour Day but our season is not yet over! Later in September, the Old Town Hall is hosting a sold-out dinner and a performance by the Strumbellas, as part of the special Festival of Small Halls taking place in 13 communities across the region.



Delta Harvest Festival October 3

Lots of fun for the whole family: vendors, demonstrations, music, food, bread contest, children's activities and much more. See the enclosed program guide for full details and our website www.deltamill.org for the latest information.

Please come and enjoy the day on Saturday, October 3 and help make this, our first Harvest Festival, a success!

October 3rd is the first Delta Harvest Festival. It is a change from previous years for us. Rather than holding our annual Thanksgiving Festival, we have spearheaded the planning of a Delta-wide harvest event. The Delta Agricultural Society, the Delta Firemen's Museum, the Lower Beverley Lake Park, the Delta Athletic and Recreation Society, the United Church and other groups in Delta have come together to present a full range of events and activities for the day. It could become an annual event.

Finally, the DMS will be participating again in the Celebrating the Season festivities on the five Saturdays before Christmas (Nov. 21, 28 & Dec. 5, 12, 19).

I am exhausted just thinking about all that activity! We owe special thanks to Katherine Killins and Cathy Livingston for their organizational work on the DMS Events Committee. Many assist but these two are the brains and sweat behind the effort.

Dann M. Michols
President, The Delta Mill Society

The Forge Repair by Art Shaw

At the 2015 Delta Maple Syrup Festival I was in the blacksmith's shop, an hour before official opening, to light the forge and be ready for visitors. There were 2 little boys and their dad watching, but I couldn't get the coal to light. There wasn't enough air coming through the twyere [a pipe through which air is forced into the fire]. I knew the ash dump was not full, so I started to suspect that mice had built a nest in the air pipe as has happened before. When I pulled the ash dump open, just to check, I discovered that the whole assembly from the firepot down was hanging by one bolt. The other bolt had burned and rusted until it fell apart, so the lower castings were hanging with big gaps at their joints, and the air was blowing out the gaps rather than up through the fire.

This looked like a disaster, and I thought I might have to close the forge. Then I came up with a temporary solution. By putting the jack from my truck under the ash dump, I could push all the castings up tight enough that the air would go where I wanted it. We had a good weekend, Ben Warren from Elgin was a big help cranking the blower, and 4 other blacksmiths dropped by, besides the regular festival goers. Mark Garvock from Fallbrook gave directions to Josh Price from Lyndhurst to make a drive hook, and a good time was had by all. The jack prevented the ash dump from opening, but I managed to forge without dumping it. Sunday morning I took out the jack and dumped the ashes before I lit the new fire.

After the festival I looked at properly repairing the forge. I hoped it was a matter of driving the burned off bolt up from the bottom, and dropping a new one in place. No such luck; the whole firepot had to be removed from the cement that encased it.



Top: cutting new threads in the firepot. Middle: Firepot cemented back in place. Bottom: overall view of forge under repair. Photos by Art Shaw.

The threaded bolts were rusted into the casting, no amount of hammering or twisting could free them. The only way to salvage the firepot was to drill out the old bolts, cut new threads, and put in new bolts as before. It was finally accomplished at the cost of 2 drill bits and a threading tap dulled by the hardness of the casting. The new bolts were made from 1/4" round forge stock. And it all went back together as it should.

The firepot was reset in its former position. The cost to the Mill was about \$10 for a tub of stove cement. This repair allowed the forge to continue to be used during the summer. Matt Okum and Ben Warren have been forging key fobs and roses this summer and selling them like hot cakes.

The overall view of the forge however, shows the urgency of a complete restoration, which is overdue. A plan that we would like to promote is to suspend the brick chimney on supports at each side, and rebuild the forge from the ground up. Stone blocks exposed where the cement has broken away suggest that it may be a stone forge that has been encased in concrete. Whatever its construction, it is in dire need of rebuilding, including raising the height for a more comfortable operating position. Our wish list would include a display case or two to show some of the smithing artifacts in the collection, and possibly the restoration of one of the bellows that have been donated.

Ed Note: The Delta Mill Society is looking into possible sources of funding that would allow us to repair the forge and improve the Drive Shed in general.

Featured Member/Volunteer Q&A by Mariska Kriebel

Matt Okum

Matt Okum, in addition to being a summer student staff member at the Old Stone Mill for 3 years, has also dedicated his time and knowledge as a volunteer. Currently, Matt is a 2nd year student at Carleton University in Ottawa majoring in History. Matt is a top notch interpreter, combining his extensive knowledge of the history of the Old Stone Mill with an ability to zero in on what topic a visitor is interested in.

What sparked your interest in working as a Summer Student for the mill?

Initially I became interested in 2010 when I assisted my dad when he was working on a restoration project at the Old Stone Mill. Then I fell in love in with building itself. In 2013 I applied for a summer position and was hired. During that summer I became more interested in history in general. My initial education thought was to go to RMC in Kingston but due to an injury I could not pursue that career. My next two options were either Science at Queens or History at Carleton. So my choice was easily made after my work at the Old Stone Mill.

What are some of your daily tasks as a Summer Student Staff Member?

The main task of the summer staff is to give guided tours to the visitors and answer their questions. In addition there are many other tasks that have to be done. These include the daily opening and closing the mill and Old Town hall, and keeping things tidy and well organized in the buildings. We also conduct a daily inspection of mill to check that everything is in good repair and that the permanent exhibitions are up to date. We do an exhibit inventory check and report any missing items. We operate the gift shop, putting out the flour in the morning and handling the cash sales and donations. At the end of the day we count the donations, itemize the sales and give this information and the cash box to the Treasurer.

There are quiet times during the summer and I decided to open the Blacksmith's Shop more often and work on items that could be sold in the gift shop. I am very keen on learning this heritage craft and hope to further delve into blacksmithing in the future. Art Shaw has been very kind in helping me out and passing along his expertise.

What do you consider the most rewarding and fun part of your job?

The most rewarding is the interaction with the visitors and the diversity of people you meet. Although I like to share my own knowledge I'm also very eager to learn from others. Being a people person this is the kind of interaction that is very motivating.

Why do you think it is so important to preserve The Old Stone Mill?

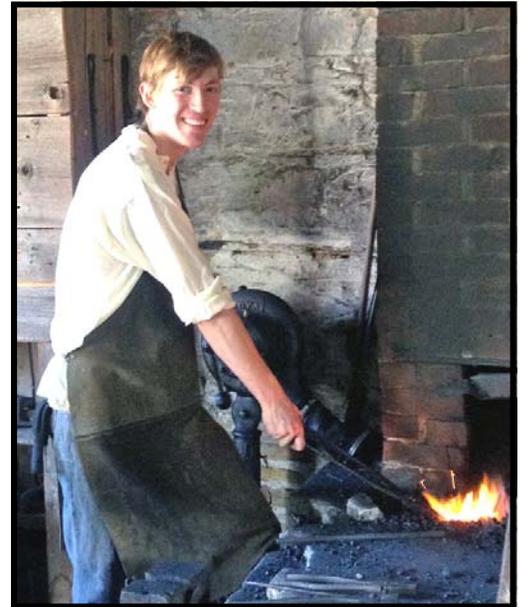
The Old Stone Mill is one of a kind in this area. It's unique in both its history and architecture. The permanent exhibits provide historical information about this area as well. I also think The Delta Mill is a great asset for this village as it attracts a lot of visitors.

Besides the Old Stone Mill do you have any other favourite museums or historical sites?

My favourite is the National Art Gallery in Ottawa. I also like the Rideau Canal and Jones Falls locks a lot.

What are your future plans after University?

In the future I would like to work in a place of public history. I want to get my Master degree in History and teach history as a professor. In this way I hope to contribute to keep history alive.



Matt working the forge.

Photo by Mariska Kriebel

Thank you Matt!

Our Summer Students

We could not be open 7 days a week, 7 hours a day for 16 weeks without a core of dedicated volunteers. While this is true, those volunteers depend on a team of summer staff to keep the Mill open, clean, and engaging. We were fortunate to have five special 'kids' to help us this year.

Those of you who had a chance to meet them this summer will appreciate how energetic and intelligent they were. Matt Okum, the subject of our Q&A in this newsletter, returned for his third year. He is studying history at Carleton University. Allisa Dullemond is also a history student, studying at Nipissing University. This was her second year with us and she is planning on a career in museum work. It was the first year for our other interpreters – Renee Bongers, Šarūnas Veselka, and Shailyn Bronsema. Renee is enrolled in science at Guelph working towards a veterinary degree, Šarūnas is at Carleton studying journalism, and Shailyn returns to RDHS this year.



Summer students Renee Bongers, Allisa Dullemond and Šarūnas Veselka. Photo by Sally Smid.

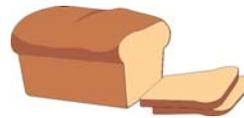
Not only did these young people serve as knowledgeable guides but they also worked hard on repairs and maintenance activities and undertook research on various projects. We are grateful to the federal government's Young Canada Works and Canada Student Jobs programmes for assistance in the funding of this year's staff. The Old Stone Mill could not operate as it does without this assistance. The DMS

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR PRESERVES * PRODUCE * BAKING * JELLYS * PICKLES * RELISHES

We're looking for donations from our members of any type of preserves, baking, produce, etc. These are for our Friends of the Mill table where they will be sold as a fundraiser for the mill. Donations can be dropped off at the Old Stone Mill on **Friday, October 2, from 9 am to 4 pm.**



BREAD FOR TOAST



We also need bread made from OSM flour to make toast for the harvest breakfast. We will supply the recipe. Please contact Katherine or Cathy (see below).

HELP!!

We need volunteers both on Friday, Oct. 2 to help with setup and Saturday, Oct. 3 to help with various tasks. For Friday, you can simply show up at 9 am and we'll put you to work. For Saturday, to arrange for a task and a schedule, please contact Katherine Killins: katherinekillins@gmail.com, 613-924-7142 or Cathy Livingston: cathy.livingston@sympatico.ca, 613-928-2796.

prides itself on being able to provide summer work for local kids while they are pursuing academic studies.

It also goes without saying that, although we do have a dedicated Board of Directors and other volunteers, we need more help. If you are interested in becoming involved in our activities – in event planning, collections management, facilities maintenance, communications and promotion, or guiding tours, we are interested in you. Please contact us. You will have fun and we will be grateful!

Have to close now. Our hard-working communications guy and newsletter editor, Ken Watson, is shouting "Deadline"! Thank you all for your support of another good year for the Delta Mill Society.

Dann M. Michols