

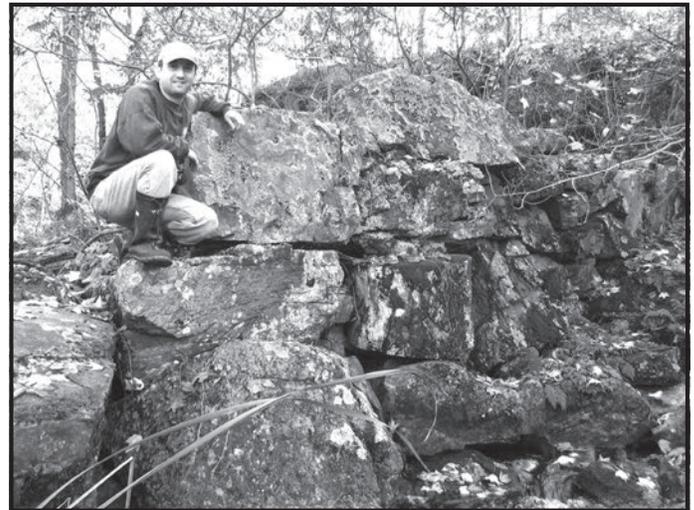
The Power of Water

The recent signing of a collaboration framework between Parks Canada and the Ontario Waterpower Association reminds us of the rich heritage of the use of water power on the Rideau, which dates back to 1794, long before the taming of electricity. At that time, a readily available source of power for various types of machinery was running water. The amount of power was determined by both the volume and the head (fall) of water, so any place with a quick drop in elevation on a river, such as a rapid or a waterfall, became the potential site for a mill.

The first mills on the Rideau route were located at Cataragui Falls (today's Kingston Mills). They were a grist mill and a saw mill, both built by the government in 1794, and known as the King's mills. The grist mill was on the west side of the falls, in about the location the current electrical power generating station, and the saw mill was located on the east side. In the mills of that era, a water-wheel was used to harness the power of running water and that power was transferred by a series of belts and gears to anything that needed to move, such as mill stones, saw blades or machines to card wool.

By 1826, when the Rideau Canal project was just getting started, there were a dozen sites on or near the Rideau route with operating mills. Unfortunately for some of these mills, their ideal location to generate power from moving water was also the needed location for dams and locks to create a slackwater navigation system. Lt. Colonel John By's first choice was always to bypass the existing mills, allowing them to continue to operate. However in some spots, such as at Chaffey's Mills and Davis' Mill, there was no room to bypass the mills, so he had to purchase the mills and property from the owners. Only in a few places, such as Merrickville, was he able to leave the mills completely untouched.

The canal with its many dams created new water power opportunities and by the mid-1800s there were dozens of mills operating along the Rideau Canal. By this time turbines had become the norm for harnessing the power of running water, replacing the less efficient water



The "Dead" Lock

These large cut stones, part of an old mill site, were misinterpreted to be an abandoned Rideau Canal lock. They are located at the outlet of Hart Lake, the head of Deadlock Bay on Opinicon Lake. (Photo by Ken W. Watson)

wheel. By the beginning of the 20th century mills were in decline due to economic reasons but a new water power opportunity was making itself known, the generation of hydro-electric power.

The location of the first mills on the Rideau, Kingston Mills, was also the location of the first hydro-electric generating station, built in 1913. Today there are five electrical power generating stations on the Rideau Canal, one at Merrickville (built 1915) operated by Ontario Power Generation and four operated by Fortis Properties Corporation: Kingston Mills (1913), Lower Brewers (1942), Upper Brewers (1939) and Jones Falls (1947). While these present-day stations are off limits to the public, the first turbo generator used at Merrickville in 1915 is on display in the Industrial Heritage Complex in Merrickville.

Mills have even entered Rideau mythology, there is the well known Ghost of Watson's Mill (based on a true

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

Saturday, May 10, 2014 (see back page for details)

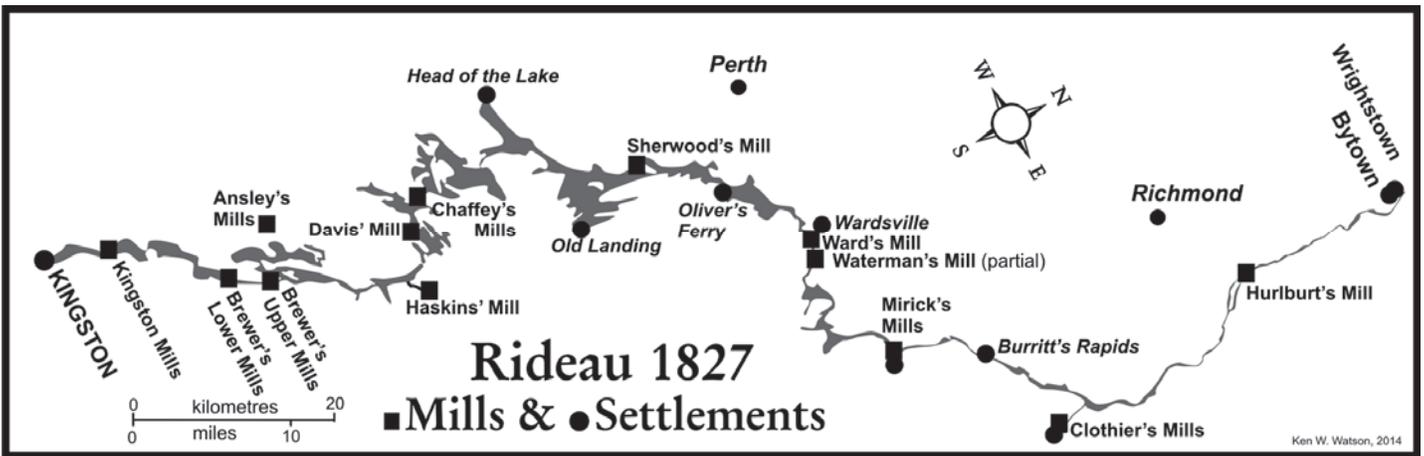
Friends of the Rideau is a volunteer, non-profit organization, working to enhance and conserve the heritage and charm of the Rideau Canal.

Friends of the Rideau, P.O. Box 1232, Stn Main, Smith Falls, Ontario K7A 5C7

Email: info@rideaufriends.com – Website: www.rideaufriends.com.

Comments about the newsletter can be directed to the editor, Ken Watson, c/o Friends of the Rideau or by email at: rideauken@gmail.com

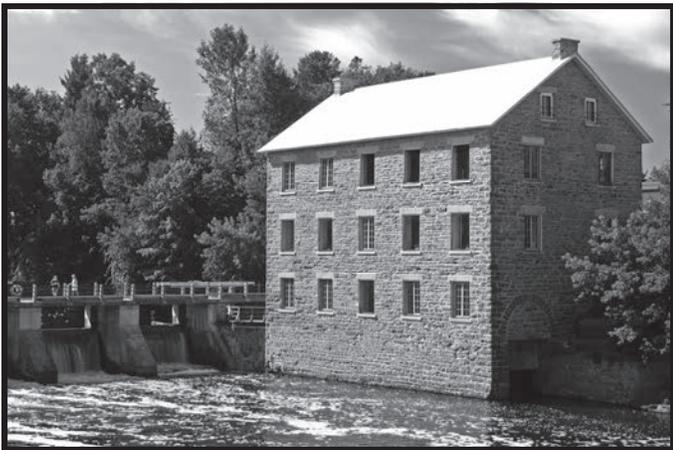
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story) and much lesser known origin of the name Deadlock Bay in Opinicon Lake (based on a tall tale). The story with the latter was the “discovery” of cut stones at the exit of Hart Lake (the head of Deadlock Bay) in the mid-late 1800s. The erroneous supposition by those who looked at the stones was that they were from a Rideau lock that was started and then abandoned (hence “dead lock”). The stones are actually part of a dam and mill established by Robert Drummond in about 1832. It wasn't a dead lock at all, it was a mill site. It appears to have been soon abandoned, some of

the stones were later repurposed into building a canal water control dam. You can still see those stones today.

We are fortunate in the Rideau Corridor to have two spectacular mills that are fully restored and open to the public; Watson's Mill (built in 1860) in Manotick and the Old Stone Mill (built in 1810) in Delta. These form a tangible link to our past, going back to when this part of Canada was a frontier, when mills played a critical role in local economies and community development. They are both well worth a visit.

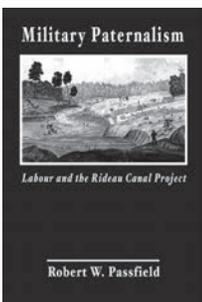


Watson's Mill, Manotick



Old Stone Mill, Delta

New Rideau Book



Historian and Rideau Canal expert, Robert W. Passfield, has published a new book, ***Military Paternalism, Labour, and the Rideau Canal Project***, about the history of the labour situation on the Rideau Canal construction project (1826-1832). Passfield provides a new view, one that rejects the previous interpretation of class conflict and worker exploitation by the military. The book examines the working conditions on the canal project and the paternalism practiced by the Commanding Royal Engineer, Lt. Col. John By, on behalf of the workers on the canal project, and by British military officers in aiding immigrants to settle in the Rideau wilderness.

You can find the book on www.amazon.ca and www.chapters.indigo.ca

2014 AGM

Our AGM will be held on Saturday, May 10, in the theatre of the Rideau Canal Visitor Centre (former Rideau Canal Museum) in Smiths Falls. This year will feature a talk by Dr. Marcus R. Létourneau, Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Queen's University. Marcus' talk is "**What next?: Reflections on the Rideau Landscape Strategy**" looking at the landscape strategy process and the future conservation of heritage landscapes on the Rideau Canal.

Our AGM is also a great opportunity to come out and meet the directors and members of Friends of the Rideau. We share a common love of the Rideau Canal so there is no lack of interesting conversation.

We'll also have coffee and tea on hand and Rowena's famous carrot cake!

Everyone is welcome to attend.

The Depot

We hope to have The Depot in Merrickville open by late June or early July, depending on availability of volunteers. And speaking of volunteers, we could use some help, all we ask is that you bring your knowledge and enthusiasm for the Rideau and share it with visitors. If interested or if you wish to learn more, please contact Hunter McGill at huntermcgill1@gmail.com

Canoe & Kayak Rentals

You can rent a canoe or kayak at The Depot courtesy of our partner, canaltripping.com. On your next visit to Merrickville, consider going for a paddle.

Membership Renewal

A reminder that this is membership renewal time (our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31). If your membership is up for renewal, you'll find a handy renewal form with this newsletter. Please note our new mailing address (P.O. Box 1232, Stn. Main, Smiths Falls). We thank you very much for your support.

Summer Activities

This summer we hope for warm dry days for the following events, as we plan to be present and meet many members of Friends.

June 14: Westport Heritage Festival

July 26: Classic Boat Show, Rideau Ferry

Aug 2-4: Canalfest, Merrickville

Aug 4: Colonel By Day, Bytown Museum, Ottawa

Message from the Chair

What a long winter it has been. At least it appears that we will not have to worry about water levels on the Rideau this summer, judging from the snowpack now slowly melting away.

I'm delighted to announce that the Friends Board of Directors has three new members: Victor Suthren of Merrickville who joined the Board in the fall of 2013, and Mary Farrar of Kingston and Gillian Organ of Rideau Ferry who came on to the Board in March. With their commitment to the heritage of the Rideau Canal, we look forward to the addition of their valuable knowledge and geographic perspectives to the work of Friends of the Rideau. I hope you will have the opportunity to meet them at the Friends Annual General Meeting in Smiths Falls on May 10.

As you have likely noted in recent media reports, there has been a surge of attention over the last several months to the operations and maintenance needs of the Rideau Canal. Notwithstanding recent announcements regarding infrastructure work on the Rideau at Poonamalie, your Board remains very concerned at the continuing downward pressure on the Parks Canada budget for the Rideau Canal. In this newsletter you will see our most recent letter to Minister Leona Aglukkaq, minister responsible for Parks Canada. We encourage you to add your voice to that of Friends of the Rideau and others by writing to government representatives – Ministers and Members of Parliament – to let them know of the action you believe they should take to protect and preserve the Rideau Canal National Historic Site and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Over the winter many Rideau Waterway stakeholders, including members of Friends, were involved in workshops and consultations on the Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept (VEOC). This major initiative, led by Parks Canada and Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corp., aims "to enhance opportunities for travellers to connect with the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor." The VEOC report was released on January 31 with calls for future collaboration in "Realizing Our World Class Potential." The full report is available on the Valley Heartland website: valleycfdc.com. It is not clear what the next steps will be, nor is it clear how much prominence will be given to heritage protection and presentation in future activities.

Looking ahead to the summer, after the Annual General Meeting we will focus on opening The Depot in Merrickville and taking part in various events along the Rideau Waterway (see listing to left). We look forward to seeing you there. Enjoy the summer on the lovely Rideau Waterway.

- Hunter McGill

Friends of the Rideau – Rideau Reflections

29 January, 2014

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq
Minister of the Environment
Parliament Buildings, Ottawa

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Board and membership of Friends of the Rideau I am writing to express our concern at the impact the 2012 and 2013 budget cuts are having on the protection and preservation of the Rideau Canal National Historic Site and World Heritage Site. While our primary focus is on the heritage of the Rideau Canal, we wish to draw your attention also to the economic consequences of reductions in the funds available to maintain and operate the Canal and provide interpretation services along the entire Waterway.

While precise figures on the numbers of visitors to the Rideau Canal are not available, it is evident that the Rideau is among the top three national heritage sites in eastern Ontario. Our own measure of the popularity of the Canal, based on the number of guests we welcome during the peak summer months to our interpretation facility in Merrickville suggests that the Rideau's popularity is growing; from 2012 to 2013 we saw an increase of over 10%. The growth in the number of land-based visits is not however matched by boat traffic. The uncertainty about fee levels and operating hours/length of season have raised doubt with many boaters as to whether the Rideau is still an operating canal.

A further issue of concern to the Friends of the Rideau is the elimination of much, if not most, of the interpretation services along the Rideau Waterway. Many visitors come to the Canal on the strength of the reputation of its role in the history of eastern Ontario, and of Canada for that matter. In our experience, these visitors are by and large left on their own as to interpretation or explanation of the history and significance of the specific site they are visiting, to say nothing of the importance of the entire 202 kilometre waterway. We believe this is a very unfortunate consequence of the cuts to the budget of the Rideau Canal and it deprives visitors of the opportunity to obtain a proper understanding of the importance of this key component of our national heritage. We and other volunteer groups along the Rideau do our best to meet visitors' need for information and interpretation, but Parks Canada must take the lead and thus we urge you to ensure this element of the Rideau operating budget is restored.

Finally, recent press reports have highlighted the extent to which the physical infrastructure of the Rideau Canal is deteriorating. We as Canadians through our government have a custodial responsibility to maintain and preserve the locks, dams, bridges and other structures which comprise the Canal and which were so brilliantly conceived and constructed over 180 years ago by Lt. Col. John By and his team of engineers and contractors. Not only do we owe it to Canadians, but under the commitments made when the Rideau Canal and the Kingston Fortifications were proposed to UNESCO, and accepted, as a World Heritage Site, Canada accepted a duty of care for the Canal given its outstanding universal value, representing human creative genius and significance in human – specifically Canadian – history. It would be deeply embarrassing if the commitments made in 2007 when the Rideau Canal achieved World Heritage Status were called into question.

We ask that you direct that the annual heritage infrastructure maintenance budget for the Rideau Canal be set at a level of 5% of the value of the Canal asset base, which we understand to be approximately \$900 million. Only through this explicit targeting can there be assurance that sufficient funds will be available to protect the Rideau's physical elements. The government should look at this also as an opportunity to invest in job creation in eastern Ontario, and reinforcement and enhancement of the attractiveness of the Rideau Canal as a visitor destination. Postponing maintenance and renewal work only means that the eventual cost will be considerably higher than present estimates.

Yours respectfully,

Hunter McGill
Chairman

2014 Hours of Operation

The reduced hours of operation on the Rideau Canal will remain in place for 2014 according to a recent statement by Colin Carrie, Parliamentary secretary to Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq. According to Carrie “there have been meetings with the Minister and she’s been clear about that.”

It’s a shame, given the evidence that the reduced summer hours are having a large negative economic impact on the canal and surrounding area.

Maintenance Backlog

In 2012, Parks Canada conducted a review of their asset base, including the condition of those assets and the amount of work required to bring them up to Good (as opposed to Poor or Fair) condition. For the Rideau Canal, the total asset base is worth 929 million dollars and the maintenance backlog is 104.3 million dollars (in 2012 \$).

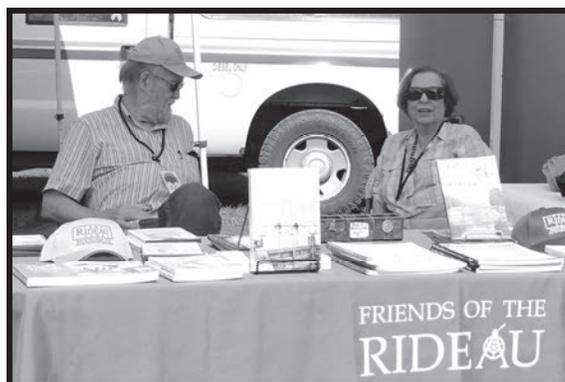
The reason the backlog is so large, is that there has been insufficient capital funding by our government to maintain these assets. Capital spending on the Rideau over the last six years has varied from 1 to 6 million dollars per year (typically ~ 2 million per year). These expenditures represent an average of 0.2% of the asset base. Parks Canada’s own target is 1.5%, however to do a proper job with the heritage assets (locks, dams, buildings), expenditures in the order of 3% are needed.

A small step was the government’s recent announcement of the capital spending to repair an earthen dam and the Minnow Creek weir at Poonamalie. This is part of a government safety initiative (mostly dams), which is a good thing, however it doesn’t address the issues with the heritage assets. For instance, at Jones Falls, the backlog now exceeds 12 million dollars, mostly for required work on the lower flight of 3 locks (which are all rated as being in Poor Condition).

You can find the complete asset list for the Rideau Canal on the Save Our Rideau website: www.SaveOurRideau.ca - you’ll find it linked as a PDF download on the Built Heritage page in the World Heritage section of the website.

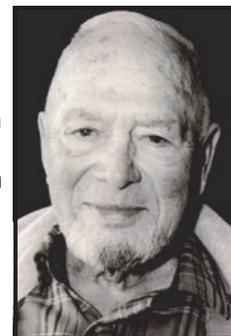
Sad Losses

In late February we received the sad news that **Lucy Bebee**, wife and partner of our friend and colleague Ed Bebee, had passed away. Lucy was known to many of us at Friends of the Rideau from her participation at events along the Rideau, as she accompanied Ed and helped show the flag for Friends. She was also a keen editor for Ed's books and thus helped enhance the public's knowledge of the social history of the Rideau Waterway. We send our deepest sympathy to Ed and his family.



Ed and Lucy Bebee manning the Friends of the Rideau Booth at the Rideau Ferry Regatta in 2013.

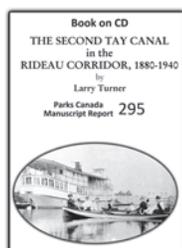
Don Warren, a founder and life member of Friends of the Rideau, passed away peacefully on March 31, 2014. Many will remember Don for his tireless work in support of the Rideau Canal, which earned him the nickname “Defender of the Rideau.”



Don’s legacy is a vast one, not the least of which was to help change the focus of the government’s management of the Rideau Canal from transportation to heritage.

Don was a true Friend of the Rideau in every sense.

Resources for the Rideau



We’re nearing completion of the last manuscript report that we’re presently digitizing, Larry Turner’s comprehensive study of the building of the 2nd Tay Canal. This is the canal we use today to go to Perth. It was built in the late 1800s, replacing the then defunct 1st Tay Canal. The locks at Beveridges were built to the same design as a Rideau lock, but canal building technology had evolved to include the ability to dredge a canal cut. This technique was used for the 2nd Tay. The project was pushed by local MP, John G. Haggart, and for a time the 2nd Tay was known as “Haggart’s Ditch.” We hope to have this new Book on CD available this summer.

FRIENDS OF THE
RIDEAU

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

Saturday, May 10, 2014

9:30 am to noon

Rideau Canal Visitor Centre, Smiths Falls

9:30 am – 10:00 am	Meet and Greet - coffee & cake
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Annual General Meeting
10:30 am – 11:30 am	Marcus Létourneau Talk + questions
11:30 am +	More meet, greet, coffee & cake

Our featured speaker is **Dr. Marcus R. Létourneau**, Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Queen's University. Marcus' talk is "**What next?: Reflections on the Rideau Landscape Strategy**" looking at the landscape strategy process and the future conservation of heritage landscapes on the Rideau Canal.

Come out and meet some Friends.

Everyone is welcome.

Enjoy refreshments - coffee, tea & cake.

Chat with some of the Friends' directors.

***Or simply come out and
meet some like-minded Friends.***

The Rideau Canal Visitor Centre (formerly the Rideau Canal Museum) is easy to find – it's the big stone building with the grain elevator sitting at the south end of the main downtown area (34 Beckwith Street South) in Smiths Falls.

There is lots of free parking under the water tower (you can't miss it).