

Testimony submitted by Eriks Petersons, President Mechanic Falls Historical Society

From the Lewiston Sun Journal, September 26, 2006: "It was a gray day on June 13, 1982, at DiMillo's Marina in Portland Harbor, when Dunlop – then 40 years old – set sail in his small craft with a destination of Falmouth, England. About 20 vessels, large and small, tooted horns in salute.

The Associated Press reported that Dunlop was seeking a record for the smallest boat used in a solo Atlantic crossing. He planned to reach England in eight to 12 weeks.

'His boat is filled with food, survival equipment, extra sails, rope, tools and reading matter,' the AP reported. 'Mr. Dunlop's sailboat has a fiberglass hull, and a \$16 sextant for navigation. He has a radio, but no backup engine.'

Seventy-eight days and 3,400 miles later – pretty much on schedule – Bill Dunlop stepped shakily ashore from the tiny yacht to a champagne welcome.

He had set the record for crossing the Atlantic west to east in the smallest boat."

At the November 2023 Mechanic Falls Historical Society meeting discussion arose if Mechanic Falls could do something of a memorial to Bill Dunlop, the locally known and famed sailor who made it across the Atlantic alone in the smallest boat ever in 1982. Dunlop sailed 3,400 miles in 78 days to reach Falmouth, England. He gained celebrity status, appearing on national morning talk shows and his voyage was recounted in numerous newspaper and magazine articles. Mechanic Falls generated a Bill Dunlop Day complete with a parade with state and local dignitaries making an appearance. The idea was proposed at the society meeting involved the Mechanic Falls Bridge in the center of town, which slated to be refurbished in 2025. Could it be named after Bill Dunlop? Society members wanted to know what it would take to have the bridge named in Dunlop's honor. I met with Town Manager Vic Hodgkins to see if this was possible. Vic gave me the bridge project manager's name and email address. I sent Brian Nichols, the manager, a news story about Dunlop and asked what it would take to name the bridge in Dunlop's honor. I also sent the email to our State Senator Rick Bennett and Representative David Boyer, since Nichols said it would take an act of the legislature to get it accomplished. In addition, on February 5, 2024 the Mechanic Falls Town Council unanimously voted to support the society's attempt to name the Route 121 bridge (#2540) over the Little Androscoggin River as the Bill Dunlop Bridge.

<http://enchantedacresfarm.com/BillDunlopHistory.pdf> 28 pdf of Bill Dunlop voyages

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February 5th, 2024

To Whom it May Concern,


We the Town Council of Mechanic Falls recently voted unanimously to support the Mechanic Falls Historical Society's attempt to name the Rt.121 bridge (#2540) over the little Androscoggin river, "The Bill Dunlop Bridge". Mr. Dunlop brought positive recognition to the Town of Mechanic Falls through his historic record-breaking sailing journeys. The Mechanic Falls Town Council stands committed to this bridge naming in honor of Bill Dunlop, and encourages the State Legislature to approve this request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



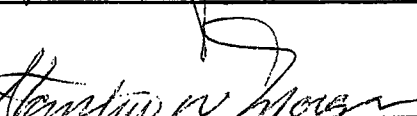
Tarsha Downing, Chair



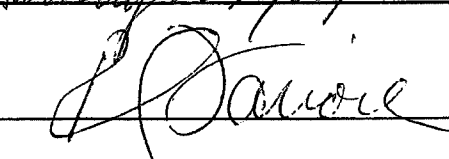
Darrell Young, Vice-Chair



Paula Stotts



Stanley Morgan



Ray Lavoie