

## About Us - Ian Ellison

In the last edition of *Being Together – Apart*, we learned about CHS member Ian Ellison’s love of saving historic/ancient structures using hand tools that were used when the structures were originally built. While he anxiously waits for Covid travel restrictions to France to be lifted so he and son Jaden can join a team of like-minded carpenters restoring Notre Dame Cathedral, Ian continues to ply his carpenter skills on local Cape Cod properties.

Born in Montreal, Ian is the oldest of three boys. His Dad was from Liverpool and came to Montreal in 1950 where he met Ian’s Mom, Fern, at the local Anglican Church. Life in Montreal was full of family time and harsh winters. The family took summer vacations on Cape Cod for a total change of scenery and lots of quality family time on the sandy beaches.

Ian completed primary school in Montreal and then graduated from McGill University with a degree in mechanical engineering. His childhood love of Cape Cod continued and after college graduation in 1985, he bought a piece of land in Brewster off Freemans Way. His dream was to use his college degree and work in the USA aerospace industry but was challenged getting a job because of his Canadian citizenship. He finally secured a position at Kaman Industries in Hartford CT but never even started as the job was eliminated due to reductions in government spending. Always the optimist, Ian says that was the best thing to happen.

While he was in college, Ian still spent summers on Cape Cod. One summer job was working with rough sawed wood. This ultimately led him to join the Timber Framers’s Guild of North American and begin his own Design and Building Company, Ellison TimberFrames. Building his dream home on the Brewster property was on the back burner but he was able to buy a home in Harwichport.

Ian met his first wife in Brewster, they had three sons and business was going well. He specialized in building additions, restoring and converting old barns into houses, and general carpentry. In 1993, a New Jersey couple on the hunt for the perfect retirement home hired Ian to build a lovely timber framed home in Brewster. This project was a feature article in the January 1995 edition of *Timber Frame Homes* magazine.

While his marriage ended in divorce, Ian’s three sons, Tanner, Colton and Landon, have all bought homes and live full time on Cape Cod and two sons have given Ian grandchildren.

The recessions in the early 21st century was a difficult time for contractors. Luckily, Ian was able to keep plugging along and saved money heating their home with wood.

Ian married again and had two children, Jaden and Evie and he finally built his dream post and beam home on his Brewster land. Ian’s mother, Fern Ellison, had moved to the Cape and joined CHS. Ian started attending church with his Mom and then Jaden and Evie were baptized by Fr. Charles Morris and began to attend CHS’s Church School. They became “regulars” in

various Church School pageants as well as acolytes at the 10:00 Sunday Service and the monthly Youth Group Brunches (Ian washed the brunch dishes). Richard O'Hara was the youth leader at the time and Jaden thought his name was "Mr. Old'Hara!"

In 2005, Ian joined the U.K Carpenter's Fellowship that took him to France to work on restorations of very old structures without power tools, nails or other common 21<sup>st</sup> century building "accoutrements." In 2011 and again in 2018 he went to France with Carpenters Without Borders to work on the restoration of an 11<sup>th</sup> century castle using the same ancient techniques.

Jaden and Ian now live with their Mother in Sandwich but spend many weekends with their Dad and his partner, Joannie Barnes, in Orleans. The family, joined by Ian's three older sons and families, are building, by hand, a 20'x20' cabin on a 25-acre trek of land 90 minutes from Montreal. They are making the timbers from trees on their own land. Alas, Covid has also put this project on hold until they can travel back to Canada.

In the meantime, Ian is an advocate for creating more Affordable Housing in Orleans, and making time to canoe, kayak, fresh water fishing, and basically, anything outdoors that he can do with his family.