



In this issue

Page 2 Our Land Acknowledgment

Page 2 Updates on Speakers and Website

Page 2 2025 OAS Symposium, Windsor, Ontario - *Beyond Borders: Lands, Rivers, Peoples*

Page 3 Bonnechere Provincial Park Archaeology Week 2025 Summary Report

Page 8 *A Warm Welcome at the Dickerson Site Camboose Shanty* by Rory MacKay

Page 9 Campfire Motif on Medalta

Page 10 2025 Chapter Executive, OAS/Chapter info, Coming Up, an interesting license plate.



Archaeology Days in Bonnechere Provincial Park, July 12-13, 2025

Standing, left to right: Phil Trottier, Brad Drouin, Bill MacLennan, Bob Clark, Anne Burchat, Gabrielle Clark, Monica Maika, Lyla Reid.

Seated, left to right: Rory MacKay, Ellen Blaubergs, Stacey Girling-Christie.

Not present for photo: Jane Duff, Luke Dickerson, Georgian Parkes.



Campfire motif on a ceramic plate
(see page 9)

We dedicate this image to Marian Clark, our long-time and stalwart organizer of Archaeology Days. Although unable to join us in person this year, her efforts during the winter and spring months insured that the Chapter's programs at the Davenport Centre were well organized and supplied, and went off without a hitch. She even arranged for a nice lunch to be delivered by Rory. We are also very grateful to the staff of Bonnechere Provincial Park for their continued cooperation, provision of accommodation, good cheer, and so much more. *EB*

Le chapitre d'Ottawa de la Société ontarienne d'archéologie Inc. reconnaît le territoire non cédé de la Nation algonquine Anishinabe dont le riche attachement culturel remonte à des milliers d'années et dont la culture et la présence ont nourri et continuent de nourrir ces terres. Nous reconnaissons les Algonquins Anishinabe comme étant les gardiens traditionnels de ces terres et comme étant les défenseurs coutumiers du savoir du bassin versant de la rivière des Outaouais. Nous honorons leur culture, leur présence et leur long passé d'accueil de nombreuses nations sur ce magnifique territoire. En outre, nous rendons hommage à tous les peuples autochtones de cette région, de toutes les nations à travers le Canada, qui vivent à Ottawa.

The Ottawa Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society Inc. acknowledges the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation whose rich cultural attachment to this land reaches back thousands of years and whose culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this land. We recognize the Anishinabe Algonquin as the traditional guardians of this land and as customary Knowledge Keepers and Defenders of the Ottawa River watershed. We honour their culture, presence and long history of welcoming many nations to this beautiful territory. Further, we pay respect to all Indigenous people in this region, from all nations across Canada who call Ottawa home.

Upcoming Speakers

Chapter Executive members are currently scouring their contact lists and reaching out in a concerted effort to bring our membership an interesting and varied slate of speakers for the remainder of 2025 and start of 2026. Stay tuned.

If you're interested in speaking to the Chapter about a current or past project, or other related subject, or know anyone who might be, please contact Ottawa Chapter Vice President Brad Drouin through the Chapter email: oasottawa@gmail.com

New publications on the Ottawa Chapter website ottawaoas.ca

If you haven't already done so, check out some fascinating new content on our website, including articles authored by Jean-Luc Pilon when he was Curator of Ontario Archaeology at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now CMH). We appreciate the efforts of Jean-Luc and our webmaster, Yvon Riendeau.

The poster features a dark blue background with white and yellow text. At the top left is a red circular logo with a white 'S' and a scale. To its right is a stylized logo of a river and trees. The main title 'BEYOND BORDERS' is in large white letters, with 'LANDS RIVERS PEOPLES' below it. The event location and dates are 'DOWNTOWN WINDSOR ONTARIO' and 'OCTOBER 17-19 2025'. The schedule is listed by day: Friday Oct 17 (Opening Ceremonies at Chimczuk Museum), Saturday Oct 18 (Main Sessions, MCM Round Table, Evening Banquet at St. Clair Centre for the Arts), and Sunday Oct 19 (Indigenous Round Table at St. Clair Centre for the Arts, Tours and Workshops at Francois Baby House, Historic Sandwich Towne, Assumption Church). At the bottom, it states 'ACCOMODATIONS AVAILABLE AT BEST WESTERN AND DOUBLE TREE DOWNTOWN WINDSOR'.

Bonnechere Provincial Park Archaeology Week 2025 Summary Report

Chapter Teamwork a success

Good planning in advance paid off as a strong contingent of Ottawa Chapter members, led by Phillipe Trottier and other members of our executive represented the Ontario Archaeological Society at Archaeology Days in the Park 2025. Setup of tables for our displays was facilitated by helpful park staff and some park visitors began to make an appearance before the official start at 10 am. As usual, the beautiful beach at Bonnechere Park was strong competition, but the Chapter, The Friends of Bonnechere Parks, and the Upper Ottawa Valley Heritage Centre exhibits held their own.



Rory MacKay, author of *Spirits of the Little Bonnechere*, and other histories, was on hand to sign books and engage with campers; Monica Maika, Bob Clark and Gabby Clark had busy picnic tables all morning as they ably facilitated “Every Sherd Tells a Story” – a fun and challenging ceramic mending activity. This segued nicely into Ellen Blaubergs and Stacey Girling-Christie’s new program developed by Ellen this past winter. The decorated paper plates displayed on “The Great Wall of China - Bonnechere Campers’ Version” were inspired by archaeological sherds and antique examples set out on the picnic tables.





Once again Phil Trottier and Bill MacLennan engaged with campers as they looked after the OAS/Ottawa Chapter tables featuring artifact casts and various handouts. Brad Drouin was back for a third time, demonstrating the knapping of flint to make tools; Luke Dickerson demonstrated the use of a bow drill and board to make fire . . . successfully, I might add.

Completing our circle of activities and presentations was a “Timeline of Civilizations” originally created by Ken Swayze; Lyla Reid had a display representing the Upper Ottawa Valley Heritage Centre, and Jane Duff and Anne Burchat from the Friends of Bonnechere Provincial Park promoted *Discover the Spirits of the Little Bonnechere*, a cultural heritage activity book for youth.



With the morning’s interpretation of the past done, chapter members enjoyed a lunch from Subway in Barry’s Bay, as arranged by Marian Clark. No, we didn’t forget to include Marian’s usual involvement in the day’s activities. Although not physically present that day due to helping a friend in need, Marian had invested weeks of planning to make the event a success. By late afternoon, the Pine Shores Cabin right by the waters of Round Lake, was available.

An evening program of a different kind was held at the Davenport Centre on Saturday: six ten-minute talks about regional archaeology and discovery by different presenters, rather than one long talk by one person.

This “Pecha Kucha” (Japanese for “chit chat”) format and content seemed to keep people’s interest. We might try it again some year.



On Sunday morning, a bit of shameless promotion in a nearby parking lot and outside a comfort station, as well as a walk along the beach with a reconstructed chamber pot, proved successful in drawing some park visitors to a display and activity entitled “Ick, Yuk, Eew – Our Gross Ottawa Valley Archaeology and History.” Ellen’s inspiration to create this program came from a book with a similar title. She would like to acknowledge the author, Lois Miner Huey, a former archaeologist with the state of New York. A great selection of icky and yucky artifacts was provided by the Ottawa Chapter, Marian, Ellen, and the NCC Archaeology Program.

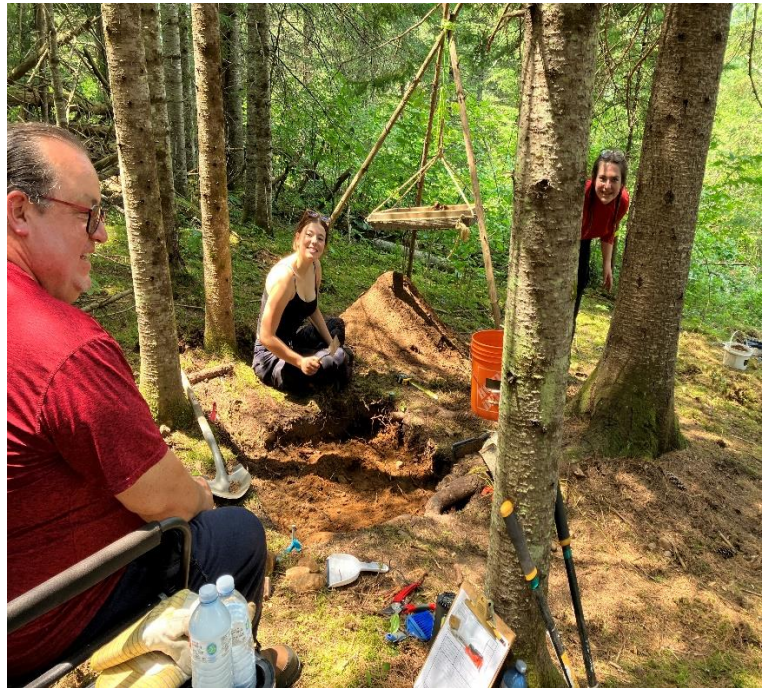


Return to the Dickerson Site

Monday saw a return to the Dickerson Site to once again volunteer in doing some shovel testing and unit excavation under the direction of Courtney Cameron, of Cameron Heritage Consulting Incorporated. A smudge was held along with a “Bear Song” given by one of the active participants from the Algonquins of Ontario and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, prior to nine o'clock when instructions for the day were given by Courtney.



It was a half hour drive to the parking spaces beside the access road and another twenty minutes walk in to the Dickerson Site. Five units were opened up and excavated by trowel at 10 cm intervals. In addition, a two metre by half metre trench was excavated across one foundation mound and borrow ditch defining the eastern wall of the camboose shanty found in 2011. A considerable amount of work was done over three days, given temperatures in the mid 30 degrees and an abundance of Deer flies. In addition to helping with excavation, Park staff were very good about providing hydration to all. Although few artifacts were found, archaeologists find useful data from empty excavations with stratigraphy.





Quoting from a letter of thanks from Jason Mask, Bonnechere Provincial Park Superintendent:

"...it's a wonderful reflection of the important work happening at the Dickerson site and the spirit of collaboration that makes it all possible..."

"...I'm glad to hear that everyone had such a positive experience again this year. The feedback and photos that have been shared so far really speak to the success of the week, and it's always a pleasure to support the Ottawa Chapter and all of the volunteers who make this event such a highlight...Appreciate your ongoing commitment and partnership. Wishing you a fantastic summer as well...hopefully with just the right amount of sunshine!"



Thanks to everyone who contributed both on site and behind the scenes to make Archaeology Week a success. Together we uncovered some of the hidden heritage of an important site and river and park.

by Rory MacKay
with editorial input from Ellen Blaubergs, Courtney Cameron,
and Marian Clark.

*Images courtesy of: Rory Mackay and Ellen Blaubergs;
Greta Prince sent the Chapter the image of Brantley holding his
amazing paper plate (on page 3) along with permission to publish.*



A Warm Welcome at the Dickerson Site Camboose Shanty

by Rory MacKay

The thermometer registered well above 30 degrees C each afternoon during the three days in mid-July 2025 when I joined other members of the Ottawa Chapter in continuing work at the Dickerson site on the Bonnechere River, along with park staff from Bonnechere Provincial Park, under the direction of Courtney Cameron of Cameron Heritage Consulting, Inc. Despite the heat and the presence of Deer Flies and Horse Flies and Mosquitoes in fair abundance, and even a few Sand Flies, many of this year's archaeological objectives were accomplished in just three days. Although "Time Team" said they did their investigations in "just three days" I believe much mapping and drawing of profiles was done in the days following; not so in our case.

My assigned objective was to determine the extent of the earthen mounds adjacent to the shanty walls surrounding the camboose mound discovered in 2011 and partially excavated in July 2024. When shanties were built by the shanty men in search of big pine, anytime between 1830 and 1900, earth dug from a borrow ditch along the edge of the shanty was piled against the bottom logs, presumably to provide some insulation. Complicating matters in 2025 was an abundance of shrubs and forest debris obscuring much of the southern mound and forest debris obscuring the northern mound adjacent to the Bonnechere River. Park Superintendent Jason Mask kindly cleared the debris over the apparent location of the northern wall, but it was still hard to locate. It is speculated that some of that mound and parts of the eastern and western mounds were levelled when spring flood-waters inundated the northern part of the shanty site. Even though there was no continuous ditch outside the northern mound, an estimation of where the mound should be, was possible. Based

on a best-case location for the corners of the shanty, the shanty appears to have been a north-south oriented rectangle measuring roughly 10 metres by 11 metres, with a camboose hearth located centrally. Although more than a full 5-hour day was spent in measuring the shanty, with very capable assistance from Georgian Parkes, only the east and west mounds and the eastern ditch were mapped in detail, with the northern and southern mounds and the western ditch estimated in their location. Chalk that oversight by me as due to the heat of the second day, age, and a lack of wisdom to take enough advantage of the water and energy drinks on ice which park staff were excellent in providing. Fortunately, the walls will still be there if and when someone returns to complete their measurements, perhaps me later in the summer.

Since the shanty wall mounds were so difficult to see, it was necessary to verify the structure of the expected mound and ditch complex relative to the original soil layers. That involved my second objective, excavation of a two metre by one-half metre trench across the eastern wall where there was minimal vegetation. Assistance in this task was given by Georgian Parkes, Gabby Clark, Monica Maika, Ellen Blaubergs, and Courtney Cameron.



Details of the mapping and that excavation will be included in the official report by Courtney, however, it was confirmed that there was a mound, and a ditch representing the wall of a camboose shanty.

Notwithstanding the temperature and the flies, the personal opportunity to work with interested people and to do hands-on (and on-knees) archaeology on my third camboose shanty in or near Algonquin Park was most gratifying.



This 7" (17.5 cm) side plate served as an inspiration for one of this year's Archaeology Days activities at Bonnechere Provincial Park. The backstamp above has the pattern name - **Mountain Trails** from the **Canadian Western Art Specialities** line, and manufacturer - **MEDALTA** - Medalta Potteries Limited of Medicine Hat, Alberta (1912-1954). It was made during the pottery's waning years in the early 1950s and was designed by their art department head, Tom Hulme. Medalta Potteries Ltd. was one of Canada's largest producers of sturdy hotelware, kitchenware, and souvenir items. It is interesting to note the bean pot and coffee pot in this design, as these vessels were two of their best sellers.



Images: EB

Sources:

Blaubergs, E.

2019 "Practically" *Canadian – Medalta Pottery*. Tea Time Talks 5, (3 pp.), Coldwater Museum, Coldwater, ON.

2020 *May I take your order? Exploring Restaurant China*. Tea Time Talks 9, (4 pp.), Coldwater Museum, Coldwater, ON.

Getty, Ronald M.

1994 *The Kilns of Southeastern Alberta*. Friends of Medalta Society, Medicine Hat, Alberta.

2025 Ottawa Chapter Executive Committee

President: Phil Trottier
Vice President: Brad Drouin
Treasurer: Bill MacLennan
Secretary: Monica Maika
Director at Large: Marian Clark
Director at Large: Pierre Desrosiers (until May)
Director at Large: Stephanie Carles
Director at Large: Aaron Mior
Director at Large (*The Ottawa Archaeologist*
Newsletter Editor): Ellen Blaubergs

Don't forget to renew your **2025 OAS** and
Ottawa Chapter memberships

<https://ontarioarchaeology.org/get-involved/membership/>

Thank you to everyone who has renewed.

Our mailing address is:

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With appreciation for information and
contributions to this issue....

Marian Clark, Rory MacKay, Athena Sotirakos



Ottawa Chapter
ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The clay pipe in the Ottawa Chapter logo is from the Roebuck Village Site excavations undertaken in 1912 and 1915. It was reported and illustrated in *Roebuck Prehistoric Village Site, Grenville County, Ontario* by W. J. Wintemberg, National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No. 83; 1972 Facsimile Edition; page 163, Plate XVI, Figure 18.

Coming up in the next *Ottawa Archaeologist*...

- 2025 OAS Symposium Recap
- Book Review – *Aprons and Moccasins*
- Acknowledging Service and Leadership

Remember...

Our newsletter is a great place to showcase images, short articles, event notifications, book and media reviews, and other related items. Please send them to ottawaoas@gmail.com for consideration.



ARKEOLOGY license plate seen while exiting an
Ottawa parking garage this past summer. Do we
know who came up with the clever spelling?

Image courtesy of Athena Sotirakos