

STRATA

NEWSLETTER OF THE PETERBOROUGH CHAPTER OF THE ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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President's Message

Greetings! I trust that you have all had ample opportunity to enjoy the hot sunny days of the past couple of months. For some readers, that translates into lots of sunscreen in the field. For others, not quite so fortunate as to be able to indulge their passion for the practice, we are continuing to explore opportunities for Public Archaeology. As Ottawa Chapter President Glenna Roberts proclaims in their latest newsletter: *"Public Archaeology should not be something separate, but should be integral to the excavation process – the more archaeologists learn, the more their responsibility to inform the public. HURRAH FOR PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY"*. We hope that next year we will be able to offer members a chance to sharpen up the ol' Marshalltown and go play in the dirt.

Still, not all archaeology-related activities are conducted in field, nor do they necessarily involve lab work. Part of our chapter's role is to promote ethical

practices, and to advocate for the importance of Archaeology in a sometimes seemingly uncaring society. Letters went out to two local school boards this week after it was learned that a high school teacher was scouting for known sites in order to conduct excavations with the class. The boards were advised that such activities were in contravention of the Ontario Heritage Act and they were requested to advise their staff accordingly. That was the stick...the carrot proffered, though, was an offer to explore opportunities with them to create such teachable moments in a licenced environment.

A letter was also sent to the attention of Environment Minister Peter Kent, whose portfolio includes the administration of Parks Canada. It pretty much speaks for itself:

Sir,

I am writing as President of the Peterborough Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Association, as well as one who is active in many aspects of Canadian heritage preservation. Recently, I submitted photos of some unusual artifacts to Parks Canada's Material Culture Research section. Within a day, they had been identified for me. This is an invaluable service to those who seek to interpret and preserve the artifacts which reveal to us hidden elements of our collective past. However, I was also made aware of the fact that all of the staff who service this section will be laid off as of August 30, 2012.

I am appalled that the Government of Canada is gutting Parks Canada's archaeological services in general, and this pending action is yet one more insult to the integrity of our National cultural heritage. I would respectfully request that the Minister review these changes, perhaps prefaced by a re-reading of Parks Canada's stated mandate, role and commitments. Your own words echo these themes: East, west, north, south – we are at work everywhere, side-by-side with our partners, building a legacy for tomorrow.

Yet your Ministry's current actions support none of those aspirations. Our Nation deserves better.

Sincerely, Tom Mohr, President, Peterborough Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society

Yes, I was irked. That was August 10, and no response so far. Should I hear from the Minister, I'll report back.

Meanwhile, at this writing we are organizing our Fall field trip and we'll get word out to the membership as soon as details are firmed up. I'd also direct the reader's attention to the great line-up of Fall speakers and remind them of the pot-luck dinner in December. Thanks to all, especially members of the Executive, for their continued support of the Chapter.

Searching for Chert

By Dirk Verhulst

On July 14, one of the driest and hottest days of the year, Peterborough Chapter members Bill Fox, Tom Mohr and I embarked upon a search for the elusive Ordovician chert that the Native people used to make their stone tools. Bill and Tom had heard some tantalizing rumours that chert could be found in the area of Balsam Lake.

We decided to investigate.



Bill Fox, Dirk Verhulst, Dianne Grubbe, Wayne Jolly at Indian Point

Our first stop was the Sweet Bottoms Coffee Shop in Fenelon Falls. The owners of the café, Wayne Jolly and Dianne Grubbe, had told Tom about some unusual outcrops of rocks they had discovered while hiking in the woods at Indian Point on the shore of Balsam Lake.

Over coffee (and some very tasty and appropriately 'layered' pastry), Bill, who is a well-recognized

expert in lithics, described what we were looking for. "Look for a layer of dark rock sandwiched between layers of limestone," he said.

Wayne and Dianne then led us to Indian Point.

After taking precautions against the poison ivy that grows rampant in the area, we set out on what, at first, appeared to be a well-travelled trail. As we hiked deeper and deeper into the woods, however, the trail became increasingly obscured by the dense undergrowth.

Eventually we came upon some shallow depressions. Several of them were filled with piles of different size stones. We spread out and began to examine the stones looking for what the dark veins Bill had described to us.

Each of us carried several stones that looked promising back to Bill for confirmation.

No luck. But...we did find a clue.

On the way back we came up a huge boulder just sitting by itself in the woods. Bill called us over.

Running his hand over the top layer, he asked, "Do you see this?"

We leaned in to have a closer look at the roughened and brittle material on top of the boulder.

"That's calcarenite," he told us. "It's representative of an active water environment that's filled with accumulated debris. It can indicate the presence of Balsam Lake chert."

Buoyed by this discovery we continued our search.

Directly across from Indian Point is the northern side of Grand Island in Balsam Lake. Peter von Bitter's 1984 field work had indicated that we might find chert in that area.

To confirm this we would need a boat. Fortunately, Bill had brought his boating license with him and we were able to rent one at a local marina.

On the way over to the island Bill revved up the motor. The breeze brought a welcome relief from the heat.



Bill and Tom navigating the channel at Balsam Lake

The map that the staff at the marina had given us indicated some very shallow water ahead. While Bill called

out the depth readings, Tom kept his eyes on the shore looking for outcroppings of rock. I hung over the bow checking for submerged rocks.

When we found a promising location, Bill cautiously steered the boat ashore.

We spread out along the trail, looking for vantage points from which to examine the rock face from above. It didn't take Bill long to find what we were looking for. Sure enough the rock he showed us had a thin layer of dark stone running through layers of lighter limestone.

"That's it," he said.

While Bill continued to explore the area where he had found his sample. We went on ahead to see what we could find. I stayed on top of the rocky ledge. Bill decided to wade in the water.

He made the smarter choice. Not only did he get to cool down, he had a much clearer view of the rock formations from the water than I did.

Tom had also taken to the lake and was wading his way west toward Bill. He pointed out to me a 20 cm. strip of dark stone occurring in a layer about two metres above the water line. After some poking and attempts to dislodge a sample he reluctantly dismissed it as appearing too coarse to be the chert we were seeking.

Tom climbed back up the bank and we returned along the trail to where Bill was triumphantly displaying the sample he had found. Upon inspection, Tom realized it was identical to the deposit he had scrutinized. Bill explained how the normally fine grain had been obscured by patination, which would have thrown off his assessment.



When we returned to the spot where Tom had found the seam, he cleared away some of the overhanging brush. Bill used his prospector's hammer to break off a couple of pieces.

Eureka!

We documented the find by snapping several photos.

Who knew that a piece of rock could cause so much excitement?

On the way back Bill documented the location of our find from the boat. On our left was the north shore of Grand Island. On our right was Indian Point.

For a moment we paused and reflected upon a time, thousands of years ago, when the ancestors of the Native peoples may have crossed the shallow channel to find the highly valued chert that played such an important role in their way of life.

The three of us agreed: it had been a great way to spend a hot summer's day.

*A note from the author,
This segment of the story presents some diplomatic challenges, given the behaviour of some of the leading characters. While a great deal will be omitted, some of the following may be deemed somewhat disrespectful, but that is not the intent. My objective is simply to provide a sense of the occasionally bizarre academic world into which a naive high school student walked. It was a time of social turmoil, with rapidly changing values.....the Age of Aquarius, the Vietnam War, the Rolling Stones and Timothy Leary. Despite sage advice from our family doctor – “archaeology is a good hobby, but no way to earn a living”, I was determined to pursue my passion!*

The Academic Years: Bill Fox goes to college.

Being a Hamilton boy, my first choice of university was McMaster; especially following *Hamilton Spectator* reports concerning excavations at the Old Lilac Gardens in the Royal Botanical Gardens by Dr. Frank Vallee of the Sociology Department (the first Princess Point Complex excavations in Cootes Paradise). However, these plans were altered by a University of Toronto (and Yale University) experiment, wherein final year high school students were offered the opportunity for advanced admission to university (prior to final examinations) if you scored well on the new Yale Entrance Examination Board test. During the winter of 1966, hundreds of Hamilton Grade 13 students converged on the

Hamilton Armories to write the exam and await their fate. To my surprise (and that of my friends!), a letter arrived from the University of

Toronto granting me advanced admission, and the decision was made. Even more surprising was a subsequent invitation from Dr. Irving Rouse at Yale, which was turned down due to his area of research – the (boring) Caribbean...this decision I have questioned at various points over the ensuing years. I had determined to enroll in University College, as it was non-denominational, and selected Devonshire House residence for financial reasons. The latter was the “professional” residence on the St. George campus, inhabited by soon-to-be doctors, lawyers, engineers, dentists, architects, pharmacists, and one “arts-man” or “artsie”. Somehow I survived an experience that would have done John Belushi proud - I recently reread a number of Dean Lennox’s residence council reprimands. Otherwise, life revolved around an assortment of anthropology classes; including, Dr. Emerson’s pottery type seriation lectures. The world of Huron Incised and Pound Necked ceramics opened for me and junior fellow students like Roberta O’Brien. (Figure 1)



Figure 1

As my four years of undergraduate training proceeded, I came to know and work with students such as Alan Tyyska, Bill Russell, Sonja Jerkic, Dean Knight, Wallace Smith, Peter Ramsden, Bill Finlayson, Martha Latta, Peter Reid, and in later years, Ian Kenyon and Dave Stothers (McMaster graduates), Bill Ross, Thor Conway, Paddy Reid and Grace Rajnovich. The majority of these were graduate students. For instance, Peter Ramsden had earned his B.A. by 1967 and, after spending a year in the new University of Calgary archaeology program, returned to Toronto in the Fall of 1968 to begin his PhD. studies with fellow students Dean Knight and Marti Latta. Like myself, Peter and also Ian Kenyon had been high school “avocational archaeologists”. Peter worked on the Draper village, and for Walter at Miller and Norm at Cahigue (Warminster). Ian worked with his father, Tim (a commercial artist with a strong interest in history), surveying for sites in Cootes Paradise and along the Grand River. Ivan Kocsis, an artist associate of Tim’s also interested in Grand River archaeology, once contacted my father to arrange a meeting between the two high school student “archaeologists”, which unfortunately never came to pass. During my undergraduate years, day to day interaction with the graduate students not only influenced me archaeologically, but contributed to a mastery of extreme frisbee in the hallways of the Sidney Smith building!

On a more serious note, the enthusiasm of the mid-sixties, which infused our work, gave way to cynicism by the turn of the decade, as resentment grew concerning certain faculty members of the so-called “Wisconsin clique”. By the summer of 1969, there were no less than four University of Wisconsin archaeology graduates among the Anthropology Department faculty, plus a fifth at the ROM, who was husband to a paleoanthropologist hired by the Department (note - Bill Irving was born in Toronto, but grew up in the States). The majority had arrived during the summer of 1967, due to the efforts of the new Departmental Chairman Dr. Tom McFeat, who “oversaw tumultuous changes in the department”, according to *A Brief History of Anthropology at University of Toronto* (Anthropology Department WEB site). I remember joining Dr. Emerson in an unpleasant discussion with Dr. McFeat, concerning the Department’s hiring policies. This was instigated by the demoralizing experiences of my graduate student friends and resulted in the expected response from the Chair - that I should mind my own business (in so many words!). A copy of a manifesto addressed to the administration and circulated widely in the department remains in my files, signed by “The committee for preparing a brief to the archaeology section” – Roberta O’Brien, Peter Ramsden, Bill Russell, Frances Stewart and Alan Tyyska. These events had soured my relationship with Bill Hurley to the point that I was fired from the Algonquin Park survey in 1970,

following a lengthy discourse composed of accusations and rebuttals, until a final confession was extracted about potato peelings thrown out the back of the cook tent while on “KP” duty (potentially attracting dangerous wildlife)! This worked for me, as I was scheduled to excavate with Dr. Henri de Lumley at the Palaeolithic site of Lazaret in Nice over the coming month. Despite the above, my first field experience during the Fall of 1967 provided a taste of University of Toronto archaeology as it had been. The size of the Fall field school at Cahiague was such that even 18 year old neophytes were “called up” to supervise the close to 1000 students expected to participate in a trenching exercise of a scale rarely witnessed since WW 1! These were heady times, which were grounded by subsequent experiences at the so-called Thunder Bay (Maurice) ossuary during May of 1968. The student crew had been given a month to excavate a roughly six by seven by two metre deep Wendat Attignawantan mass grave. Graduate student Alan Tyyska supervised the archaeological field work, while Sonja Jerkic was responsible for osteological recording and recovery. The project proceeded at a measured pace for three weeks, until Dr. Hurley “read the riot act” about the need to complete the project on time and jumped into the pit to illustrate a more rapid method of recovery. During this project, I was dispatched on a survey to the north of the adjacent Maurice village site which had been identified through test pitting to the north of the ossuary.

While it was unknown to the senior project investigator, who was oblivious to any previous research in the Province, it did not take us long to locate (or should I say, relocate) the Robitaille village, where the landowner, Mr. Robitaille, informed us of Frank Ridley’s recent testing of the site!

Next, I was recruited by Alan Tyyska to work on his much different Cahiague north village project. The next several months were a valuable introduction to large-scale Iroquoian village excavation techniques, as we exposed and carefully documented the northeast quadrant of this important Wendat Arendarhonon village. Thereafter, Dr. Emerson organized a crew, and we travelled north to Cobalt to undertake the initial testing and salvage excavation of the Montreal River site, which was about to be destroyed by the construction of an Ontario Hydro generating station.

The following year, Alan asked me to supervise a survey of Tiny Township Wendat sites with two U of T graduate students – Mary Mullen and Jerry Kukan, which provided an unexpected opportunity to renew acquaintances with Frank Ridley. Our crew was testing and mapping a large prehistoric Wendat (Lalonde) village near Farlain Lake, when I came upon Frank excavating a midden on the concession road shoulder. I mentioned that we had located an undisturbed midden nearby, and wouldn’t he like to test it? He agreed and we moved his screen to the new location. Frank then took a shovel-full of earth and deposited an intact ceramic vessel section from high collared rim to mid-

body with a thump on the screen (without a nick)! I departed somewhat in shock at his feat, and returned several hours later to find him back at the roadside midden. He had not found the new midden particularly productive and, as we spoke, Frank picked a complete "Lalonde point" (Naticoke Notched) hanging by a side notch from a wire of his half inch screen, noting that they were often elusive! I returned to camp that day knowing that I had been in the company of a master. During 1969, I also volunteered on Peter Ramsden's Rocky Ridge (Late Archaic) site excavation at Inverhuron Provincial Park, participated briefly on Bill Finlayson's Thede (Saugeen) site test excavations, and in the Fall, directed mapping and test excavation of the DeWaele (Glen Meyer) village site. The latter had been brought to my attention that summer by Mr. Don Hurst of the Norfolk County Board of Education, whom I also worked with earlier that Spring regarding burials reported on the Bruce Boyd farm near Long Point. The field season ended guiding a new ROM archaeologist on his first Ontario field trip to visit the George Lake sites in Killarney Provincial Park, which had been excavated forty years before by Dr. Greenman of the University of Michigan. Arriving at a tree throw that displayed a "snowfall" of white quartzite retouch flakes among its roots, I announced our arrival on the George Lake 2 site. Dubious about the cultural origin of the flakes, he was only convinced when a broken biface was pulled from the loose earth.

I graduated with my Honours B.A. in Anthropology in 1970, which turned out to be another year of active field work. It began as Thor Conway, Scott Horvath and I assisted Dave Stothers in salvage excavating the Porteous (Princess Point) village at the Brantford City waste disposal site. It was one of those memorable projects, combining camping in a municipal dump adjacent to the City sewage treatment plant (where they kindly allowed us to shower occasionally) with Friday evening trips to the Graham Bell Hotel on the back of garbage trucks and return travel to the dump late at night, courtesy of terrified taxi drivers (at least the first few nights, until word got out among the drivers). It did not take me long to discover a double palisade line and substantial hillside midden, which had been missed the previous season during another university's excavations (slides of that midden excavation display bathroom tissue wrapped around excavation unit stakes, courtesy of the winds blowing across the dump). The final insult was being told to clean up our campsite by the dump manager!

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Hurley left for a project in Oaxaca, Mexico after directing Dean to hire the most experienced crew possible for his Algonquin Park survey. Having no interest in the project, Dean passed the job on to me, and when Bill returned, he was shocked to be confronted with a crew composed primarily of long-haired high school students (fans of Frank Zappa), who were indeed the most experienced field crew available (youths such as Jamie Hunter and Dave Morrison).

As noted earlier, my association with the project terminated after a month in the field, but not before some rather miraculous events! That Fall, Dave Stothers continued his Grand River field work at the Cayuga Bridge site, where I assisted along with Ian Kenyon, Maureen Driscoll, and Barry Newton, providing photo-documentation of the river bank profile illustrated in David's doctoral dissertation.

My 1971 graduate year focused on the excavation of the DeWaele village. We were visited regularly by the local crop dusters who "buzzed" our camp in the early morning and occasionally by Dr. Emerson, who regaled us with stories of projects past. My favorite moment occurred one morning when Norm was sitting on top of our picnic table, smoking and telling stories to an enthralled crew. The latter grew nervous at the distant and approaching sound of a familiar airplane engine. Everyone kept their nerve until the last moment, when the plane roared literally metres above Norm's head. Collecting ourselves from the ground, we marveled at his bravery, but were told by our nonchalant professor that "well I don't want to die, and I assume that he doesn't either." As we explained to Norm that the pilot was flying without a license because he had terminal throat cancer, his demeanor changed somewhat as the cigarette fell from his hand! Otherwise, it was an extremely hot summer (reaching 116 F. on site during June 28!), so that we were lucky to have the use of George DeWaele's tobacco irrigation system to keep the sandy soil wet for

mapping and provide showers for the crew. (Figure 2)



Figure 2: Dr. J. Norman Emerson Contemplates the DeWaele Village Site (Stew Leslie in the background)

One evening, as was traditional, we hosted the McMaster University crew who were excavating on the nearby Van Besien site. Several beers were consumed and as the visiting crew piled into the grey and maroon van to return to their camp, I suddenly realized the vulnerability of our survey datum stake adjacent to the farm lane. Running to the location as the head lights described an arc across the site, I frantically waved my arms and stepped aside just in time to see their left front tire strike the datum and watch the red tail lights twist and bounce into the distance. Later in the afternoon of the following day George DeWaele wandered over to the excavation and casually asked if I knew anything about a grey vehicle that seemed to have struck his farm wagon (to Dr. Noble's credit, he did return and make good for the wagon repairs). Over that summer, our relationship with the crop dusting pilots grew (I did some very low level aerial

photography) and our liaison with the Norwich community warmed to the point that our finishing-up pig roast became quite a social occasion. One pilot was so excited that he landed in the neighbouring farmer's field and buried the wheels of his Cesna to the axels. Luckily, we had a strong crew and stout rope to pull him onto the adjacent side road for take-off! Overall, the project was a success, to the extent that the U of T field school was held on site later that year, based in the extremely comfortable facilities of nearby Innisfree farm.

As my initial attempt at the M.A. exams was unsuccessful, I accepted an invitation from Dr. Noble that Fall to attend McMaster University. This proved to be an unwise decision. With subsequent success in the U of T examinations I did receive my M.A.; but while my passion for archaeology remained, my dedication to academe had run its course. It was time for a change! In hindsight, the majority of my learning had derived from field experience and graduate student discussions; excepting some classic Emerson courses and Dr. Bruce Schroeder's Palaeolithic archaeology seminar, wherein he facilitated my access for metric analysis to hundreds of British Thames valley handaxes held by the ROM Near Eastern and Asian Civilizations Department. Some years earlier, I had become aware of the ROM Palaeolithic holdings as my interest in Iroquoian lithics was burgeoning (anything but ceramics!) and, approaching the Geology Department curatorial staff for chert/flint reference specimens, I had been handed Upper Palaeolithic

tools displaying neat handwritten labels such as "La Madeleine 1887" and "Le Moustier 1889"!

Before ending this chapter, I must thank Bruce for arranging an entertaining month living in a residence overlooking the beach in Nice, while excavating La Grotte du Lazaret in 1970. Also, I must acknowledge my debt to Norm in recruiting a "green" first year student as trench supervisor for one of the awesome Fall student excavations on the Cahiaque site, and for subsequent support during the increasingly difficult years at U of T; years that led to the abandonment of graduate careers by brilliant students such as Alan Tyyska, Peter Ramsden, Bill Russell, and Ian Kenyon.

Epilogue

As you, the reader, can sense, there are many more stories which could have been shared regarding these first academic years; some sad and many amusing. Those more interested in archaeology than anecdotes can visit my page on the current Academia.edu WEB site to review the publication record during this early period.

I am indebted to Peter Ramsden, who agreed to spend an hour of his time on the phone reminiscing and confirming the dates of various events. Likewise, Gerry Kukan shared some of his memories concerning the Tiny Township survey. As with any such endeavour, any errors are the sole responsibility of the author.

“Think Like an Archaeologist”

For ten years Mike Stringer has been a practicing archaeologist. Now, as a recent graduate of the Trent University School of Education, he is also a teacher.

According to Mike it’s a natural combination.

“Think of learning as an archaeological excavation,” he says. “Teachers are the lead archaeologists. Students are the investigators.”

During the last year, as part of the regular practice teaching requirements for his education degree, Mike had to do an ‘alternative’ placement. He chose to do his assignment with the Peterborough Chapter of the OAS. As the past president of the local chapter he was eminently qualified.

Mike’s placement with us included the following responsibilities:

- Help to plan and organize chapter presentations for the general public.



Above: Mike practicing exchanging a trowel for a desk

- Explore joint opportunities between the Peterborough Chapter and the Trent Archaeology Department.
- Develop a teaching unit in archaeology.
- Inform students and teachers about local archaeological resources.
- Prepare and deliver a presentation on archaeology and education for the chapter members and the general public.

Mike’s presentation took place on May 22, 2012. He began his talk by urging teachers to show their students how to “think like an archaeologist.”

“Our task,” he said, “is to help students find answers to the big questions.” He offered the unit he had developed, “Why Do Civilizations Collapse?” as an example.

In his unit he shows teachers how they can stimulate student thinking and find answers through

archaeological investigations, field trips, mock digs, and visits to museums.

According to Mike, "Archaeology provides a model for learning. It teaches students to practice active learning. As a discipline it naturally integrates a number of different disciplines. And, because of its hands on approach accommodates all kinds of learning styles."

Mike's enthusiasm for the educational possibilities of combining archaeology and learning is obvious. He'll make a fine teacher and we wish him the best.

Fall 2012 Schedule

Tues. Sept. 25 7:00 p.m.
Dr. Paul Healy "Mayan Archaeology and the 2012 Apocalypse"

Tues. Oct. 23 7:00 p.m.
Dr. Catherine Mathias "Archaeological Conservation and 17th Century Costume Artifacts from Ferryland, Newfoundland and

Mr. Brian Ross "Parks Canada's National Parks and Native Sites Programme: 20 Years on the Trent Severn Waterway"

Tues. Nov. 27 7:00 p.m.
Mr. William A Fox, "The Peopling of the Americas: New Evidence, Old Controversies"

Note: all sessions are at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Peterborough (please use Water St. Entrance)