

The *Egeria* petroglyph at Green Wharf, *Gabriola* SOUNDER, p.11, January 18, 2010



*The Egeria petroglyph at Green Wharf is now partially obscured by a mature Douglas-fir tree. The photo above shows an almost identical, but unobscured one in Miners Bay on Mayne Island.*

*Photo credit: Mark Lauckner*

## **The *Egeria* petroglyph at Green Wharf**

The HMS *Egeria* benchmark at Green Wharf is one of several in the Gulf Islands. There is a similar one in Miners Bay on Mayne Island, and another in Bedwell Harbour on Pender Island. All give the reference for measuring sea level while observing the local tides. The petroglyph on Gabriola is different however, in that there is an additional marking F.O.E. 11.1621, credit for the finding of which behind a large Douglas fir should go to Tammy Kinloch (only the “E.” is easily seen).

Debi Williams wrote about the petroglyph in the Gabriola Sounder, March 31 & April 14, 2000, saying: “There was some speculation recently, that F.O.E. 11.1621 might be a date. That would be November 1621! First contact was reported to be Cook in 1788. The imagination soars with the possibilities. Could another tall ship have been exploring this coast over a hundred years before that? The site is definitely safe anchorage during one of November’s storms. Would there have been a waterfall coming off the cliff nearby where thirsty sailors could pull alongside and fill empty casks without having to leave the safety of the ship or even the water? Perhaps they needed to make emergency repairs after trying to head down the unknown (False) narrows.

Maybe they were just lost at sea in one of winter's major storms, never returning to wherever they came from, to tell of the resource rich land they had visited. But...probably not."

Probably not is very true, as Debi well knew. But what then? Well to get the full answer you will have to read the article in the latest issue of the Gabriola Museum's Journal *SHALE*. All I'll say is that F.O.E. stands for "fleet of engineers" and the numbers enable you to work out the timing of the tides in the Northumberland Channel. This was in 1904 remember when tidetables were not widely available. Pictures of the ship, its officers and some of its crew, and also the ship's dogs are included in the article.

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There is a full length article about the *Egeria's* visit to Gabriola in *SHALE* 22, January 2010. The article includes an explanation of the F.O.E .11.1621 inscription.