

Vancouver Island University
Education/Social Sciences Building (356)
Room 109 or Room 111 from 7-9 PM. Lectures are open to everyone.

Archaeological Society of BC – Nanaimo Branch

LECTURE proposed for ~~December 12, 2008~~ January 9, 2009

A new look at some of Gabriola's petroglyphs

Despite the great interest in the petroglyphs of Gabriola Island, they have seldom, if ever, been the subject of investigation by the anthropological and archaeological communities. In part, this has been because they cannot be dated, either absolutely, or by association with near-by depositional layers. Nick Doe, who is an engineer (now retired), lives on Gabriola and has been taking advantage of the slack left by the the tradition of leaving petroglyph studies to enthusiastic amateurs. In this lecture, he will be describing the results of his studies over several years of the design of petroglyphs at a few remote sites loosely associated with the well-known Boulton and Church sites. These petroglyphs have a sophisticated geometry and show evidence of having been accurately aligned relative to geographic coordinates (east, west, north, south). They also have orientations defined by bedding-plane perpendicular fractures in the sandstone. In one case, the petroglyph was probably a solar calendar; and in another case, the petroglyph site contains representations of the constellations of Orion, Gemini, and Ursa Major. Nick is also an avid student of the geology of the island, and brings a geologist's perspective to the problem of dating them, and to the reasons as to why they are so rapidly eroding.