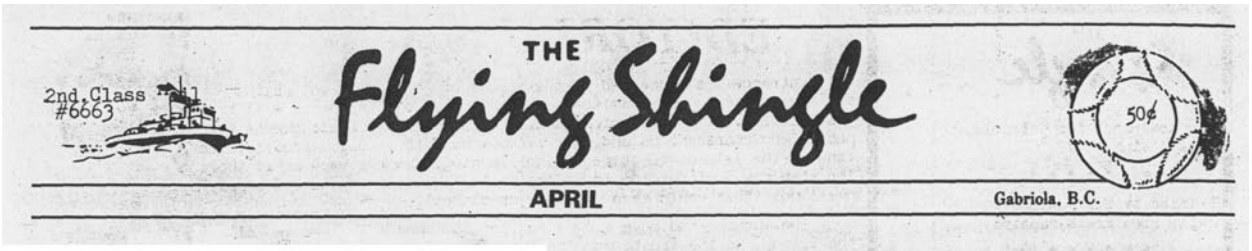
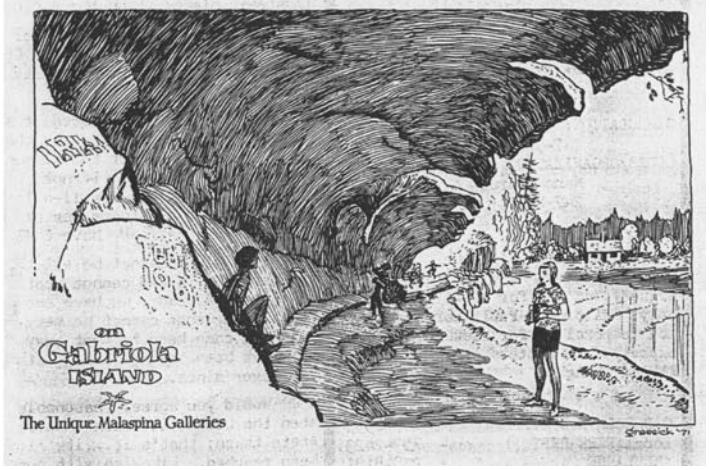
Editorial

This is the second special issue on the geology of Gabriola. This one deals, among other things, with the honeycombing of the sandstone. Much of the work in this edition is the result of original research and has not been published elsewhere before. I hope that in this issue you'll find the answer to questions in Ted Wilson's perceptive letter of April 1990 to *The Flying Shingle*. The sketch is by Jack Grassick.





Letters to The Editor

JUST WONDERING...

Have you ever wondered how the Galleries and other similar caves around the shores of Gabriola have been formed? I have. I think there is an explanation. One thing I'm sure of is that these are not "wave-cut" as many people claim.

First of all, the phenomenon seems to occur on rocks which have some southern exposure but not on the northern side. Also, one sees such erosion in areas where wave action is minimal and furthermore, the effect is only at the high tide line.

My thought is that certain kinds of sandstone which are fairly soft and absorb seawater readily, tend to dry out above high-water in direct sunlight. The drying process causes grains to loosen and dust off. It may be that repeated wetting and drying causes salt crystals to form between the grains, forcing them apart like the action of frost. Those rocks which are below the high-water line and those which have a northern exposure tend to remain damp for long periods of time.

Another effect which seems puzzling at first is the overhanging, cap-like formation. I believe this is caused by fresh water from rain which leaches out the salt from any seawater that moves upward by capillary action.

These thoughts are strictly my own and may be completely wrong. I would welcome comments from anyone who has an alternative explanation.

Ted Wilson, Gabriola.