

ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS

UBC to hold Archaeological Field School with Musqueam

The University of British Columbia's (UBC) Department of Anthropology and the Musqueam Indian Band have announced that the 2007 UBC archaeology field school will take place on Musqueam Reserve Lands this summer. The work done by the field school will be the first part of a larger research project on Musqueam heritage developed and conducted jointly by the Musqueam Indian Band Council and community and the Laboratory of Archaeology at UBC. Steering Committee members for the project are Leona Sparrow (Musqueam Indian Band Director: Treaty, Lands and Resources) Susan Rowley (UBC) and Andrew Martindale (UBC, instructor for the field school).

Working in consultation with Musqueam Band officials, elders, and community members, students will learn archaeological field methods, interpretation techniques and about the contemporary responsibilities of the archaeologist. They will be trained to survey sites using total stations, explore the sub-surface (using coring, augering and remote sensing), use mapping software, collect and manage materials and data, research historical records and will also participate in demonstrations of traditional technologies. Students will also have opportunities to learn firsthand First Nations expectations about the interpretation of the past and long term data management. The field school will run from May 7 to June 15, 2007.

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University of Washington Dating Numerous Sites throughout the San Juan Islands

The San Juan Islands Archaeological Project is based out of the Burke Museum and University of Washington (UW) Department of Anthropology, and directed by Julie Stein; it is funded by a private family foundation. Since 2005, we have been investigating and dating shell midden sites in the San Juan Islands of Washington. Our aim is to refine the chronology of prehistoric occupation in this region and contribute to the preservation of the archaeological record through erosion studies and public outreach.

We have visited twenty-two sites so far and dated most of these sites. Seven are on National Park Property, and the rest are on private land. To obtain radiocarbon samples with minimal impact to the sites, we either auger or collect bulk samples from eroding banks. Our results indicate that population density in the San Juans before 3,000 years ago was low, but the number of sites increases after that time and rises dramatically between 1,000-500



Augering at the Burger Site, Shaw Island, Washington (Left to right: UW graduate students Colby Phillips, Catherine Foster, and Amanda Taylor; Photo by J. Stein).

years ago. After 500 years ago, there is a marked decrease in number of sites. This spring and summer we plan to share our work with the San Juan Islands community through public talks and school visits.

Amanda Taylor
University of Washington

Mayans Ritually Purify Archaeological Site after President Bush's Visit

Mayan Priests conducted a ceremony at the archaeological site to exorcize evil spirits after an appearance by President Bush during his recent Mid-March tour of Latin America. The site was Iximche, 45 km west of Guatemala City, the center of the Kaqchikel Maya region centuries before contact; it's Mayan name means "Place of the Maize Tree." Bush watched a reenactment of the Mayan ball game at the ruins.

Juan Tiney, a spokesperson for a Mayan nongovernmental organization, told the *Associated Press*, that the "spirit guides of the Mayan community" decided it would be necessary to cleanse the sacred site of "bad spirits" after Bush's visit so that their ancestors could rest in peace. Once he left, reported the *Washington Post*, "the group of about a dozen ascended a partially restored stone pyramid to a central altar, where they burned incense, scattered holy water and bowed to the ground in prayer."

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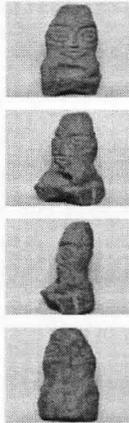


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0870: Native Artifact Human Stone

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Lot number:

Auction Date:

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Larger Picture

About This Item

Description: The Fulford Harbour Human Stone Effigy Bowl as Documented in Ancient Losses
Dimensions: 17 High
Condition: GC

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The Auctioning of BC Heritage

Variations within our Theme

This issue has been long in the making. The idea, of course, started back when the auction was first noticed for the Fulford Harbour Bowl on eBay. A flurry of emails shot around, all debating whether it was legit, whether it violated provincial laws, whether it was moral. The auction also offered a chance for the figurine bowl to return to the First Nations in whose traditional territory it was uncovered. There were more questions: Does the law allow the artifact to be seized for First Nations? Is there money together to purchase it? Meanwhile, the hours of the auction clock were counting down, leaving little time for extended debate.

The story is within the articles of this issue, and many of the issues and dilemmas raised then certainly recur here in these pages as well. We've tried to bring together multiple viewpoints, including several of those involved in those events. Don Welsh was an advocate for the Semiahmoo First Nation, who ultimately acquired the figurine bowl; he discusses it from his vantage point and provides a descriptive analysis and history of the figurine bowl itself. Ray Kenny and Jim Spafford from the Archaeology Branch explain the provincial laws regarding the selling of BC's artifacts. Susan Rowley from UBC provides an account of her interview with the auctioneer, Ted Pappas, who handled the sale as well as other artifacts he's sold in his career. Finally, Eric McLay, an archaeologist for the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group as well as president of the ASBC, provides a discussion of aboriginal title and heritage legislation in regards to archaeological property; he also provides a rebuttal to the Archaeology Branch. In addition, we have several related pieces, providing additional details, including the original news accounts from the time that were in the *Victoria Times-Colonist* and *Gulf Islands Driftwood*.

That time, it was the Fulford Harbour Bowl. There have been others since, and there undoubtedly will be more, with higher asking prices.

Bill Angelbeck,
Editor

BOWL-ING FOR DOLLARS

By Louise Dickson
Times - Colonist. Victoria, B.C.:
Apr 30, 2005. p. A1 Front
(continued C1 Front)

In defiance of the provincial government, Ted Pappas is determined to sell a rare and sacred First Nations sandstone bowl, discovered on Saltspring Island more than 30 years ago.

The archeology branch has asked Pappas, owner of Vancouver's West Coast Estates Auction, to withdraw the 2,000-year-old Fulford Harbour Bowl from an online auction which begins at noon today, until archeologists can clarify its legal status. But Pappas said his client has instructed him to "run with it."

"And I'm running with it," Pappas said.

First Nations groups and B.C.'s archeological community are distressed by the sale and by the commercial trafficking in artifacts. Don Welsh of the Semiahmoo First Nation discovered the stone bowl in an online auction, with a starting price of \$18,750.

"It's unfortunate that this sort of thing happens," said Grant Keddie, curator of the Royal British Columbia Museum. "We tend not to put a value on artifacts because their value is in their history and the part they played."

More than 30 years ago, Saltspring Island resident Ken Stevens was working for the Ministry of Transportation, clearing topsoil at a gravel pit on Crown land near an inland shell midden on the west side of Fulford Harbour. When the bucket of the backhoe was filled, it tipped forward and a stone figure fell to the ground.

"The figure stared him in the face," said Ted Pappas, owner of Vancouver's West Coast Estates Auction. "As it's falling over, he sees the face."

Pappas is now helping Stevens to sell the figure, which is a bowl generally used for ceremonial purposes by First Nations people.

Stevens brought the bowl home, but

he must have shown it to an archeologist, because it is documented in 1971. In 1988, Stevens brought it to the Royal British Columbia Museum.

"My client was very innocent. He wanted to learn about it," said Pappas. "They asked if they could have it. But he couldn't leave it."

The Archeology Branch has asked Ted Pappas to withdraw the 2,000-year-old Fulford Harbour Bowl from an online auction until archeologists can clarify its legal status. But Pappas said his client has instructed him to "run with it." "And I'm running with it," Pappas said.

The Fulford Harbour Bowl weighs 10.2 kilograms and is the largest of 12 stone bowls found in the Gulf Islands.

Two-thirds of the figure is a massive domed head with large concentric eyes, spanning the width of the face. According to Sue Rowley, curator of public archaeology at the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, the bowl could be from a time when First Nations women bound their heads to create a different shape of skull. The lips are pursed and open to suggest the figure is singing. It has a second bowl beneath its base.

"They are incredibly important pieces," said Rowley. "The rareness, the detail, all suggest they were significant to the people who created them."

In 2004, Pappas met Stevens at an antique roadshow in Fuller Lake. Stevens had brought the bowl to discover its worth. Pappas explained that its spiritual value far outweighed its monetary value. He suggested Stevens donate the bowl to the First Nations and in return they would honour him.

"But he can't afford to," said Pappas, who is not taking any commission for the sale. "He's not a rich man.

"He has taken care of this item for 35 years. He's put a roof over its head, he's heated the home, he's insured it. He

has been its custodian. You have to give him what he's due."

The Archeology and Registry Services Branch of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management is trying to investigate whether Stevens has the right to sell a bowl which was taken from Crown land. Archeologists want to talk with Stevens, to pin down details of how the bowl was found.

If they know when the bowl was discovered, they will be able to say what legislation was in force at that time, said ministry spokesman Mike Long.

From 1960 to 1972, the Archeological and Historic Sites Protection Act was in effect. It stated that no person shall knowingly alter a site on Crown land, whether designated as an archeological site or not, unless authorized to do so by permit.

The ministry is seeking legal advice on whether the removal of the bowl constitutes a breach of the act that was in place at the time. They are also trying to determine if they can do something about it after all this time.

The branch has advised Pappas that under the current Heritage Conservation Act, the Fulford Harbour Bowl is a protected heritage object and no one can remove it from B.C. unless they are granted a permit.

Pappas said three First Nation groups -- the Semiahmoo, the Saanich and Saltspring Island -- are forming an alliance to buy the bowl.

Eric McLay, spokesman for the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group, insisted First Nations people shouldn't have to buy back their cultural property. He compared the heritage laws of Greece -- which led to the arrest of a Duncan teenager for picking up a stone -- to B.C. heritage laws, under which it may be legal to pick up a significant artifact and then publicly sell it for profit.

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