



THE JOURNEY OF THE STONES

From Riverbed to Superyacht

These stones are significant, for they used as ballast in the hold of the last active Carriacou trading sloop,

Before setting out on a journey of trading by sail in the islands, it has been the custom for 100 years and more to collect stones to be used to balance the vessel under sail. On arrival at the next port,

they would be jettisoned to make room for the cargo which was often contraband.

These particular stones were collected at the riverbed in Kendeace, Carriacou and loaded onto the 39' sloop *Pipe Dream* along with some scrap iron and an old rusty gearbox.

On a breezy April morning in 2004, Winsley McLawrence and his two nephews sailed through the passage in the reef outside Windward bound for Antigua. This time she was not doing a cargo run for she had just been sold and was on delivery to her new owners.

Captain Chris Gartner of the superyacht *Maltese Falcon* and Cuyler Morris of Morris Yacht builders in Maine had fallen for the workboat and were looking forward to racing her in the Antigua Classics.

As the islands of the Grenadines grew distant in her wake, *Pipe Dream* flew along with the building wind. Fifty hours later in the light of dawn they realized they had drifted far to leeward of Guadeloupe and with the wind increasing by the hour the crew realized they would not reach Antigua in these conditions.

Winsley called for a change of plan – to sail into Guadeloupe and take shelter until the wind abated. This however, was not to be for one of the crew had been caught with contraband in the French island and had a healthy fear of meeting the coast guard. So, with her old sails beginning to tear, her rigging strained to breaking point and waves crashing on deck, *Pipe Dream* held her northerly course...

For the entire day the three men in the boat feared for their lives while they took turns bailing with the bucket. Eventually St. Kitts appeared and they sailed along the ravaged windward coast, then rounded the northern reef strewn promontory of the island. Several hours later, the old vessel limped along under the lee of Brimstone Hill to a safe anchorage and as soon as the anchor had hit the bottom, the nephews hailed a ride ashore & jumped ship....

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Sea Terror was built in 1954 as a lifeboat to brave the wild seas of the English coast. Her present job was to rescue *Pipe Dream* and tow her to Antigua.

Arriving at the dock, a relieved Winsley was already waiting for us. During the evening he recounted the tale of the desertion. Between breaks for KFC and rum we learned that the boys were convinced that *Pipe Dream* was cursed and would drag their souls into the deep blue sea when she went down...

Early the following morning we dived on her ravaged hull, patched the seams in her old planks and made ready for the tow to Antigua. On arrival at the slipway dock, the ballast was jettisoned to make room for the lead that would trim her for her new racing career but not before a few of the stones were saved. After all, they had balanced the vessel and kept her from foundering in the wild seas of those long April days and nights.

These few stones rolled smooth by the waters of the riverbed, represent the lost tradition of a sea people who's lives for many generations had also been shaped by the elements.

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