

## THE HISTORY OF 'GLI GLI'

In Salybia the canoe was "opened out" with heavy rocks and fire, ribs were added, and the 'boardage' attached. At 35 feet long with a beam of 6 ½ feet she was the largest canoe to be built in living memory. Then late in November 1996 Gli-Gli was trucked down to the port of Marigot to receive the traditional Carib blessings, encircled with gommier smoke and sprinkled with coconut milk prior to the ceremonial launching.

By May 1997 sufficient funds had been raised, and everything was ready for the 800 mile voyage south, down the islands to Guyana. With a 10 man, 2 woman Carib crew and a multi national support crew, the expedition set off to reconnect the Carib people of the southern Caribbean for the first time since the European conquest. Accompanying the Gli Gli was the 'Carmela', a beautiful Dominican schooner which acted as the 'mother ship'.



Celebrations, emotional meetings and cultural research were undertaken in the Carib communities along the way. The Gli Gli and its crew made an important historical gesture, drawing high profile media attention to the cause of indigenous peoples in the region and highlighting the plight and marginalized conditions of many the formerly great tribe's direct descendants.

The voyage was to reawaken a sense of community and brotherhood that had long since been lost among the fragmented tribal communities of the region. In this, the Gli Gli expedition was supremely successful.

