



David and Stephane - joint sculptors of St Piran

Elaine: So, David, as a sculptor from Cornwall, how did you become involved with creating the statue of Saint Piran?

David: Er, I was doing a carving demonstration in a small town in Cornwall called Helston during the restoration of a, of a building and someone mentioned the Vallée des Saints to me to have a look and I hadn't heard of it and I went online and checked it out and discovered that it was quite a big project and looked really exciting and great that it was kind of a sculpture project that focused on granite. So Stephane had already been working at the quarry for a while as well and then the next time I saw him I mentioned it to him and Stephane knew a lot about it and well we just made the decision there and then to get in touch with them. We offered our services as a couple of sculptors in a quarry with all the kit to make the sculpture and it just seemed the perfect.....

Elaine: And it evolved from that? Do you have a picture from which to work or any idea of what he would have looked like?

David: We did a, we did a drawing, you know we spent a bit of time drawing, designing together and then once the design had sort of been finalised in 2D, and sort of that got sanctioned by the Vallée des Saints then we could go on to make the model which we made in clay and then we had the clay one cast by a, a colleague at the university, so that we could make reproductions and that we had a model, a scale model to work from with, with the granite block that we had.

Elaine: So how long have you actually been working on it? How long has it taken?

David: We started working on it essentially in May last year and from that point we've been working on it sort of part-time. What we were really interested in and, and what was quite important to us was that firstly that we were gonna make it in the quarry where we work....

Elaine: That's over in Cornwall?

David: Yeah, so the quarry, the quarry's called Trenoweth Quarry and its not far from Penryn, in the south west of Cornwall.

Elaine: Did you come across any particular difficulties or did things run quite smoothly?

David: Really quite smoothly really. I mean, Stephane and I hadn't actually made a sculpture together before and that.....

Elaine: This is the beginning of a future bonding, in that respect, maybe?



David: We're kind of brothers, brothers in granite.

Elaine: Oh brothers in granite, I like that, yes. So it brings me to the question, as you say the heritage why was Saint Piran chosen to be the 100th statue here? And why, what was his importance?

Stephane: Well, Saint Piran is the, the iconic saint of Cornwall so for us he was kind of first choice because the sculpture that we were commissioned to do is very iconic. It's the 100th sculpture, the 10 years anniversary, so he had to have some kind of iconic representation of it and Saint Piran is the icon of it, so it was just to, to bring the best of what Cornwall has to offer, Saint Piran, the grant that we used from councils.....

Elaine: Interesting, yes. And the connection with Brittany?

Stephane: Well yeah, of course because that's important you know because we are the first one doing the giants crossing where the boat is picking up granite which is not native to Brittany and, and the monks before used to be that connection going through Ireland to Cornwall, to Cornwall to Brittany, so that's what we've done with Saint Piran we, we tried to have someone that represented the Celtic connection, because he was from Ireland, went to Cornwall, from Cornwall to Brittany so we have this 3 type of granite that he put his foot on in the sculpture.

Elaine: 3 Celtic places, countries ...

David: So the millstone is a piece of Irish granite, the body is Cornish and the face is French, Breton.

Elaine: That's brilliant because that's bringing the 3 cultures which are actually similar with the Celtic.....

Stephane: It's 3 cultures, it's the notion of journey because it's a journey because where he is at the moment he's about to go through the journey. The making of the sculpture is a journey it's a journey as well for the boat that's gonna bring it from.....

Elaine: Absolutely, its an old fishing boat?

Stephane: Yeah it's an old fishing boat, so it's just to bring everything together all at once.

David: And I think, I think with Saint Piran I guess it was going to give us profile. There could have been a few other saints that we could have chosen that are kind of very specific to Cornwall, but Saint Piran is so iconic within Cornwall that it, it kind of, I guess it's made the job ...

Elaine: So, the journey of the statue to the site here, how is that going to happen?



Stephane: It's gonna leave the quarry where we've been making Saint Piran, quarry on a steam engine through towns and through Mabe, Penryn and Falmouth to kind of relieved we traced the history background of masonries through the Penryn peninsular. Then it's gonna reach an harbour in Falmouth where it's gonna be craned on the boat, that will be on 5th and 6th of May and then, weather depending, we'll, we sail on 11th of May. Yes we'll sail with a little bit of a flotilla from Cornish and Breton all sailing boats, reach Paimpol on the 12th when there will be a celebration there, some sculptures from here, Cornwall especially, will be on the harbour, there will be the sound of music, fest-noz type, and then from the 12th of May we gonna go to Côte de Trio(?), go inland and from there go on a stream engine on a train I think and a few other transports

Elaine: And escorted by yourselves?

David: No I don't think we can quite afford to wander round Brittany for 2 months unfortunately.

Stephane: We go to Paimpol maybe on the Trio and then we'll err, we'll head back home but Saint Piran will head back home too, but slowly to his final destination

Elaine: So you will be here in July

Stephane: It will be in May in Brittany and then through May, June, July it's gonna go to um, the Vieilles Charrues at Carhaix, then a bit of Tour de France it's gonna be seen through the helicopter on l'Abbey of Bon Repos where it's gonna be trapped on the trailer for the first time, so there will be almost the symbolism of its first part of the journey through Brittany, few, few other events in villages throughout Brittany and then on the 27th its gonna reach the Vallée des Saints. There will be assembled for the first and last time, so all the 3 blocks will be put together there will be a celebration.....

Elaine: It's going to be well its the 100th statue and its 10 years isn't it as well since the site opened?

Elaine: Well thank you very much both of you.