

ARTS

If you have a story to tell, get in touch with Shaun Shackleton on 240210 or email sshackleton@guernseypress.com

A feathered fairy tale



Local artist Charlie Buchanan (below) has collaborated with her husband Magnus to produce a book *Osmond the Owl Boy*.

Set in a fairy tale version of Sark, Charlie Buchanan's latest book offers a beautifully illustrated story for youngsters and adults to get caught up in, as **Shaun Shackleton** discovers

GUERNSEY children have a new hero – Osmond the Owl Boy. Osmond appears in the latest book by local artist, illustrator and author Charlie Buchanan. Set in a fairy-tale Sark it follows the journey of a little boy named Osmond who falls from the sky and goes on to discover that he is descended from owls. 'I began work on the book a decade ago while living in Spain,' said Charlie, who is an art and photography teacher at Elizabeth College. 'The story was initially inspired by Mervyn Peake's Mr Pye and the illustrative tradition Peake

created around the beautiful island of Sark. 'I remember watching the series, with Derek Jacobi, as a child and being fascinated by the idea of a person growing wings. I have the image in my mind of Mr Pye at La Coupee. It was very evocative.' As well as Mr Pye, the Sark Folk Festival has also inspired Charlie to develop the story and images. 'The summer light in Sark is very magical. 'The island has a fairy tale quality about it that appeals to me. Walking back from the festival in the fading light, one feels one is being watched by fairies.' Charlie's last book was *The Soul of the Sea*, an epic ballad reworking of Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea*, published in 2013. She worked on that tome with her husband Magnus and this time has made use of his skills to help reword her original writings for Osmond. 'Our Islands are a real inspiration for both Magnus and I. I have a particular interest in fairy tales and the folklore of the Bailiwick is rich and compelling.' Local artist and graphic

designer James Colmer has designed the book, creating a vintage look and taking inspiration from Charlie's passion for early photography. 'I enjoy the collaborative element of the creative process,' she explained. 'I'm lucky to have such great people to work with.'

The new book and a selection of Charlie's original ink and watercolour illustrations will be exhibited at the Gate House Gallery, Elizabeth College, until Sunday, along with work by fellow art teachers at the College, Adam Stephens and Sharka Lee. 'I realised a few years ago that illustrated books are a great love of mine. I collect them and there's nothing more magical than opening a book and getting lost in the words and pictures, just as a child would.' Charlie is now working on a novel based in 1920s Paris, as well as working towards a new illustrated book with Magnus and a series of images based on her favourite novel, *The Book of Ebenezer Le Page*.



Let your imagination take flight...

OSMOND the Owl Boy is published with the support of the Guernsey Arts Commission. The A4 paperback edition is £10 and the limited edition of 100 A5 hardbacks, £15 each, are available in local bookshops, through Charlie's website www.charliebuchanan.com and at arts events throughout the summer.

