



Elizabeth Collage student Sam O'Neill, 17, with the literary-inspired book bench, which will be unveiled to the public at tonight's KPMG Castle Night. (Picture by Steve Sarre, 9947570)

Book bench to be unveiled at Castle Night

A BENCH in the shape of an open book will be unveiled today, as part of a reading project led by the Guernsey Literary Festival.

It will be on show at the KPMG Castle Night event.

The Guernsey Book Bench is painted with scenes from local classic *The Book of Ebenezer Le Page* by G. B. Edwards.

To mark the project, copies of the book will be hidden around Castle Cornet for members of the public to find.

People are encouraged to read it and pass it on for someone else to enjoy.

Local artist and Elizabeth College art teacher Charlie Buchanan worked with sixth form students Lauren Perry and Sam O'Neill to paint the bench, which took two weeks. They found inspiration for the design in the Priaux Library, using photographs of local people in the late 1800s and paintings of the island to bring the famous story to life.

'Sam and Lauren are very talented, I couldn't have done it without them,' Mrs Buchanan said.

Last summer the National Literary Trust ran a similar project called Books about Town, which saw 50 book bench sculptures placed around the streets of London. It raised £250,000 for the UK charity National Literacy Trust.

After Friday, the sculpture will be installed in Market Square until the end of the festival, which runs from Wednesday 16 September to Sunday 20 September.

After the festival, in conjunction with Every Child Our Future, the bench will begin a tour of every school in the island.

Catriona Stares, director of the Guernsey Literary Festival, said Mrs Buchanan and the team did a brilliant job.

KPMG sponsored the project and its Channel Islands chairman, Mark Thompson, said it was a great way to get children excited about reading while highlighting the fantastic artistic talent in Guernsey.

■ The Castle Night event is free and gates open today at 6pm.