

The Fairies' Gallows

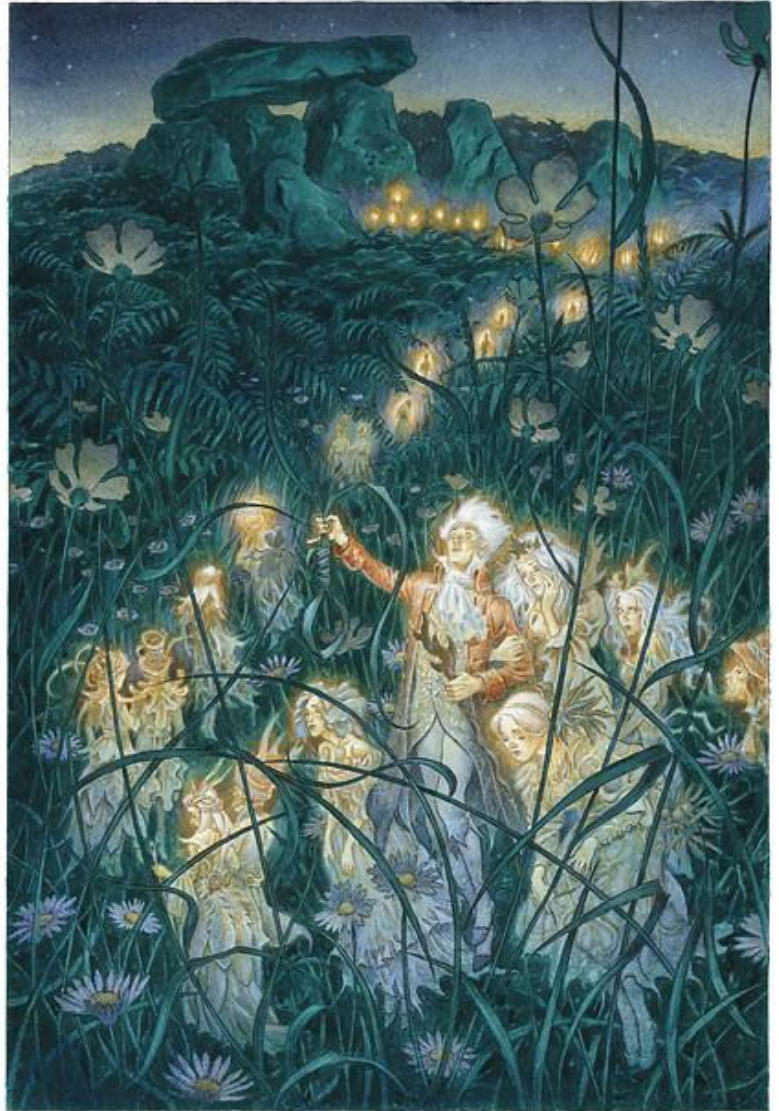
Local legend tells of a race of supernatural creatures, a breed of fairies or 'sprites' that once lived in the north of the island. By all accounts these 'little people' had a particularly strong connection with humans. However, they had become upset with how Guernsey society was developing, and how evil local people were becoming.

The fairies knew of a sacred spring which trickled from the foot of a granite *hougue* that overlooked Fontenelle Bay at the very northern tip of the island. This hillock bears the name *Hougue Patris*. The waters of the spring had magical properties that were said to make anyone who drank

it forget the past. So one night, the fairies all gathered in order to drink from the spring and purge their regrets. However, to their dismay they discovered that as supernatural creatures they were unaffected by magical waters, so their memories remained as clear and as vivid as ever.

Full of despair the fairies saw only one way to escape their sadness. They made their way up to the top of *Hougue Patris*, where there stood an ancient dolmen. Beneath the great stones they fashioned tiny nooses out of blades of grass and hung themselves till all were dead.

This breed of fairy was never again seen in the island.



Artwork by David Wyatt. © Guernsey Museums & Art Gallery

Story by Guernsey Museums, adapted from Marie de Garis' *Folklore of Guernsey*