

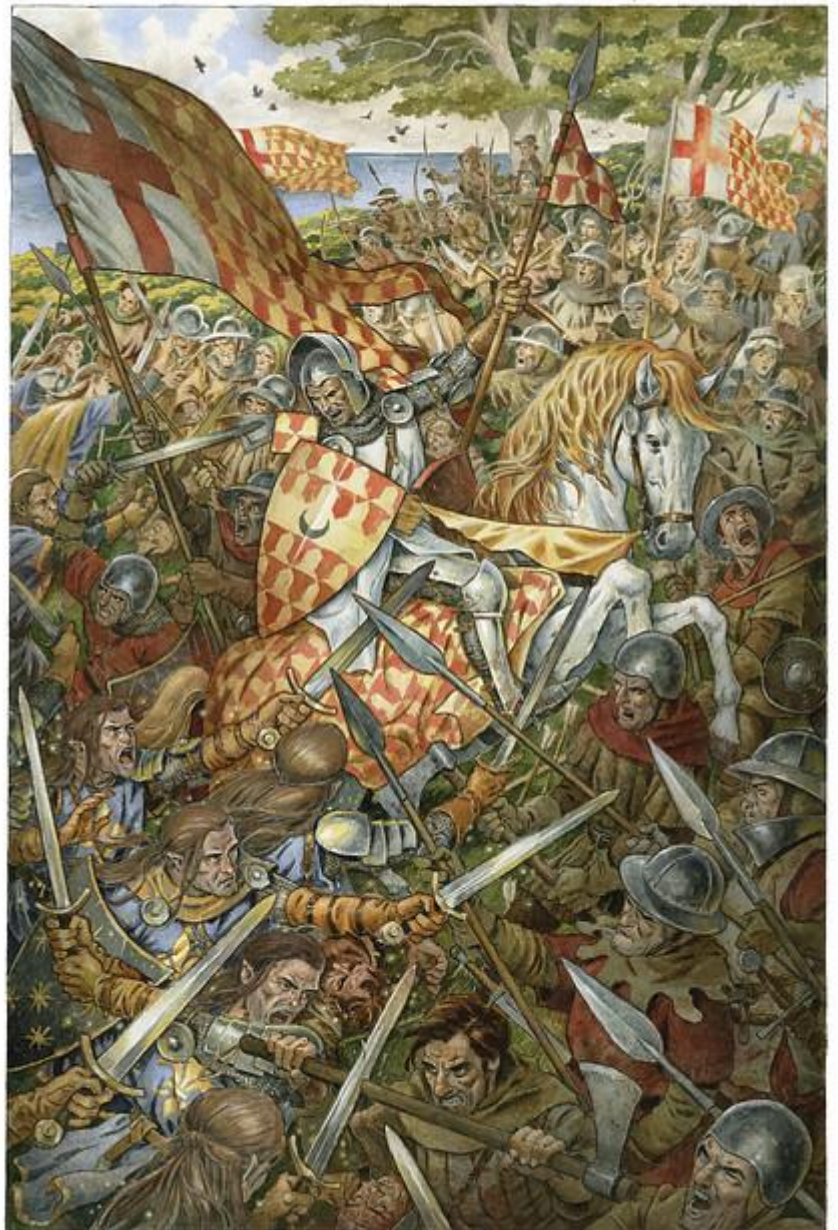
The Fairy Invasion of Guernsey

One day, a very, very long time ago, a beautiful Guernsey girl set out to tend the family's cows. When she arrived at the meadow she chanced upon a stranger whom she found asleep in the long grass. The man was short but very handsome, and the girl immediately fell in love with him. When he awoke his eyes fell upon the girl and he too was instantly smitten. He told her that he had come from the land of the fairies, far across the sea and he asked her to marry him. The girl said 'yes'. He led her down to the beach where a ship carried them to the fairy kingdom where they lived happily.

Time passed, but the other fairies in the kingdom became jealous of how beautiful the Guernsey girl was, and they decided that they too wanted beautiful Guernsey companions. So it was agreed that they would travel to the island and find themselves wives.

One day, a local man out tending his cows down on the west coast of the island saw a great horde of fairy warriors emerging from the coastal cave we now call *Les Creux des Fâies*. Thousands of the creatures crossed the Vazon marshes and captured the terrified man. They told him that they had come to claim the Guernsey women as their wives, but agreed to release him so that he could go and tell the Guernsey men of their intentions.

When they heard of the fairies' demands, the men of the island refused to give in to such a threat. They armed themselves and marched to meet the fairies. A vicious battle ensued, but the men of the island were no match for the supernatural invaders. They were pushed back across the island to the western



slopes of St. Peter Port. Here the islanders made a last, desperate stand, but the fairies won the battle. The blood of the dead covered the ground and this scene gave its name to the site – which to this day is known as *La Rouge Rue* or the Red Road.

The fairies then took the women of the island as their wives and settled down to years of happiness and prosperity. It was not to last, for the magical law of the fairy kingdom eventually obliged the fairies to return home, leaving their Guernsey wives behind. However, by then fairy blood had been mixed with that of the islanders, and local people say this is why Guernsey people have always been short in height.

Artwork by David Wyatt. © Guernsey Museums & Art Gallery

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