

Each month we will focus on an inspiring author based in or writing about Wales! You'll have an introduction to their latest book, what inspires them to write, and any advice they have for young writers!

# Get to know

## Karen Owen



Karen Owen has been partially deaf since childhood, and wrote the character Callie in Major and Mynah to reflect who she wanted to be when she was younger – funny, clever and with a special gift to hear something that other people cannot. Karen currently lives in London.



fireflypress.co.uk Firefly



### Summary:

The fourth and final Major and Mynah adventure will be out on February 6th. SPUD – the Super Perceptive Undercover Detectives – are in a race to solve a new mystery. When they discover puffins coated in waste oil, they must try and crack the case in time to protect the precious sea life and the Welsh coastline.

### Tell us a little about Major and Mynah: Project Puffin. Where did the inspiration come from, and what do you hope readers will take from the story...

Major and Mynah: Project Puffin is the fourth instalment in my junior detective series for readers aged 7+. SPUD – the Super Perceptive Undercover Detectives – are on holiday but find themselves in a race to solve a new mystery. When they discover puffins coated in waste oil that has been dumped in the sea, they must find out who is to blame before more damage is caused to precious sea life and the Welsh coastline.

Walking is my salvation and it's my ambition to walk the coastline of the UK. I've made a start but there's still a long way to go! While hiking, I've become very conscious of the urgent need to protect our planet, and I was keen to write a story for children that highlights this, without being didactic. I love walking in Pembrokeshire and was lucky enough to see the puffins on Skomer Island last year. They were so cute and vulnerable at the same time, and my urge to protect them lead me to creating a story about them.

### What are your favourite reading genres, and what books are you reading at the moment?

I read a lot of children's fiction and I love stories that help kids explore who they are and how to express themselves in what can be a noisy and confusing world. As a writer of 'humour with a heart' fiction, I'm naturally drawn to this genre. I'm enjoying books by Cath Howe, Mo O'Hara, Terri Chilvers, Loretta Schauer, to name but a few.



Project Puffin is published by Firefly Press, illustrated by Louise Forshaw, and perfect for readers age 7+.



### What experiences of libraries have influenced you during your lifetime?

As a child, librarians fed my insatiable appetite for words. My parents couldn't afford to buy many new books so the village library was a lifeline. They fuelled my burgeoning imagination and opened my eyes to other worlds and cultures beyond my very white and very conservative one.

As an author, I regularly run events at community and school libraries. I was part of the Summer of Fun events in libraries across South Wales and loved sharing stories and creating new ones with the children who attended.

### What suggestions do you have to encourage children and young people to read more for pleasure?

Let children choose their own books. If they're 12 and choose a picture book, that's absolutely fine. Reading isn't just about education. It's about pleasure, it's about finding your own place, and it's about safety. Audio books are fabulous, too. Having a narrator read a story just for me is one of my pleasures in life.



... more Q&As on the website [libraries.wales](http://libraries.wales)