

EXMOOR AMOUR

Charles Wood

At the time of year when the red deer stags were bolving, days were falling in, and chiggy-pigs had ensconced themselves in the damp dark of cottage squinches, rumours had come, blown in with the draughts, of snow machines, of water-spitting dinosaurs, of hovering helicopters and low-flying jets, of farmers having teddy troubles and of bibblers cuddling grouse. Apparently the 'Aksmoar' weasel patrols were proving alarmingly ineffective.

Charles Wood heaved himself upright from beside the cold-summered stove. Having washed his coal-grubby hands, pulled a log splinter from his thumb and whinged about a broken toe stubbed on the banister, he made a decision to emerge from behind his warped blue front door and make sure all was still well in the world of jodhpurs, antler men and fishers.

His emotion spring had begun to flow again.

It was the 'Ex' in Exmoor that made things so disconcerting. Long ago he ceased to refer to the place as 'it' but as 'her'. And now, like an old flame, memories of her still burned happily after a lengthy separation. And then, on the other hand, not so happily – like a grockle fire that makes charcoal of heather and gorse. Such are the foibles of the heart – of amour.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

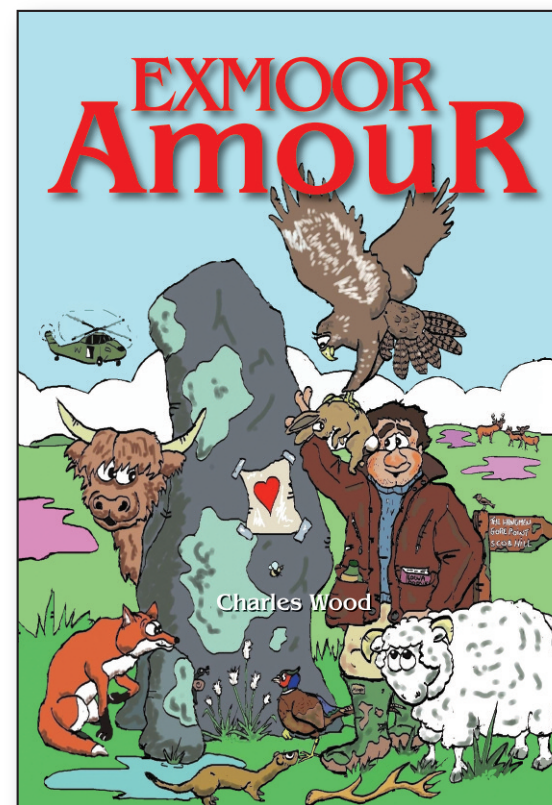
Charles Wood gave up the legal profession, and the stress of work in Libya and Hong Kong, yearning for the artistic life. For the past twenty years he has just about managed to avoid wearing a tie to work or getting grubby. Instead he has preferred to eke out an existence in the Somerset custom of self-employment. As a self-taught documentary filmmaker he has made over thirty films. His *Somerset the Summerland* and *Exmoor – An English Wild Kingdom* sold in their thousands finding their way into many a Somerset and grockle home. His film *Dragons – the Story of a Country Parson* was broadcast on HTV in 1999. And in 2005 he was the first Englishman to win a documentary film award in the Republic of Moldova.

Charles has also found time to be full-time Dad of four; a writer of fairy tales, an illustrator; a part-time college lecturer; a part-time school teacher; an occasional broadcaster on BBC Somerset Sound, a cameraman for Westcountry television news and have a heart transplant. He now admits to an enjoyment of poddling through the lighter side of life's rich tapestry, relieved that he has never been bankrupt.

Charles Wood lives with his family in the Exmoor-edge town of Wiveliscombe.

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