

# BATS, PADS AND CIDER

A MISCELLANY OF SOMERSET CRICKET

Charles Wood

"Sleep when you're dead, play cricket while you're awake" are the words of advice eagerly followed from Taunton's County Ground to the many a twenty-two yards treasured down a country lane.

A cider or two in the *Three Ferrets* can help make sense of a Somerset summer where the green stains on whites are not just from grass but also from the moulds of damp. In the villages there are those who play in the Shrubbery and those who don't; and where amid the moos of protest from cow corner there are accusations of creating crop circles while ball rummaging in farmers' meadows.

Call it perverse, but while incredulous tales are told of the valiant knights Sir Beefy and Sir Viv playing hippy cricket, among the counties of Saint George other good men, and women, of Somerset continue to wield willow in defence of a dragon beast flying from a pole. A county where for lesser mortals a Wurzels ring tone from silly mid on can distract a batter from a beamer and Shep the sheepdog helps stop the runs at third man.

Compiled during the vintage season of 2010, here are vaulted stories and little histories of cricketing characters both famous and, perhaps, not so much, to charm and to wince at between innings, dredged from a cricket mad soggy county that the author loves to his apple core.

## 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 tens of thousands. In 1994 he made Somerset County Cricket Club's first official club video film. 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 a 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, and a director of Somerset Film and Video.

He now admits to his enjoyment of cricket and poddling through the lighter side of life's rich tapestry relieved that he has never been bankrupt.

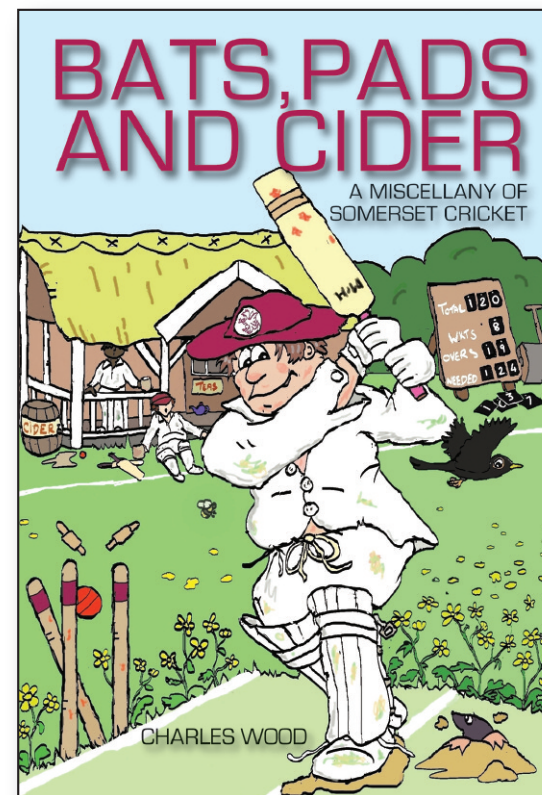
Charles Wood lives with his family in the Somerset town of Wiveliscombe.

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