

# HOPE BOURNE'S EXMOOR

ELOQUENCE IN ART John Burgess with Caroline Tonson-Rye

HOPE BOURNE has been described as one of the finest writers about the British countryside in the twentieth century. Her prose delineated Exmoor; its character and its characters, at its finest. In beautifully measured terms, she described the daily round of a life lived close to nature and to the land. Her work published in her lifetime invariably included some supporting line drawings – sharply memorable vignettes – and full-colour works for the covers of her books, for she was an extremely skilled artist. Yet although she left over 2000 artworks at her death, and many others in private hands, there has hitherto not been a volume that focuses on her painting and drawing.

Now for the first time, the publication of a collection of her works of art gives the opportunity to remedy this omission and to view Hope Bourne and her achievements through the media of her paint-box and her pencil. The sweep of the moorland, the colour of the hounds and huntsmen, the delicacy of the soaring bird, the haven of the farmhouse, the nobility of the stag, all were captured by Hope Bourne on paper to give an immediate and graphic expression to her love of Exmoor.

With a carefully selected text, some of it drawn from her unpublished writing, and an expert commentary from John Burgess, with Caroline Tonson-Rye, *Hope Bourne's Exmoor* redresses the balance in our appreciation of this remarkable figure. It allows us to savour just how eloquent Hope Bourne could be in her visual record as well as in her prose. Her sketches, with pencilled comments, show her acute observation of colour and light through the seasons. She had, too, a gift for capturing the essence of a moment, from the drama of storm clouds and rain over moorland, to the glory of a river bank in summer. As the remarkable pictures in this book show, she understood Exmoor in all its moods and her work is imbued utterly with the spirit of the place.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Hope Bourne** (1918–2010) is well known for her writing celebrating Exmoor, often accompanied by elegant line drawings, and for her independent, self-sufficient lifestyle. The preservation of Exmoor was her passion, which she recognised in the aims of the Exmoor Society. She became an early member and soon joined its Executive Committee. On her death, all her possessions were left to the Society, including an astonishing 2000 sketches and paintings. This book reproduces a selection of these, as well as a good number generously lent by other people, painted by Hope in recognition of friendship or a kindly deed.

**John Burgess** was born in Wellington of a farming family. He has enjoyed a varied and interesting career, including almost twenty five years as a BBC radio journalist and producer. His "love affair with Exmoor", first took root in the late 1970s when he joined the Exmoor National Park. The job, which included photography, brought him into contact with the people of Exmoor; the farmers, the huntsmen, the craftsmen and many of "Exmoor's gems", Hope Bourne being one of its most precious. Over the years he gained her friendship and enjoyed many visits and conversations with her, in the little caravan she called home, tucked away on the moor. John maintains a close and active association with Exmoor and is a member of the Exmoor Society's Executive Committee.

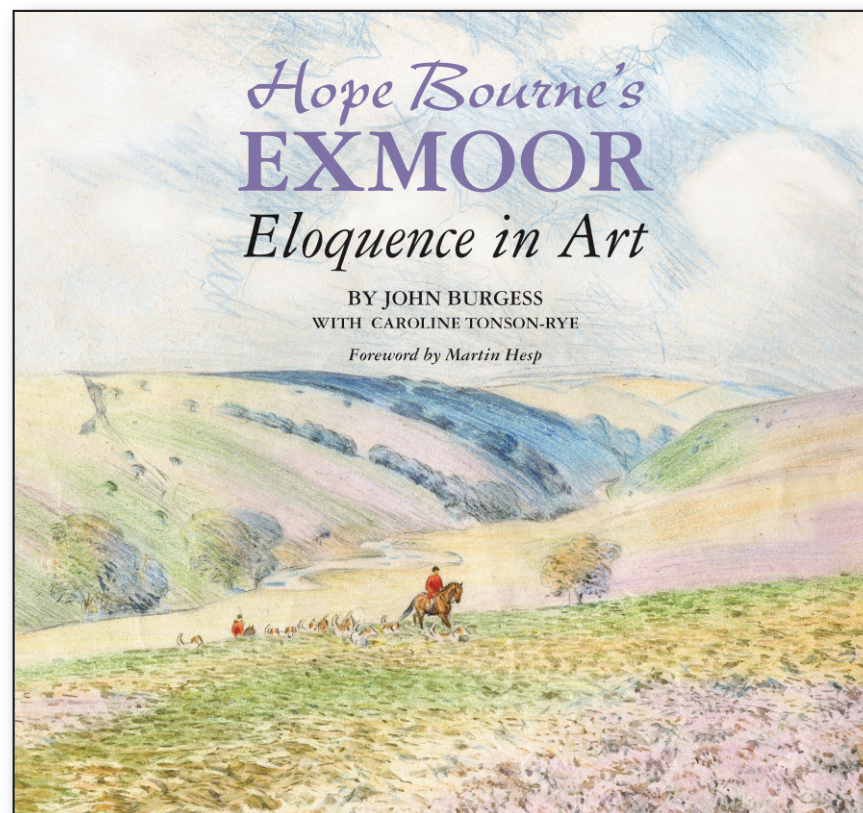
**Caroline Tonson-Rye** retired recently after a career in publishing. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the Exmoor Society and has been responsible for making the inventories of all the material that Hope Bourne left to the Society.

## HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

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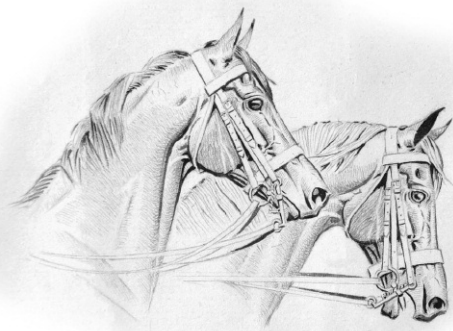


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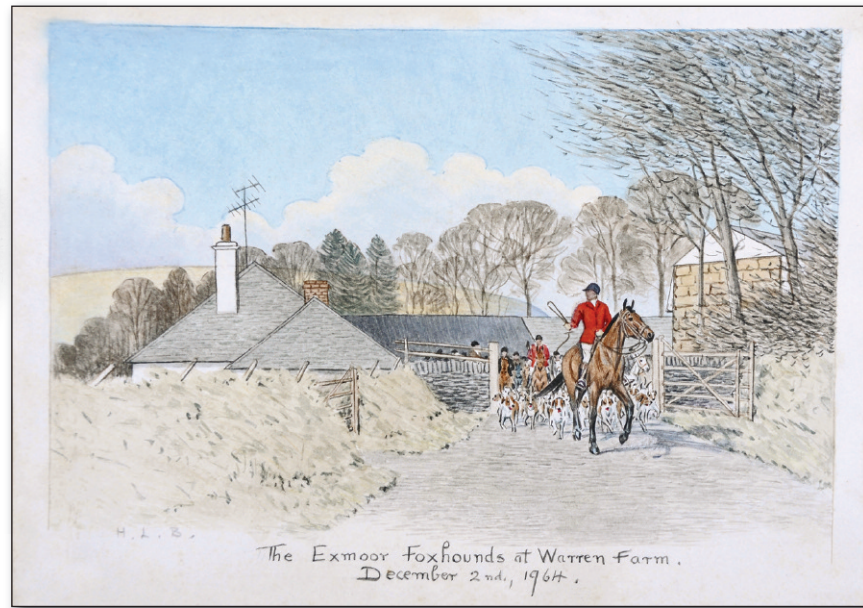
HOPE BOURNE'S EXMOOR ELOQUENCE IN ART



Autumn colours near Ferny Ball.



Buzzards above Hoccombe Goyle,  
near the Doone Valley.



The Exmoor Foxhounds at Warren Farm.  
December 2nd, 1964.

Example of a double-page spread.



The lane to Ferny Ball.