



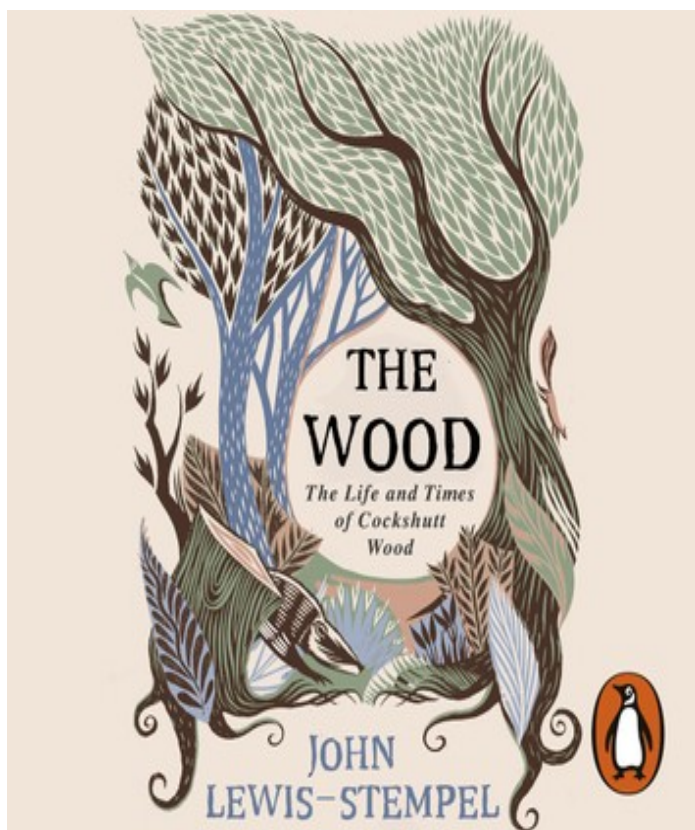
Suntrap Book Review

The Wood: The life and times of Cockshutt Wood

By John Lewis-Stempel

Published by Transworld, £9.99

Age range: Young adults



Description

Written in diary format, *The Wood* is the story of English woodlands as they change with the seasons. Lyrical and informative, steeped in poetry and folklore, *The Wood* inhabits the mind and touches the soul.

For four years John Lewis-Stempel managed Cockshutt wood, three and half acres of mixed woodland in Herefordshire - that stands as exemplar for all the small woods of England. John coppiced the trees and raised cows and pigs which roamed free.

This is the diary of a year, by which time he had come to know it from the bottom of its beech roots to the tip of its oaks, and to know all the animals that lived there - the fox, the pheasants, the wood mice, the tawny owl - and where the best bluebells grew. For many fauna and flora, woods like Cockshutt are the last refuge. It proves a sanctuary for John too.

Reviews

'Indisputably, one of the best nature-writers of his generation' (*Country Life*)

'Over twelve months, this is the story of Cockshutt Wood in Shropshire, representative of all the small woods in our landscape and the sanctuary they provide.'

From January through to December, John Lewis-Stempel records the passage of the seasons in exquisite prose, as the cuckoo flits through the green shade in the silence and the wind of winter. He explores from the roots of the oak to its tips, under the black, spicy leaf mould of the woodland floor and up into the mysterious canopy.

It's a unique account of the animals that inhabit this refuge - the fox, the pheasant, the wood mouse and the tawny owl, among others - with the stories of their births, lives and deaths threaded through the book'.

BBC Radio 4 'Book of the Week'

'It is a pleasure to be in the company of a man who is so attuned to his woody world ... He is good at sketching nature, fixing a vivid image in the mind's eye of a reader ... Lewis-Stempel has rightly won himself the reputation as being among our best nature writers ... *The Wood* is an entertaining, illuminating, well-turned read' - *The Times*