

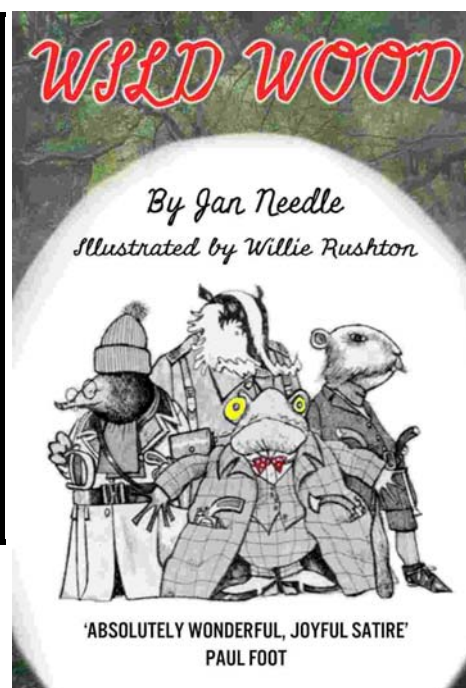
A NEW EDITION OF  
JAN NEEDLE'S CLASSIC  
**WILD WOOD**

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIE RUSHTON

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**“Wild Wood** was one of those single ideas that hit you like a flash of lightning,” writes Jan Needle. “I was in a doss house in Dewsbury, talking about *The Wind in the Willows* when it occurred to me that Mr Toad and his chums from the River Bank didn’t know that they were born. Mr Toad lived in a glorious mansion from which he bought and abandoned executive toys on the merest whim. The servants who existed to service his desires were not even mentioned. They were invisible, taken for granted. They were just there. As indeed were Mr Rat’s.”

*And so a gallant band was formed to bring about the downfall of the rich, uncaring few. They were the Wild Wood volunteers and theirs is a saga of poverty and desperation, loyalty and treachery, strange love and great despair.*

Jan Needle's richly comic re-telling of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* can be read as political satire but there's much more to enjoy. Though the wood is cold and unemployment bleak it only takes a sea rat with an accordion and a nip of Daisy Ferret's special brew to get the stoats and weasels partying.



Jan Needle’s first job was as a journalist on the *Daily Herald* and he was soon writing radio and TV dramas as well as journalism, stage plays and novels. His early novels for children include the anti-racist *My Mate Shofiq*, which caused controversy on first publication. More recently Jan survived an orchestrated protest over *Killing Time at Catterick*, his expose of conditions among British Army recruits.

Jan’s writing is often unflinchingly realistic but is tempered by a warm humanity and inventive sense of fun.

Jan Needle lives in Manchester and is available for interview.

**Wild Wood** was first published in 1981 by Andre Deutsch. In its early years the book was translated into several languages (including Japanese) in editions throughout the world. Rapidly a cult bestseller, it was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and has been adapted for the stage.

The late Paul Foot was among **Wild Wood**’s admirers describing it at the Cheltenham literary festival as ‘absolutely wonderful, joyful satire’. Further praise came from former deputy Labour party leader Roy Hattersley (*Mail on Sunday*), academic critic Ann Wright (‘truly comic descriptions of political realities’), and writer Jan Mark (‘I honestly wish I had written this book’). Joanna Carey in *The Guardian* described it as ‘An ambitious, exuberant and lovingly wrought book with many subtle shifts of interpretation on those complex questions of greed and need, loyalty, luxury and envy.’

**Wild Wood** is as funny, as relevant and as pleasurable in 2014 as it was on first publication in 1981.

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