

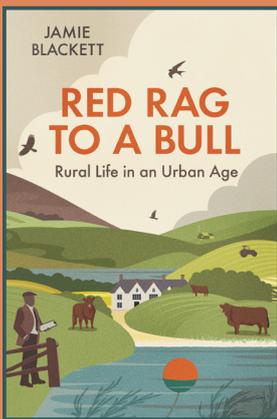
# Jamie Blackett

Jamie fell into writing; thirty-three years after putting down his pen at school he received a surprise commission to write the biography of his old tutor, Michael Kidson. The landmark book: *The Enigma of Kidson: Portrait of a Schoolmaster* (Quiller 2017) was serialised in the *Daily Mail* and hit the bestseller lists in 2017. It continues to resonate with parents and teachers who mourn the loss of breadth, eccentricity and rigour in our education system to box-ticking and political correctness. His talks reflect on the nature of education and what makes a great teacher, and have proven popular with audiences up and down the country



In his latest book *Red Rag to a Bull: Rural Life in an Urban Age* (Quiller, 2018), he emerges as a perceptive commentator and thought-provoking polemicist on the issues facing the British countryside. The book has received praise across the political spectrum, from Sir Roger Scruton to George Galloway via Kate Hoey. Drawing on his experiences as a farmer and conservationist in Dumfriesshire, he writes about the fragility of our native wildlife, communicating the Brexit hopes and fears of the farming industry at this fascinating point in history, where there are clear parallels with the Repeal of the Corn Laws in the nineteenth century; then, as now, our democracy was in a state of flux. *Red Rag* sheds light on the issues surrounding the campaign for Scottish independence, and asks whether the rural population faces a democratic deficit meaning that its interests are not always served by governments elected by the urban majority.

Jamie is available to talk on either book at festivals during his 2019 speaking tour.



## Red Rag to a Bull

Red Rag is a humorous and thought-provoking story seen through the eyes of a landowner—a modern-day Poldark—trying to keep the family estate going in an ever-changing world.

Jamie Blackett's intelligent and easy-to-read narrative flows through the farming challenges of the Scottish independence referendum, the hunting ban and Brexit.



'A brilliant, enlightening and amusing book ... it should be read by politicians, bureaucrats, ramblers, wildlife-lovers, townies, blow-ins and bumpkins like me. What a read!'

Robin Page

'This book should be compulsory reading for all those townies who long to live in the country after a week in a holiday cottage... Wildlife, hunting and much hilarity pack this volume, perhaps best described as James Herriot meets the Irish RM.'

BASC, Shooting and Conservation Magazine

'A must read for anyone who cares about preserving the real countryside in an ever-changing world.'

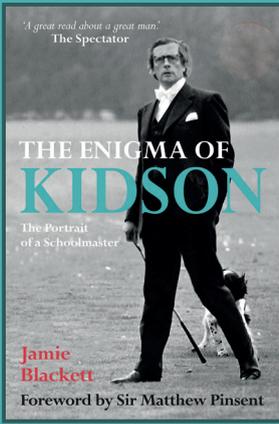
Kate Hoey, MP

'His book belongs with the tradition established by H. Rider Haggard and A.G. Street – a frank, honest and beautifully observed account of the "return of the native".'

Sir Roger Scruton, FBA, FRSL

'This book is a reflection, by turns poetic and gritty, on two decades of life at what Jamie Blackett calls 'the silage-pit face'... He has to cope with the Scottish Government, unsafe trees and the implementation of the hunting ban. He's literally living the dream, given that dreams are generally odd, disconcerting and irrational, as well as, in recollection, at times very funny...Couched in the gentlest of language, this book holds a cri de coeur.'

Clive Aslet, Country Life



## The Enigma of Kidson

Move over Mr Chips. Kidson had everything that central casting requires of a legendary schoolmaster: a passion for his subject, a brilliant didactic style, a silly walk, a smelly spaniel, breath-taking rudeness, eccentric mannerisms and catchphrases, a maverick attitude towards authority, and above all, a deep empathy, loyalty and dedication towards his boys. He had an extraordinary influence on his pupils – Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury; Johnnie Boden; David Cameron; Nicky Henderson; Sir Matthew Pinsent; ‘Lupin’ and Dominic West among them.

This unique portrait features recollections and vignettes of incidents in the classroom and the tutorial. Through Kidson’s life story we get a vivid social history of the latter part of the twentieth century where the themes of education, culture, teaching, adolescence, discipline, mentorship, pronunciation, parenting and old age are all examined.



‘A stirring, often hilarious biography of Michael Kidson, a fullthrottle eccentric who taught boys at Eton for 40 years. Think the History Boys meets Goodbye, Mr Chips.’

**Allison Pearson, *The Sunday Telegraph***

‘This book, a feast of anecdotes about a remarkable schoolmaster, is a delight. Michael Kidson, for all his eccentricity, exemplified the essential character of a great teacher; read *The Enigma* and learn about life.’

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

‘My four brothers and husband all went to Eton but *The Enigma of Kidson* is the only book I’ve ever read that makes me long to have gone to the school too.’

**Rachel Johnson**

‘This book needs an H.M. Government health warning for OFSTED inspectors as it describes an inspired beak who ignored all the modern rules but put his pupils first.’

**Jacob Rees Mogg**

‘This funny and fascinating book....is a delight to read and a fitting testament.’

**Alexandra Henton, *The Field***

‘Michael Kidson was a wonderful eccentric and an inspiring teacher. Reading this book brought back many happy memories.’

**David Cameron**

‘Eccentricity is being squeezed out of teaching today. This book delightfully and powerfully shows us why our schools would benefit from more, not less of it.’

**Sir Anthony Seldon**

‘This is the most delicious book. I have loved every page of it and laughed out loud. What a wonderful and extraordinary story. We should all have mavericks like Kidson in our lives.’

**Penny Junor**

‘If you enjoyed *Dear Lupin* you will love this book’

**Country Life**