

Excerpt from Home Hills & beyond



River Stiff and Stiffkey Bridge

Sometimes May or Rachael would take me for a walk round their garden, it was rather like a wilderness but with paths that were fascinating, made of crushed-up cockle shells. I thought the inside of the house very exciting, there were so many copper and brass articles of all descriptions, on the walls or standing in the hearth and all highly polished. Someone in the family had had something to do with antiques; probably May and Rachael's brother Ronald, it was never quite clear what his role in life was. I found him distant, unapproachable and not nearly as jolly as the rest of that family. But I never went upstairs, so I did not see the room which was boarded up, unused and supposed to be haunted.

I enjoyed my father's short visit as I had been missing my family, at the same time I liked living in the village where everyone knew everyone and most people said "hello", even to strangers.

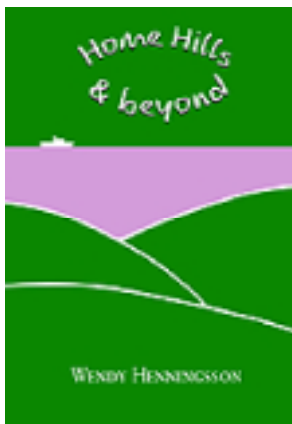
He took me for walks to the Home Hills, where we climbed up and sat on the soft grass, surrounded by sandy rabbit holes; here were also the small purple-blue flowers popular with bees. My mother had told me how the smell of these flowers, which she called thyme, had reminded her of her own childhood.

In those days, she had often played on the Hills, especially at Easter, when the children of the village had rolled their hard-boiled eggs down the slopes.

We sat for a long time, enjoying the view out over the salt marshes with the sea in the distance. It was exciting to spot the dark silhouette of a ship on the horizon and to watch it disappear, speculating about its cargo and destination. It did not occur to either of us that I might one day settle down to live on the land-mass on the other side of the sea we were looking at.



Helen, Wendy and Ann: cousins on the salt marshes



Home Hills & beyond

By Wendy Henningsson.

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An interest in learning to speak foreign languages decided the path Wendy's life would take. However, she did not know at the age of nine when she sat with her father on the Home Hills overlooking the North Sea, that one day she would settle in a land beyond that horizon.

Based on diaries, letters and photos, Wendy here describes her childhood in England, student life there and in Germany and her new life in Sweden.

The subjects of integration and bi-lingualism are treated in this book by one with first-hand knowledge of how it feels to be "outside looking in".

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