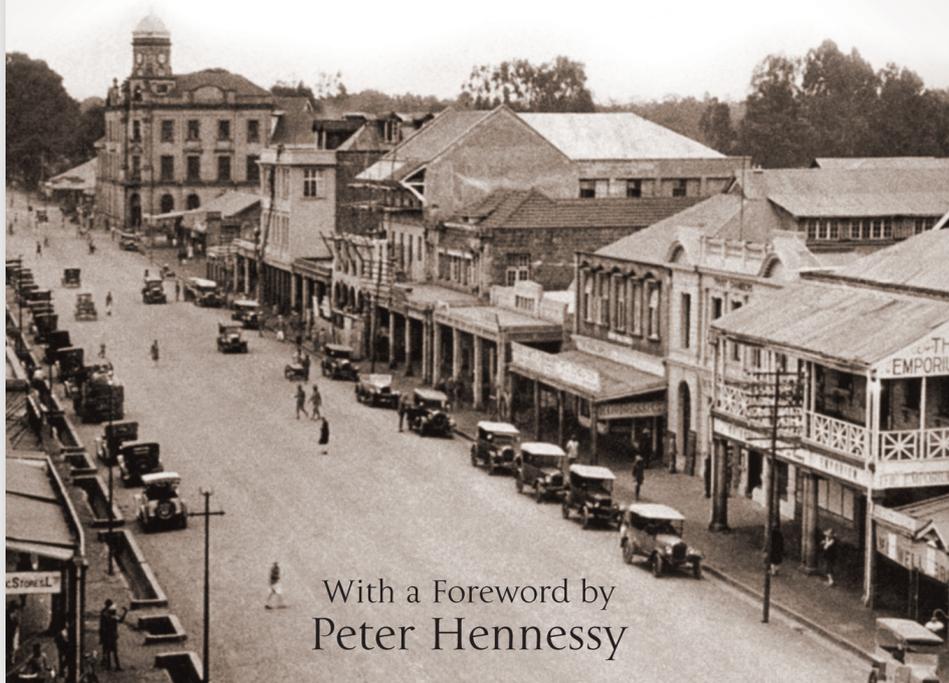


Hilary Sunman

A VERY DIFFERENT LAND

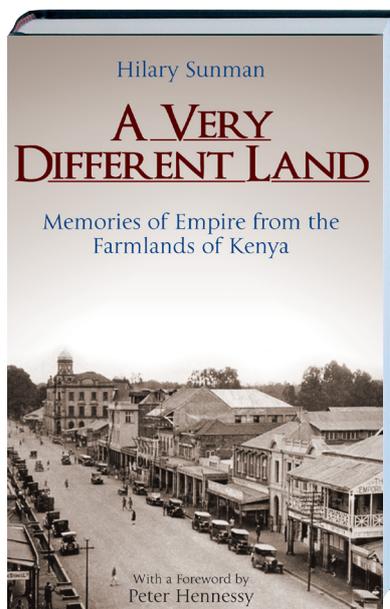
Memories of Empire from the
Farmlands of Kenya



With a Foreword by
Peter Hennessy

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Memories of Empire from the Farmlands of Kenya

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Foreword by Peter Hennessy

Kenya was a 'very different land' for the young and often idealistic officers who went out to Africa to use their technical and professional skills with a sense of purpose, even mission, in the early twentieth century. This was especially marked in the Colonial Agricultural Service where Hilary Sunman's father, Owen, served from 1928-1950.

In this book, Sunman considers the day-to-day experience of 'colonial service' and its challenges as she weaves together a human and family story, with special emphasis on her father and his work, combined with her own experience as a development economist. All the elements – political and developmental – in late colonial policy are present, from the problems of the 'White Highlands' and race to the varying quality of colonial leadership, including governors, and the rise of the Mau Mau. She looks at the academic training in agricultural science offered as preparation for the colonial service as well as the attraction of Africa and the idealism felt by many young officers. Using her family as a case study, she examines the realities of life in Kenya for the wives and children of colonial officers, as well as for the officers themselves. In the years after World War II, Sunman considers the moves to independence and decolonisation and the early Mau Mau period.

Peter Hennessy, in his introduction to the book, praises 'the richness, texture and careful sensitive recreations within these pages'. This book provides a unique and moving account of a country in transition and the pivotal roles played by those on the ground in the final years of empire. In doing so, it provides a nuanced and revisionist perspective on the 'imperial debate' which will be essential reading for anyone interested in the era of empire and decolonisation.

HILARY SUNMAN is a development economist with extensive experience working in Africa and Asia. She studied Economics and Sociology at the University of East Anglia, followed by an MA in Development Economics.

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