

Kællingbjerg – the hill of the old hag

On one of the last days of the year the snow finally falls in Denmark. I have planned a trip into the raised bog on the path just below the cliff Kællingbjerg. Kællingbjerg means in Danish the hill of the old hag.

We reach the top of the cliff at a height of thirty metres and find in the increasing snowfall a stunning view to the large bog below us.

At the top of the cliff stands a burial mound. The burial mound has collapsed and a single tree has taken root here at the highest point in the landscape.

The cliff was once the shoreline where the bog, which now lies at the foot of the high limestone slope, then was covered by the sea. On the back of the cliff the landscape gently slope down towards some farms, and the area is covered by a stubble field. The stubble field is now almost hidden by new snow.

Throughout history there have been traces

of human activity here. On the cliff the remains of a burial site from the Iron Age have been found, and a nearby farm, Kællingbjerggård, is already mentioned in written documents in the year 1493.

The Danish folklore also has stories from the cliff. Here the lone riders on the distance between the local manors experience trolls. The legend tells us that a rider by a little hag was offered a silver cup with a drink that turned out to be toxic. He saved his life, but had to flee with the trolls close on his heels.

Later the little hag steals back the silver cup. An old man from a nearby village is said to on a moonlit evening to have watched a little hag sitting on Kællingbjerg turning a spinning wheel, and several have heard that coffins have been closed up and slammed again behind the hill.

This day in December the twilight comes quickly, and maybe it is good that we left the cliff top before the darkness covered this fabled place.



Kællingbjerg, December 2014