

My Dear Phyllis!

Greetings! What a lovely surprise. Very very happy to hear from you. Yes indeed we think of you and your name is mentioned. My mother instantly knew who you were. We assumed you'd be back in SA. Who ever thought you ever openly write from Durban! Our address PTO is where we live- difficult Welsh but somewhat French like 'Lesotho'.....

Where to start? Life has been far from easy and there have been great changes. I am easily homesick for Africa at its mention. Lesotho, South Africa, oh how these will always be very close to my heart. I visit these countries in spirit every year when I take two weeks with the overseas students on housing in developing countries at Birmingham (was polytechnic, now university). This year we had India, Sudan, Zimbabwe and, for the very first time, South Africa. You may well say- why on earth Birmingham, but I find it provides a perfect opportunity to assist the students to stand back from their close involvement and gain a new perspective. They, being all post-experience, learn from each other. It's a joy and my job has become guiding them. My book on Community Building was published by GATE in Germany for Third World distribution. We tried to return but without success & I failed to get a toe hold anywhere that employed consultants. It's been very hard. When passing through Lusaka I had an idea to apply to the ANC for the post of professor of Community Architecture- should they ever come to power. I was unable to follow it up- but now SA has great need.

On the other hand I divided, loving the green countryside of for this country. I have re-established my roots here. My mother is 88 and fully active. But oh this country- all she has spent her life fighting for has been destroyed by this government.... Duncan and Rollo are flourishing. D. works hard at his computers; R. has an interesting job with a Wildlife Trust which puts him very much in line with me. He lives with his 'partner' who stretches him mountain climbing hanging onto rocks. From my architect's training I have a burning need to be creative. So all my energies go into this 20 acre woodland- it's like paradise on earth, especially when the spring flowers come out April/May. This year its soaking wet, still trying to snow and spring is very late indeed. We have a home cow, lots of real milk- far superior to anything from the supermarket. I am restoring our Welsh valley as ancient woodland in the hope of leaving something of beauty when I depart this world. I have always had a passion for trees.

On another hand, life as an architect has virtually come to an end. Africa demonstrated to me that there was an alternative to commercial gain and that building for the common good is a social responsibility. The result is that I don't fit into 'market forces'. Something like 1/3 of all architects are unemployed and 1/2 underemployed. I'm with the 1/3. For four years I had part-time teaching work in schools of architecture (so I could work here), but their budgets have been so cut that that came to an end. Perhaps as well, for 1/2 of the architecture students graduate to unemployment and the teaching schools retreated into ivory towers. It is I believe the end of the profession. Design has become wallpaper for commercial gain. Gone are the exciting days of new towns, inner city renewal; this government has seen to that- it's every one for themselves- not me. My mother is cut to the heart as social housing is commercialised. The pendulum has swung fully and we have lost sight of the vision of a better society.

We are avid watchers of South Africa. Exciting times indeed! I have so infected 'our' son Sibiu that he, a Zulu, has decided to return to KwaZulu Natal. He is I hope my contribution to the New SA. He resisted all that school had to offer here, but is now doing a 1 yr BTec in forestry- and awoken to the challenge and in the process become a

really nice person. His mother would vote for Deklerk, I countered without hesitation, I would vote for Nelson M and the ANC! This shook Siby, white and black reversed! He has been back and talks endlessly of the Nkatha/ANC feuding there. Futhi has, to my astonishment, gone all white- and white middle calls to make it worse. Africa has been banished from the house. I don't know how or if I'll cope when Siby departs in July. I thought I had married into Africa. But no.

How are you? What are you doing? How is Sukti? Do add me to your mailing list. I'm very busy planting trees, here and in Africa, persuading others to do the same- something for the next generation- not for us. There are so many beautiful and exciting things to do in this world. I don't write many letters like this these days, oh we could talk for hours! I hear Mophat'oa Mantsase still exists- but NO newsletter... Will the new SA succeed where others have failed?

Kind regards.

and love - *[Signature]*

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