

1987

Kitwe, 24th March 1987

Dear David,

I think a lot about you and Cindy, and I hope things are carrying on as well as can be expected. I hope you had a good Christmas — I expect it was quiet.

I had a good time, rather unexpectedly. I telephoned around just the weekend before, and found several friends who'd made no plans, so there were 12 of us here for lunch — I had plenty of help. As our rains are very bad, it's extremely hot, so we appreciated the pool. I've never experienced so little rain — and this on top of everything else!

I had a long chat over tea with Dr. Monica Fisher, who has had 2 hip replacements, and I decided it's horrible! I decided our medical standards are too low, so will have to go to England for it. I've never been in hospital all my life.

So I'm taking my last cheap ticket and flying UTA to France, then Germany, Sweden and finally UK. I suppose I'll screw up my courage and have this operation!

I'm a miserable coward. I've never been to Scandinavia, and rather fancy a mini-cruise round the Norwegian fjords. Well, it's fun to dream!

Do you still see Adele Lieu? I didn't hear from her at Christmas.

Security is getting to be very bad again — or rather the lack of it! With ever-increasing unemployment it's inevitable, but so many robbers are career men, not people in need.

Cheerio and all the best.

Yours Muriel

Addendum on President Kaunda on last page: "His 5th son died of AIDS 2 months ago. — It's an awful problem here. And most people just don't want to know.

London in winter - November / December 1986

24th March 1986

Before I went to Australia, I had an invitation from both British Caledonian Airways and the British Tourist Authority to attend the annual World Travel Market at Olympia the last week of November. But it was not in writing, and when I left for Australia I was not sure I would be going. I arrived back here to find this letter, so took off just two weeks later from London. I must say it was so unreal, taking off again so soon. I have been in Zambia for almost 27 years, and not once during that time have I visited Europe in winter. I managed to borrow a fur coat and hat, and I found my warmest clothes were enough with the very hot central heating.

There were five of us from Zambia, and it was a waste of money from our host's point of view. During my five weeks away the kwacha had halved in value, from 7.5 to 15 to the dollar, so nobody from here is going to take a holiday in Britain staying in hotels. They made a fuss of us, as we joined groups from all over the world, and the hotel at Kensington was comfortable and friendly, right across the road from a tube station. We only spent two days at Olympia, which was a good exhibition, but utterly exhausting. The Zambian stand was pathetic, nothing of interest, few brochures, no enthusiasm from the staff manning it. The big contrast with the Kenyan and Zimbabwean stands next door was cruel, even little Botswana managed to do much better. We were taken out to one of these beefeater dinners

near the Tower of London, which I thought was the most amateurish evening I have spent in ages, the entertainment was utterly corny, even embarrassing, and it seemed to go on and on and on.... The food was good, fortunately. But no beef!

My main reason for accepting the invitation was to make arrangements to see a rheumatism specialist. During the past year I have deteriorated rapidly, and I discovered that all these mini breaks and then Australia, where I pushed my self to walk and walk, which I love, was the worst thing I could have done for my osteo arthritis. I was walking with a decided limp and suffered quite a lot of pain. The specialist was a character. He waited until he was examining me on his couch, with just my pants on, to start a long lecture on banana republics and why they should exist, he refused to accept the name Zambia, it was still N. Rhodesia; he went on and on about the wonderful British, there was nobody in the world to compare with them; when he went to medical congresses only the British knew what they were talking about - no other nation had a clue, even Japanese or American. I did not want to argue too long as I thought I would never be released, but I told him if only we had time I would tell him why I could not accept his opinions. My word, I never knew people like that still existed, except for Margaret Thatcher. He decided I needed a hip operation, and that the arthritis was all over, but I went for Xrays, and when I saw them a few days later, even I could see there was nothing left between the bones in my right hip, and there was another bad patch on my lower spine, for which nothing could be done. This character said I should have a new hip as soon as possible, and while I was suffering from that appalling dull dreary depressing damp weather, I agreed. But back here in the sunshine where I never have to walk far, it is much better. I have discovered that it is possible to have the operation here in Zambia, but it all depends on the mine hospitals becoming fee paying for the general public, as there is absolutely no way I would stay one night in a government hospital. Also, it would be easier to convalesce in my home, on one storey, and with so many friends and well wishers in the immediate neighbourhood. I was really surprised to learn that hip replacement is the most common op in Britain. It must be the most rheumatically place in the world. Thank heavens I am not there as I write, in the big freeze.

I made a lot of phone calls, and managed to meet a few friends in the London area. I spent a day in Folkestone, where it was sunny and bright; and I saw the play Ghosts by Ibsen, and the film Hannah's sister, both wonderful. But I ran down rapidly and did no shopping at all, I just could not stand nor walk any more. Was I glad to get back!

24th March, 87

The Kitwe Riots

Dec 1986

As there has been quite a lot of publicity around the world I am sending you my version of what happened, as the reporters were all in Lusaka, 230 miles away.

As I was flying back from London to Lusaka on the evening of 5th December, little did I know that the very same day the government had announced an increase of over 100% on mealy meal and roller meal prices. This is staple diet. Just this morning I read in the Government Gazette that the lowest wage is now about K80 per month, and the new price of roller meal was to have been K.7, and K7.2 for the more expensive one.

Whatever the value of the Kwacha - and it's not worth much, noboddy could possible even starve who earned the lowest wage paying those prices. This of course was yet another IMF decision.

I came to work on the Monday, and unknown to most of us, the riots started that evening. The powers that be (I don't know if it is the govt or the police) appear to think that if you don't announce this kind of news, then nobody will know. In Africa, that is a ridiculous assumption. The next morning, I could not get to work (fortunately, as it turned out) I met streams of cars coming from town, turned back by the police, who were attempting to control crowds of people streaming into town, and all the suburbs where there were shops, bent on taking what they could. Some people did get to work (the early birds), and had to lock themselves as far inside as possible while all sorts of instruments taken from hardware shops, and bricks, were hurled at the windows. The police used tear gas, but they were pretty inefficient, and soon ran out. I was ringing the office every half hour to get a progress report. The company cars were locked up into the mine car parks and my friends' gardens where they could be put, and eventually at lunchtime everyone walked home - ordered by the police.

Most food shops in Kitwe were ransacked, and many joined in the handout, even abetted by police. Clothes shops were another favourite target, and all the new Italian shoes were taken from Bata (selling at K250.) As I said, hardware shops were a wonderful target, and the garages had cars stolen (the professional thieves joining in with gusto) and even the bus garage was looted and inexperienced drivers went for joy rides until they landed the buses in ditches or bush.

The next day, Wednesday, nobody even attempted to go to work. I live one kilometre from my nearest shops, and as the army had finally been called in, I could hear gunshots on and off all day. Of course the innocent were killed with the guilty, and one shot I heard nearby killed an innocent shop assistant who was the nephew of one of our church elders, and a leading trade union leader, Chitalu Sampa.

Next day, thursday, we all managed to get back, but I must say it was difficult to concentrate. There was no food left except in the 2 big state shops in the town centre, guarded by police and army as they are right near the Post office. Another target was any government office and one post office in Cimwemwe was burnt out, as well as the local govt housing offices with all their records. I had very little food at home, having been away most of the previous couple of months, so I lived as a vegetarian for a few days. Even where there was food, the shopkeepers were afraid to open. What was more difficult was trying to explain to my animals, who were not too sympathetic.

Another problem was the fact that almost all the plate glass windows were shattered, and the very little plate glass left in Zambia went the first day after, so we all have to have boarded up windows with whatever wood is available, so it looks awful.

24th March 87

The President came to Kitwe and kept a very low key, it was never announced. But he had lunch both days at our nearby hotel, and that could not be kept a secret. I find this very sad indeed, and a reflection on how bad things are. His 5th son died of AIDS 2 weeks ago - it's an awful problem here. And most people

Of course, Kitwe was not the only town. It spread to all the other Copperbelt towns, and even to rural areas, but amazingly not to Lusaka. The damage has not been totalled, and we shall probably not hear at all. KK went on TV on the Friday and announced that the increases had been cancelled, and told us that the damage to NIEC stores, just one of the state shops, was K88 million. One can multiply that by quite a lot to reach the true figure. He also said he did not know where govt would find the money.

I just don't want to know

Thinking what our troubles were over for the time being, we were not prepared for last week's saga. The army and police decided to search all the townships and suburbs for stolen property. It is fairly easy to assume that in a squatter compound with no elec or water, that a new looking frig or stove must be stolen, but some of the other suburbs have more working people who can afford radios and TV's. But if one could not produce a receipt, then that property was confiscated by the police, and many cannot get them back. Well, none of us expected that the police would close off the suburb where I live, but last Friday they descended on Riverside, and spent the day searching. This was a complete waste of time. Most of these houses are occupied by managers and man. directors, who have keys to their offices, and one result was that Nat. Com Bank did not open as the manager was not allowed out. Only when noisy clients who nearly started another rampage to get their money became rather noisy did the police catch on, so he got a police escort. Then of course, much of the property where I live is company owned, and the receipts are in the offices, so I heard there were quite some noisy scenes, until the tenants realised one way to win was to open their fridges and offer drinks all round. I was lucky, the 3 who came to my house were really nice, and we soon established that one went to my church (not the same congregation) but that helped. They did not ask for a receipt, nor ask me to open my cupboards, and only stayed about 20 minutes. I amused them by insisting on seeing their identity cards, and telephoned the office to get them to come and rescue me if I did not call back in 15 minutes. Half an hour later I had 3 more, so I told them I'D already been searched, unfortunately nobody had wrtten the magic letter \$ on my gate. I had 2 more lots after that, so asked them why they did not have a proper plan of campaign.

Well, the other suburb Parklands expected their turn this monday, but somebody decided it would be a waste of time, and I understand there were many complaints over the way it upset business. They did not search the mine town suburbs either - interesting.

We are in a no win situation. If we follow the IMF suggestions, then we get our loans but the people starve. If we defy the IMF, they withhold loans to pay the interest on the past loans we couldn't pay, and other donors stop helping too.

One has to see this in perspective. Almost all Africa is in the same boat or worse. And during this period the riots in Karachi made ours look like a minor hit and run attack. There was no mention at all of what was going on either on radio or on TV., but plenty on the B.B.C., Voice of America, and South African news - they of course loved it. Finally some M.P.'s got up in parliament and asked why it was not being broadcast or reported by the Zambian media, so then we got some rather restricted items, followed eventually by photos.

We also had a dusk curfew 6 to 6, but most people did not want to go out anyway. It only lasted 5 or 6 days.

24th March 1987

January 1987

My holiday in Australia

Ruth and I boarded the Qantas flight out of Harare (Zimbabwe) where we had met the previous day, two hours late as a result of an industrial dispute in Perth. We were assured it was all settled, but it wasn't, so we had 5 hours in Perth waiting for the staff to agree to work to a new timetable. It wasn't quite as bad as it might have been, as there was a TV in the lounge and the Davis Cup was on, so we watched Pat Cash win it for Australia. We had not realised that Sydney airport closes at 11pm, and we made it just ten minutes late, but our poor hosts had a long wait. Ruth had met a cabaret star in Gaborone who her boys had liked and palled up with, and he invited us to spend the weekend there. I was rather appalled when I learnt he was a rock and roll star - why could it not have been an oper singer? He turned out to be a real charmer, and very clued up on the countries where he entertained, and had a delightful wife and daughter. They lived almost two hours drive from the city, so we finally arrived there around 2am, as it took us an hour to clear customs. Also meeting the plane was Jason Mfula, former director of Mindolo Ecumenical Centre, and now our man in Australia. His daughter was on the plane, and he had asked us both to bring the maize meal so beloved of most Africans. Well.... Patricia's case had gone somewhere else, and the customs official decided to inspect this maize flour together, as no food is allowed in to Australia without a strict inspection. So while we waited to find out what had happened to the case, Ruth and I waited, not too patiently, so we were the last to leave the airport.

Unfortunately, Roland (the rock singer) had 2 concerts in the 3 nights we were there, the first lasted five hours as it was a tribute to some dead and buried star, we actually sat through about four hours, but after the flight it was utterly tedious. And I don't like rock music. So next night I bagged the spare TV and watched the opera Magic Flute in the bedroom to restore the balance. The next night there was a concert in connection with the Aus. fleet's 75th anniversary, fortunately only two hours. As we got back so late each time we did not see a morning in Sydney, and not much afternoon either. Pity, I would have loved to have a tour round.

We then flew to Melbourne to visit our cousins, three generations of them. It was Ruth's first visit, and my third. The eldest generation represented by Trudy emigrated alone at the age of 20, and married there producing two sons, one of whom, Wally, we stayed with. Sylvia, his wife, made us most welcome, she had not met Ruth before, and their two kids at home conveniently went and stayed with friends so we could have their bedroom, a dubious honour, I thought, as I clambered along a narrow path from door to bed amid piled up clothes, electrical things, and other articles. Trudy's sister Kath now 80 was out on a six month visit, so it was quite a family reunion. Wally was not working, from choice, so he was available to chauffeur us around in his yellow Mercedes. We had a most interesting time, as Ruth had friends we visited, and so did I. Peter Mathews, who started Mindolo, lives up in the Dandenong hills behind Melbourne, and we had a lovely Sunday lunching and admiring his proteas, which he has pioneered in Australia. A former Geneva friend, Pam Morison, is retired and she took us out a few times, in her car and to the theatre. Ruth had a friend from Victoria who had worked in Botswana, running a huge sheep farm, so we went there for a day and watched them shearing sheep. Finally, a former professor from Botswana was doing three months at Geelong University, and he invited us down and there it was most interesting. The university is planning a distance education project for the SADEC countries, and we had a good discussion on the right subjects to include. The others staff had knocked around in Africa, and enjoyed the challenge of organising such a vital programme.

24th March 1987

This is even more difficult, as out of the nine southern African countries in SADCC, two are Portuguese speaking. Some subjects are quite useless in our economy, such as marketing, with nothing to sell! Also, there are no new jobs being created, many jobs are being lost every month, and the general expectation is that if one is educated and has a qualification, then one must have a job. So subjects required are those where one can create self employment. And that is not so easy under distance education. Another problem I pointed out to them was the sheer cost of books. Students should pay something, otherwise it does not mean anything, but books are now so expensive that nobody can afford to buy them. I read this week that schools cannot provide text books, and the parents can't afford to provide their kids with them, and even duplicating lessons is a mighty expensive pastime. So we spent a most stimulating afternoon. They are thinking of having a centre for all nine countries, in Swaziland, which I think is crazy, as it is in the extreme south, and the fares to get there to courses will be out of the reach of most. Zimbabwe is the centre for many SADCC activities, so they want to avoid putting everything there, but in the end they will make it unviable. Since we were there, everything has got even more costly.

Spring was the season in theory, but in practice it was very cold most of the time there, with just an odd warm day. Melbourne can have a different season every day, but it was mostly winter during my stay. Most of our hosts kindly put on their central heating for us.

Ruth stayed only 10 days in Melbourne, and I stayed on another week. We went to the theatre one night altogether to see Rex Harrison, now 78, and Claudette Colbert, now 83, in a light trivial west end comedy Aren't We All, and it was marvellous to see them so active. The theatre was full. I saw some good films with various people, including Otello, absolutely wonderful, Room with a View, Crocodile Dundee; and a good concert. Oh yes, and a play at the National theatre in Melbourne, Servant of Two Masters.

Canberra was my next stop, with the Mfulas, and I had carefully planned it to coincide with Zambia's 22nd anniversary of independence. But Samora Machel was killed in the plane crash just a few days earlier, so everything was cancelled. In a way my visit was welcome as the Mfulas were feeling very sad. I stayed for 5 days, and enjoyed that lovely city, but the night I arrived it was only one degree, so I was rather cold. They made me so welcome, and we had a lovely time. We went to a wild life park; and up the revolving tower, and the war museum, and very luckily I was there for a diplomatic visit round the new parliament buildings, being built in readiness of Australia's 200 th anniversary of settlement. It is a most modern building, which I liked, but there is a lot of criticism of the high cost. One of the architects, Sir somebody or other, showed us round, the visit lasted a couple of hours, and I am glad I was there.

The anniversary is in 1988. There are only six African missions in Canberra, one is Egyptian so doesn't really count, and there are few Africans living there, so Mfulas were happy to have me as hardly anyone from Zambia ever gets that way. *They really are living in luxury - even an indoor pool!*

Brisbane was my last stop, for eight days, where I stayed with my friends the Folbiggs, who had been here in Zambia for 14 years, and who had stayed with me for over a year before emigrating. They love it, and Gordon has managed to find some temporary jobs. He was not working while I was there, but has found another job since. They live one mile from the ocean, and here I went swimming at every opportunity. Pure heaven to be warm again after one month freezing. One day we went to a local bowls club to celebrate the Melbourne Cup, everything in Australia stops for that. The main race lasted fifteen minutes, but we had a whole day's programme.

I noticed a lot of development in the seven years since my last visit. The country is actually in a depression, but everything is relative, and compared to us here I thought it was booming. The clothing, and oil and mining had really increased since 1979, and lots more to come.

24th March 1987.

24th March, 1987.

Dear David

I think a lot about you & Cindy, and I hope things are carrying on as well as can be expected. I hope you had a good Christmas - I expect it was quiet.

I had a good time, rather unexpectedly, I telephoned around just the weekend before, & found several friends who'd made no plans, so there were 12 of us here for lunch.

I had plenty of help. As our rains are very bad, it's extremely hot, so we appreciated the pool. I've never experienced so little rain - & this on top of everything else!

I had a long chat over tea with Dr. Louisa Fisher, who has had 2 hip replacements, & I decided it's horrible!

I decided our medical standards are too low, so will have to go to England for it. I've never been in hospital all my life.

So I'm taking my last cheap ticket and flying UTA to France, then Germany, Sweden & finally UK. I suppose I'll screw up my courage & have this operation!

I'm a miserable coward. I've never been to Scandinavia, & rather fancy a mini-cruise round the Norwegian fjords, well, it's fun to dream!

Do you still see Adele Pire? I didn't hear from her at Christmas.

Security is getting to be very bad again - or rather the lack of it, with ever-increasing unemployment. It's inevitable but so many robbers are career men, not people in need.

Cheerio & all the best -
Yours David

April 28, 1987

Dear Muriel,

Just a very short note.

Talk about mental telepathy. Our last letters early this month crossed in the mail. I think yours came about three days after I posted mine to you.

We really enjoyed your letter. Adele came over to visit Zindi almost a fortnight ago and they enjoyed your descriptions/narrations. Sad about the Kitwe riots and economic collapse generally. Adele says she will write you soon.

Zindi as before. Always precarious but enjoying her days as never before. (Doing all cooking now except for putting things into and taking them out of the gas oven! Uses two hot pads, an electric skillet, small electric warmer, electric tea kettle but very fearful of a microwave oven and we can't get the building to put in a full size electric stove.) She seems truly happy.

I'm thoroughly enjoying my work and fit as a fiddle until this week when I got a sudden unexplained, severe neck pain. Am to see the doctor in two days, so hope it can be sorted out!

Our best wishes as you plan your journey to the UK for your operation. Any possibility of your coming across the Atlantic to the Big Apple for two weeks as part of your recuperation? We now have plenty of pull out beds. Airfares are incredibly cheap as I am sure you know between America and the UK - unless on Zambian money!

Keep in touch. Keep us posted on how things go and your plans.

As always,

David

Addendum to 12th July 1987 letter

Many thanks for your letter of March and April. Sorry I can't do real justice to them.

I'm so glad Zindi is coping and doing better than expected. It's marvelous! I can understand, too, how you need to get away at times.

I don't think I can get to NY this time — I'm not even sure how well I will be able to get around, so I'm staying in the south-east.

So glad you're still enjoying your work. How did you land the Merrill Lynch job?

Cheerio. David, excuse haste, I'm off in 36 hours.

Muriel

PO Box 21007 KIPWE Zambia

24th June 1987

12th July 1987.

My dear David,

This is just a short note to let you know that I shall be coming over to England in the middle of August to have this operation. I decided against having it here mostly because the standards are not as high as they might be.

I had no idea where I would be going until after Easter. I had decided against Kensington because everyone told me it would be so expensive. Also I did not take to the doctor. At Easter I met Ruth and family in northern Botswana at the same lodge where we all met last year. This time, in addition, was another family, Seretse's former heart surgeon. Well, his wife has a brother who does hip operations etc and lives in Hythe. So I wrote to him, and later telephoned after having received a nice friendly answer, and I have arranged to see him on 17th August in Canterbury, and then go in on 19th. I suppose I ought to add that he managed to retrieve my X rays so obviously saw for himself that I do really need an op. I shall be in hospital for 2 weeks, and should come out walking.

My address there will be AMI Chaucer Hospital, Nackington Road, Canterbury Kent CT4 7AR, and the phone number is 0227 455466. My two good friends from Chicago have offered to come over and be around, which is marvellous. Afterwards I shall most likely go to stay with my Folkestone friends, Olive and Frank Adams, 27 Chichester Road, Folkestone CT20 3BN, I wrote and warned her I would give her address as a contact. Their phone is 0303 39957.

I shall leave here on 14th July and have a month in Germany and Sweden. This month is incredibly hectic with handing over, farewell lunches at the 5 branches, cocktail parties, dinners, etc. So I shall need the 2 weeks before leaving to recover.

I also need the two weeks to get this letter off. Oh yes, I plan to be away 3 months altogether, and shall have a month or so after the op in Britain, but have no idea yet where as I just don't know how I shall be physically.

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Cheers David, excuse haste,
I'm off in 36 hours -

Amiel

12th July, '87

Date cut off ✓

Muriel and David's manuscript letters retyped: 1979 — 2008

England

[Note: 1987 true original lost and only photocopy exists and exact date cut off from photocopy]

My dear David,

Many thanks for your letter of July and the 2 cards since. I appreciate all your friendship and concern.

I'm sitting in the garden in bright sunshine writing this! After 5 weeks of the lousiest weather in Germany and Sweden, I was amazed to find it's being much better here. We have odd days with mist and rain, but the sunshine bounces back — at least in this south-east corner of England. Ireland and Scotland are a different story!

Well, my operation was successful, but I'm not exactly bouncing around yet! Your friend must be a modern wonder. The surgeon was very pleased with me, after telling me the morning afterwards "I've done my part, it's all up to you now." So when I later complained of slow progress, he was forced to answer "you have had a major operation you know, and that involved a lot of carpentry!". After 2 weeks I could barely walk so transferred to another hospital 2 miles from Folkstone with a convalescent wing. It faced the sea, and I could watch the ships up and down the Channel. It was a real tonic. After 2 weeks here with the Adams, I can walk 1/2 mile with a rest half-way. Today I had a bath unaided (getting out was the problem), but I still have pain and get very stiff. You see I have arthritis all over, and last week had an awful attack of sciatica, could _____ . I find sitting in a car for long makes me ache so I have postponed my return until mid-November, I can't face the 10 hour flight.

I had loads of visits, including my great-nephew who's at boarding school here; Wilfred Grenville-Grey; and lots of letters. I used my private phone in the hospitals to ring around my friends, so have been surrounded by love and prayers. I even telephoned Ruth one evening.

I move around to other friends this w/end. The address below is where I'll be mid-October.

Love to you and Zindi, hope she's still _____

Love Muriel

Sybil David,

L21" 1987)
date cut off???



Many thanks for your letter of July and the 2 cards since, I appreciate all your friendship and concern.

I'm sitting in the garden in bright sunshine basking this! After 5 weeks of the roughest weather in Germany & Sweden, I was awaged to find it's being much better here. We have odd days with mist & rain, but the sunshines bounces back - at least in this southeast corner of England. Ireland & Scotland are a different story!

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date cut off?!?

Comes back -

1. Plan & story!

sitting in a car Aeropostale & Royal Mail Product makes me ache, so
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 I move around to other friends this weekend.
 The address below is where I'll be mid-October.
 Love to you & Zindi, hope she's skip the usual

P.O. Box 21607, Kitwe

but Actually

Southampton, England



13th October, 1987

My dear *David + Zindi.*

I started writing letters by hand, but found I was aching too much, so once again am taking the lazy way out.

I have been in England now for 2 months, arriving just a week before the hip-replacement operation in Canterbury, on 19th August. It was a successful op., but I only wish I had realised beforehand just how long it would take to be comfortably operational again. Nobody I knew in Zambia had had this op except one person, several years ago, so I had nothing to go by. Thank heavens I have retired, at least from such a demanding job.

The hospital was a private American one, and very comfortable - luxurious. I was pleasantly surprised at the actual operation procedure, which I had been dreading. The nurses were very pleasant and kind, the food very good, TV would have been OK if only there had been any programmes worth watching. So I used the telephone and rang around as much as I could. I had visitors every day, who kept me cheerful and in perspective. When the surgeon told me I would walk out of hospital after 2 weeks, I did not have in mind what actually happened. Yes, I was on my feet, putting one step in front of the other, with the aid of 2 sticks. But walking? Hardly. So a few days previously I had decided to transfer to another hospital, this time on the coast between Folkestone and Hythe, where there was a convalescent wing. The balcony in the front overlooked the Channel, so I always had something to watch, and lunched there daily. I managed to walk a little better in a week, and as the sea always zips me up, it was a real boost. While there, my great nephew came to visit me - Jackie's elder son - now at boarding school in Kent. I had not seen him for 18 months, so that was a real bonus.

Before coming to England, I had had a month on the continent. I spent a week with my German friend Magda in Solingen, between Koln and Dusseldorf, then my old friends Doris and Josephane, from Chicago, came over to spend 6 weeks with me, to include the time in hospital. I have really discovered again this year what wonderful friends I have. When I rented my farmhouse in Cornwall in 1971, quite a few of my friends kept up their friendships. Doris spent the whole 5 weeks with her daughter Lesley at the farm, so met everybody. Jo stayed 3 weeks, and Magda also came over. So we had quite a reunion in Germany. We then all went south to Stuttgart, where I stayed with Heather and Anita, and the others stayed with friends of Magda, over the weekend. Then Doris Jo and I stayed in a hotel and explored the surrounding countryside, in the pouring rain, and in the gusty winds. I loved Tübingen, but would like to see it properly next time. We all were impressed with the cathedral at Ulm. We then spent a whole day by train up to Hamburg. We had planned to stay one day, but to our surprise we loved it - in spite of the weather - and stayed for 4.

From there, we took a train to Travlunde, seeing Lubeck en route, and took the boat next morning to southern Sweden. The first 4 hours it was warm and sunny, and the decks were crammed with sunbathers trying to enjoy unexpected sunshine. Then it poured the rest of the way, and I wandered round deserted decks, trying to conjure up the earlier scenes. We spent the night at Malmö, and then took a train - all day again - to Stockholm, where we were met by the Simonssons, who put us up for a week. I had never before visited Scandinavia, mainly because of the weather. Well, this time we caught the worst summer this century, and my main recollection is of dodging the rain. Such a shame, as the city is beautiful. We had one nice

13th October 1987

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afternoon, when we took a cruise out into the archipelago, and the last day was good, and we visited one of the islands. The weekend when Bengt and Marty were free, and we were to drive around outside the city, it rained from Friday night up to Monday lunchtime. Oh, there is plenty to see next time I go...

From the day we arrived in England, the sun shone. Apart from the fact that I love the sun and warmth, it helped my progress in walking, as I was able to go out every day. From the hospital I moved to my good friends in Folkestone, Olive and Frank Adams, who had visited me every day, and also hosted Doris and Jo for 2 weeks. Once again, they had all met in Cornwall, and Doris' daughter Lesley, the same age as Olive's daughter Lois, had spent Christmas there twice while studying in France. Olive went to a lot of trouble to make me comfortable, and for 2½ weeks I was spoilt badly. I really wondered about older people who have to go straight home from this op and carry on with running a home. It's impossible to pick anything up, and I was always dropping things. I didn't have really bad pain but it was worse than it had been before, whereas most people suffered worse than I did before going in. We went for walks along the sea front - only 3 minutes by car from the house - every day, and often further afield. I could only crawl slowly, it must have been awful for them but they suffered in silence. We had lovely drives around the Kent countryside, visiting places I had not seen since the 1930's.

Hastings was my next destination. Norma and Harry, (also in Cornwall) are pre-war friends, and they continued in spoiling me in their lovely bungalow on the cliffs just 5 miles from Hastings. We used to drop down to the beach and promenade most days. Luckily, there are some ponds nearby where they and many others birdwatch, so we each did our own thing. (I still find it hard to recognise a sparrow). We had several visits to Rye, which never loses its appeal.

One bonus I've had over here is to catch all 4 political party conferences. So in hospital I watched the SDP and Liberals, and at Hastings Labour and Conservative. I found it intriguing to compare them. The first two reminded me a bit of our YWCA meetings in Zambia (national level), very chummy and unbusinesslike. Labour impressed me the most (but I must declare an interest) and the Conservatives the least. Utterly boring, heavily stagemanaged to show no opposition at all. Of course Labour will wash their dirty linen in public, and the trade union influence is frightening; I did try very hard to imagine myself a floating voter. Norma and Harry are keen Labour members and managed to get 3 visitors passes to Brighton for the Labour conf., so one day we went. I found it a great occasion, to actually be there, but I was utterly exhausted by the end of the day. I would not have missed it for anything.

I retired on 30th June after 2 exhausted months of handing over and farewell parties - lunch at all 6 branches; 2 cocktail parties in Kitwe and Lusaka; and a Boat d meeting with lunch and then dinner with all associated companies chief executives. In between I was handing over to my successor - a real Zambian this time. The 2 weeks before I left for Germany was rather unreal, in fact, ever since then I have wondered if I was dreaming it all.

I return to Zambia on 10th November. I have arranged to sell my house to the accountant and move out by the end of the year. I don't know where I shall go. I am not even sure I can manage to pack everything up in that time, as my movements are still limited and I ache after ten minutes bending. Before I left I was offered 4 jobs, all of which I turned down. I would like a part-time job, and in accountancy it should not be difficult. My time in Zambia will be limited, it is not a country for older retired people living alone. So I am changing my mind about buying a house, and hope to rent. I would love to find a charity job, but that would mean loving to Lusaka, and property there is as ridiculous as London's in price. Also I do not have a car, I had a company Peugeot, and the price of cars is as high as a house. So, I have many decisions to make. Now you know why I am writing this in England, when I return there will be no time at all.

You know some of this, but will fill you in.
All the best to you both, Love Thumel

1988

[Note: This is the end of the typed form letter July 1988]

I'm on a week's holiday on the shores of lake Tanganyika relaxing, swimming, eating, reading and sleeping — almost 12 hours a day! So Kenya will have to be next year now. It really is great to be back at Mindolo again.

It's ages since I heard news from you. I hope things are going well, and your health is keeping as stable as possible, Zindi, Right now

PO BOX 21607 KITWE

July 1988

My dear

David & Zindi,

Received
and signed
4/9/88



When I returned to Kitwe on 11th November last year, I had no idea what I would be doing with myself, I had discussed it with several friends in Britain, and thought I would be looking for a part-time job, after I had sold my house. Some of you know how things turned out, but others don't and I have forgotten who knows and who is still in the dark. The very day I returned, I was met at Ndola airport by the accountant of TG Travel, (who was buying my house), Hans Malama, and he told me on the return drive that the Finance Controller at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation had been fired the previous month for a pretty big fraud. It did not take me long to decide that that was exactly what I wanted to do, but I saw 2 big hurdles. One, Eva Sanderson (no. 2) is on the Board of Governors, the Executive committee, and Finance. I thought she would be very anti. Imagine my surprise when, after having chatted up a couple of staff here, who were all in favour of my return, Eva telephoned me and enthusiastically welcomed my return. I realised why afterwards.... The second hurdle was Bill Forrest, the chairman of the finance committee, who for some unknown reason thought I had done something nasty to him, and had refused for years to entertain any suggestion that I be a member of the finance committee. So another surprise, when he telephoned me and asked if he and the Director could come round and see me! There was no interview as such, it was taken for granted from the first moment that I would return....

I have asked myself several times since, would I have been so enthusiastic had I known what was ahead? Once or twice I would have said "no", but mainly I don't regret it for a moment. But I really had no idea how much there was to do. I had intended concentrating on packing up the house until I left it on 31st December, but I allowed myself to be persuaded to return on 7th December, mornings only until January. That week there was a Board meeting, and I realised pretty quickly what a hopeless mess I had to untangle, so the following week I worked all day. Mindolo closes for a week from Christmas to New Year, so I finished my packing, and moved out on time; I decided I would like to move back to live at MEF, but no house was immediately available, so I shifted in with some Dutch friends, with a big house, the van Nottens, for 5 weeks, then moved on to campus. It is ideal for me, I have neighbours I can pop into, there are security guards, and fenced my garden which wasn't bad, brought my 2 cats, but gave the dogs to the SPCA to be given away, as there are too many dogs on campus, and they weren't used to being able to see out, I could imagine fights galore.

I could go on forever about the work. For 6 months I have worked up to 7pm and all day Saturday, having to completely re write the whole of 1987 accounts. So much for my easy part-time job! But I have few complaints. I had to get new staff, the others were useless, except for my old friend Trywell Phiri, who I trained 25 years ago. The audit is just completed, and now we have to catch up with 1988 work, but the new staff are reliable, and we are a good team. There are still a few old friends here (it is 12 years since I left), including Jonathan Phiri, and Michael Chanda, now promoted to Head of Programmes. There is an international staff, from Norway, Ireland (Roman Catholics!), Canada; Sudan; and in other organisations on campus there are Scots, English and German. It just feels right to be back, and there is no doubt that my years as a managing director have helped to impress people - when I left I felt I was just taken for granted and rather like a piece of the furniture. It was lucky too that I was available, as I could plunge right in, knowing the place, the work, some of the staff, and needed no time to settle down.

I did take one break for a week at Easter, when I joined the family once more in northern Botswana at Chobe Game reserve. This time they met me at the Zambian - Zimbabwe border, at Victoria Falls, and we spent a delightful day there before driving on to Chobe. It was the usual fun, and it was marvellous to see how green everywhere was, after the best ruins for many years. The owner of the lodge where we stayed drove me back to Livingstone; she has become a family friend, a delightful Swiss woman - who else but Heidi? I visited my Livingstone friends each way, the Whiteheads, still enjoying living there.

Are David & Zindi happy with your work & job satisfaction?
Prayers

July, 1988

Although I have been so busy, there is a fairly active social life on campus. The international students, from over a dozen African countries, plus 2 delightful women from Fiji, love producing international nights, of varying quality, with food produced from their countries, and there are new course get-togethers, and graduations of old students; international visitors; in fact quite a variety of activities. Staff also come and go, so more parties to welcome or farewell them. I've done more dancing this year than for ages!

I was amused to become the acting Director here after the New Year, before I had actually received my letter of appointment. That's Zambia for you. There is a very new Chief of Admin, and an old staff member promoted to Head of Programmes, 2 months ago, so I am actually already the senior of we 3, coming right below the Director. Francis Makambwe is a delightfully easy going man, rather too gentle at times, so my chosen task is to try to help him get tougher! We joke about it, as he realises he needs it.

This month (it's now August, 3 weeks after page one), we have a 3 week training seminar for staff of ecumenical centres from all over the world, run by the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conf of Churches. So it will be an interesting time. I shall be hosting a couple of the resource people coming in, from Zaire and later Botswana (an old family friend of the Khamas) so hope to get a bit involved.

As you can guess, I have now forgotten I ever had a hip replacement operation. When I got back I started to swim, and that finished off the healing very quickly. I had a slight ache and dragging feeling in my muscles until the end of the year, but that went and last month I walked 5 miles round a lake in a local bird sanctuary. I was a bit weary the last mile, but that's because I don't walk enough normally. The Mindolo campus is 150 acres and is very pleasant, so now I am leaving the office earlier, I try to take a stroll round my village each evening. However, we cannot afford to keep the swimming pool here going, it is prohibitive, so I shall miss my swimming very much; I hope to join a club somewhere so that I can at least swim at weekends.

The first weekend in August is a bank holiday weekend here, so I was in Lusaka for the annual YWCA conference. The theme was Development with Justice, which had been the theme of the World YWCA conference last year in the USA. It was most interesting, and I enjoyed not having to think of accounts all day; though I had to present the YWCA accounts in the final business session. I barely had time to do these, and concentrated on them during the past 3 weeks as soon as the MEF audit was over. I took 2 extra days off and visited friends in and around Lusaka, including Jessie Nkonde at the farm. It is well over a year since Braim was killed in a car crash. She is struggling to keep the farm going, with her only son. The 4 girls help when they can, but are all married and scattered around.

A lovely seaside holiday on the Kenyan coast is my ambition this year, but it may not be for another couple of months. I still have friends in Nairobi, and hope to see them en route for Mombasa. I would have liked to go now, but we still have rather desperate cash flow problems, and until these are settled, I would not really relax. I have also decided to go to Botswana for Christmas as we close down here for about 10 days and it's too good an opportunity. The family is all well, none of the boys are married - YET - and Jackie still at the University job. Her elder son Dale is at Sevenoaks School and he visited me in hospital last year with his father; then later I took him out to lunch. His brother Marcus will join him this time next year. Ian telephones me from time to time, he is still very busy in the army, coping with the S. African raids; there was one while we were all together at Easter.

Zambia this year has elections and everything stops for months while the preparations are made. Meanwhile, the less said about the economy, the better. But we stagger on, somehow.

Cheerio and all the best for now, I will try to write some personal additions as these are posted. Love and best wishes,

Shirley

It's ages since I heard news from you. I hope things are going well and your health is keeping as good as possible. Zindi

Fun on a week's holiday on the shores of Lake Tanganyika relaxing swimming eating reading & sleeping - almost 12 hours a day! So Kenya will have to be ready year now. It really is great to be back at Mindolo again.