

The RURBANIST

Beloved historical author Philippa Gregory on the pleasure of work and the pain of rain



What's bringing you joy at the moment? So many things. My dog, a beautiful Irish setter, always my children, and the emerging spring in my garden where I have a stream of snowdrops and a wood filled with bright yellow aconite.

What's annoying you most right now? The rain. The mud. When is it going to stop raining?

What advice would you give your 15-year-old self? Almost all the things you are most upset about are beyond your control, and the things that are in your control are going to come out all right.

What keeps you awake at night? Excitement about work, which wakes me with stories in my head.

What could you have been arrested for? A couple of misjudgements, but never any risk to life.

Best life hack you can share with us? Always carry your toothbrush in your hand luggage when flying, in case they lose your luggage.

What does sustainability mean to you? It's a constant attempt to not damage the place I am in, and if possible improve it.

How can we save the world? We have to change our western lifestyles to consume, spoil, and destroy a lot less – and support developing countries to adopt new clean technology. We've got to live like stewards of the world and not like greedy maniacs.

Your greatest failure? I'm sorry I lost some campaigns I worked on, and I'm sorry that I lost some friends along the way.

Your greatest triumph? Probably the best thing I have ever done is raise funds and pay for wells to be dug in rural schools of The Gambia, Africa, so that school children can learn sustainable agriculture and not depend on the rains, have clean water to drink through the day and grow their own school dinners. We've dug 250 wells so far.

Your epitaph would read... Just my name and dates to help historians centuries from now. I couldn't define myself in such a short word count.

What does a life in balance mean to you? A mix of self-care and care for others, work that is pleasure, and being ready to work on the joys in life.

Philippa's debut stage play, Richard, My Richard, will run at Shakespeare North Playhouse from 8-30 March, followed by Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds from 11-27 April ■

Philippa has helped raise funds for wells to be dug in rural Africa



QUICK FIRE FAVOURITES...

- SCENT** Chanel No 5. **BOX SET** Vanderpump Rules. **CHOCOLATE BAR** Cadbury's Fruit & Nut. **SONG** Walk of Life. **DISH** Fish pie. **GADGET** Laptop.

