

**30<sup>th</sup> April, 1995**

*It was nice to hear you on the phone, it has only been a week, and time has flown away, lots has happened and I'll try to put some thoughts and impressions down on paper.*

*The airport road is being resurfaced and widened, huge athletic facilities above Ellis Park are being provided; the city seems cleaner than last year, a friendly mood is permeating the city. There are fewer street vendors, less city traffic, something I noticed last August already. Br\*/Credit Suisse moved north, even more shop fronts are barricaded in parts of the city – it really looks measly. Kahn's Pianos had moved in August last year, now closed completely in their new place! Tony Factor's building being knocked down – our building Victory House reasonably clean or dirty, whichever way you want to look at, toilets filthy, and requests to have them cleaned were not heard, so I scrubbed them and now A1 – our neighbour Mia still there, but Fazli left on Saturday; Beatrice moved also to her home, the record shop still liquidating stocks and closed some store rooms; Fakir above us, survived his heart troubles last year – I feel really at home: sirens at all times, so far only one march down Harrison Street – police, both white and black, complaining getting too little pay (R400 p.m. after deductions), the official minimum survival wage is now R1500 p.m.*

*Copystat are very busy, lots of holidays in the New South Africa, Friday and Monday so most people having a long week-end, but managed to get our building opened at certain hours. The main road near gas works closed off, as now working on arterial road from Emmarentia. Block of flat which housed students from Goudstad College now full of black people working in town, bus to Melville packed, only 4-5 Whites. There are lots of new restaurants and cafés in Melville. Ava and Daphne took me to "The Waterfront", a new development North of Linden which did not exist last year – 60 restaurants and a few smaller shops and big flea market – it was packed solidly around the water, on two levels – it looks like carnival time without the Disneyland effects, difficult to describe. You should see all the latest cars parked outside – even Ava has a fancy whatever. His Greek boss sold out to Danish company for a fat sum, but staying on for a while. The Waterfront, by the way, has musical fountains, reasonably pretty and kitschy feature – the crowd very mixed, but nice mix and happy – food averaging R25-30 each – lots of young people as good security and as Daphne says, better there than in Hillbrow or town!*

*Jack de Smidt (UAL) saw Lucas Sithole collection to decide on backing for Fort Hare. He reckons we probably did the right thing going to Europe, in the long run. Fort Hare are coming on Monday, Dr de Waal from Pretoria Art Museum on Tuesday, also Stuttafords, and Hilton R. is coming on Monday.*

*Tuesday evening had supper with Gishen from Sithole's Estate, at Carlton – two sculptures had been short-delivered that day, but were traced – all was in order with the accounts, gave Gishen a cheque for R20'000+. David Krut and another person had approached Gishen to handle Sithole's Estate!*

*Gave Copystat printing jobs on a stiffy disk, but they have difficulty in reading as theirs is an older software version, so they may have to type it all out which I was trying to avoid. Got 6'000 envelopes, stamped them all, now busy labelling them; sorted out mail from Coopers & Lybrand and started closing off cash books and preparing accounts for auditor but that will take a few more weeks to complete. I did some shopping as staying in empty rectory at St Peter's – cannot afford chicken at R15 frozen or R18/kg cooked (sfrs 5-6!) – 2 litre milk costs R5.50!*

*I have total peace at home, no sound except for birds calling – many more sounds than in Beatenberg – except that Tim and Rose Gray are busy finishing off their old house as they never fixed the boards around the rooms so lots of dust and noise when they are here, right into the night. They moved on Friday to St Francis of Assisi, before my arrival, and had me for supper on Monday. Their new home is also a huge place – Rose's parents were up from Natal.*

*Registration for Local Government voting is slow, so voting postponed till June! Reading the papers, it is all a sad state of affairs, though lots of goodwill.*

*Went to service at St Peter's this Sunday, not packed, mainly the oldies that I knew from way back – still love the feeling – lots of enquiries about you.*

*I won't see Judy and Garth this month, but Ava tells me Judy happy studying and working. Jan also busy but will try and come to Johannesburg – have also spoken to Leechie as Flora farm definitely going bust and arranging to have at least works of art declared "in storage" by us. Problem is the Standard Bank Marquard as cannot raise enough income to pay back capital, and now interest rates are going up again – minimum bank overdraft for top clients is 17.5%, best return on savings is only 8% and inflation is again into double digit figures.*

*At St Peter's saw picture on board that was taken last August, luckily they had spare copies. You'll recognise some people, maybe even your bald husband!*

*Staying at rectory until 4<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon, as on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> a bunch of mainly black youngsters, 18-35 years, will be staying at the rectory and the hall for the Taisé Youth Rally, and the girls will be in the main house. Trying to stay at Ava that week-end then back at rectory till painters come a week later. The new priest is moving in on 23<sup>d</sup> May.*

### **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May**

*A public holiday, so lucky to be in Melville on bus route 221, a Sunday special bus Windsor-Melville-City-Eastgate, leaving at 9.10 a.m., so plenty of time to wait in front of gallery till opened at 10 a.m. Made special arrangement with Amos to leave open till 4 p.m. and watch entrance and cars coming (R100 benefit to him at end of the day which pleased him no doubt!). The Fort Hare lady did not come, but Hilton, Jack Ginsberg and Nic from Pretoria, together they bid for 6 works value R44'000. Nic walked away with the granite "Cat's mouse day" for R10'000 (90% of "normal" price). It was a good start – thank you Lord. So now there are only 10 works left in the gallery, plus the display for PAM and Ft Hare, which should all be gone by Thursday. Hilton also purchased the last Sekete I had for R900 which just about covers the cost of bronze (historical value, no doubt). We may see Hilton and Jack one day in our flat in Beatenberg.*

*Tim Gray has finished his mess in the old house so back to peace for a while. Even the grey mouse, my companion, ran away; there is too much activity with me shuffling between bathroom, bedroom and kitchen!*

### **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May**

*Yesterday, PAM collected all their Sithole works and to-day Stuttafords collected for Ft Hare. There have been more bids and more are to be expected. Sotheby's are having a big sale so out of town visitors should be coming. We'll see, meanwhile I told Gishen the Estate can already expect over R30'000 net. Walter Glutz, ex Everite, phoned out of the blue – he spends 3½ months every year in their flat near Geneva, in France, and he hoped to move totally within the next two years.*

*I have proof-read all work for Copystat, so now printing. First job will go out next week – postage quite high now, R0.60 local, R1.05 surface to Europe, but of course still a fraction of Swiss levels.*

*I moved to-night from Tim's old house, in view of the crowd of youngsters this weekend. On top of this, the painters started already, one week too early, so the place smells vile.*

*I took the 71 bus at 6 pm to-day. I couldn't believe it, it also was packed with mainly black people, standing room even, but the percentage of Whites is higher than on the Melville route.*

*Ava and Daphne are off till Sunday afternoon; Jan phoned she will be coming sometimes next Friday to the office.*

*I telephoned SAA Zurich, the crate of books is already in Johannesburg, Renfreight are busy clearing. Rina de Villiers phoned, sends her regards and hopes you and I will have lunch with her one day.*

*The lady in charge of the Fort Hare Collection, Dawn Zain, ex Malaysian exile, will be coming to bid next week and hopes Barbara Masekela (South Africa's Ambassador in Paris) will come and buy a Lucas Sithole for her office! I should try and offer the Victor/Vanquished head.*

*Tuesday night had supper with Fred and family, tomorrow Friday with Dirk and Annie Meerkotter.*

*At this stage, I am giving up the large gallery room at the end of May, keeping present back office for the Pelmama Academy at R220 p.m. including VAT, with access through Mia's office. New tenants will most likely be dressmakers; as Amoils says, this is all he can get!*

*In-Town is not being pulled down only altered to cater for Edgars.*

*I hope someone will take the 2 Adrian de Villiers, then could consider cutting down totally next time. University of the North came and bid on 3 works, gave them some LS books, also 100 to Ft Hare, so down to about 10 copies and what is left in Switzerland. Eastside College will gladly take sculpture stands next week.*

*There is a big ceramics exhibition on at the PAM including Lucie Rie, Bosch etc from our Collection. I hope I can see it before I leave.*

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May**

*The 71 bus from Ava at 7 a.m. packed with Whites – you can never tell! Along Empire Road Ext below Wits, there are lots of office blocks.*

*Judy Mason divorced, Trent moved to Cape Town and closed Contemporary Gallery, Mylchreest died last year.*

*Yesterday spoke to Judy and Mum – she got your letter, was pleasantly surprised to hear my voice. John and Leechie were with her at that time.*

*Dirk Meerkotter never sold as much before as now, mainly graphics and mixed media, lots to ABSA. Fred and Ulrich are also doing well. Tessa Fleischer cut USA ties, has now a South African actor friend, they are opening a glass factory in Canada, our land still not built on, no squatters yet as there is no water – asked her to bring jewellery to CH for Bern.*

*Brandenberg came on Thursday, McLarty from Pretoria came on Saturday, but nobody on Friday which was a boring day, as just finished 6'000 labels. Now I've got through my orders for books. Saturday afternoon went to Johannesburg Art Gallery which was partly closed as displays from Africanus Biennale being taken down. The overall impression of the remainder of the collection on view was one of utter confusion and nonsense. Staggering crowd of Blacks at Joubert Park and parking near Shell House. I did not see more than 3 Whites around. Gallery entrance now on South side – railway side! On Saturday afternoon and Sundays, there is a good hourly bus service, in my case from Windsor to Bedfordview via Braamfontein, City Centre, Hillbrow (bus 221), but the nearest point for Ava is 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Melville, or Northcliff Shopping Centre. First I climbed in the city on the wrong bus (Bedfordview), but quickly got out, waited another hour for Windsor direction. On Saturdays, Eloff Street looks empty after 4 p.m. I got off at Northcliff, popped in at Spar, passed our former house – it's as if we had never lived there! Had tea and cake with Leana – she showed me her new car and new dog – she looks quite well. I then walked on to Ava. Dirk then brought me my raincoat I had left at their place the night before. I caught up with 3 days of washing, as rain stopped, spent time reading brochures from the JAG, papers, and writing notes. Sunday was a day of total rest.*

*Phoned church warden on Friday, must call her again next Friday as painters will be busy till then. So meanwhile, I am staying in William's old room which became Joanne's room, that's if the Nicholson will have me. And then I go for another week to the rectory.*

### **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May**

*Our plants at the office of Mia had looked very happy last year, now they are virtually dead, and the creeper at the back is totally dead. They had never been watered! Yet I gave them our vase to water with – Africa! But now I am enquiring regularly, and may be they'll survive.*

*Walking along the road to Dirk and Annie, nothing has changed, beautiful gardens, peace, lots of birds, dogs barking – if you have a job or pension, or a house paid for, you are alright, and certainly don't need to emigrate, but that's OK for Linden and similar suburbs, not Melville etc.*

*The newspapers are still full of adverts about emigration to New Zealand, Australia and Canada.*

### **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

*Monday night supper with the Schwanecke's who invited me to stay for a week if needed. They are now grand-parents (a grand-son born on 1<sup>st</sup> May, but has trouble with heart valve, already one operation and again in 6 months' time). Parents are living near San Francisco. Konrad is also staying at his parents home, he got engaged, wrote the USA medical papers, will be finished end of year, might emigrate.*

*Tuesday, I had supper with the Schimmel's – every Tuesday. To-day, Erika came with her mother, Mrs Phillimore, who is 88 years old, sending you lots of regards, bid for one work, so total sales now R62'000. I must make a note, Heinz Pulon died 1994, also Joachim Voigts, Joyce Leonard, too. Painters still busy at the rectory, couldn't get in as locked from inside. I'll check up on Friday.*

*Finished two sets of accounts books, one more to go, then can phone auditors to come. Friday I should be getting SA circulars, so I'll be busy next week. Pelmama Eastside getting crate to-morrow, as now cleared. The smaller crate costs as much as 3 crates last year!*

### **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

*Muller got the box this morning, arranging for Pelmama to collect. Auditor will come on Monday. Phoned Norman, but in Johannesburg to-day, but had a chat to Janet, also to Jane Theron who will have tea on Sunday 4 p.m. (and get an update on news). Eastside collecting 2/3 of sculpture stands to-morrow, also the Schwanecke originals which I have split between the two colleges – a nice present to them. Only one more week for the sale, I'll be pleased, then I can clear the spotlights, move the sideboard, get rid of some filing cupboards, etc.*

*Johnny just phoned, coming with Leechie to-night on way to Pretoria to see his lawyers. Pippa just phoned Daphne, so had a quick chat, got your plate which fits beautifully with what she's got.*

*I'm well up on my workload, so left earlier to-day, as no visitors it is rather boring – it's safer, too.*

*Watched a bit of TV, got such a shock as one of the lady announcers who has been on TV for many years, is still on, but she has aged so much, all wrinkled, and she was so pretty (Marietta Kruger). It is so sad to see all those poorer Whites in the city centre, floating around, with no job left, and I'm not talking of the normal drunkies.*

*Fort Hare still hasn't come to buy, despite two "approaches". I hope they will still come and though Sotheby's had a big auction, none of the dealers or museums came, probably all have Sithole's or not interested any longer. Anyway, we'll see, and I'm happy we got thus far.*

*Daphne thanks you too for the plate which is lovely and kept in her bedroom as a special display of her personal belongings.*

### **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May**

*Picking up my first circular letters on way home, so busy signing this week-end. Jan and David came, brought me a huge melk tart, got to finish by Saturday noon as goes black (!). They are looking well, relaxed and always busy. Their daughter is getting married in July, not June. Telephoned Mark at PAM to collect books next week, then all has gone including most stands and insulation board. Norman Catherine phoned, doing well, shows and group shows through Linda in London and New York. His "Memo" book being published shortly in London, film rights still reserved to Warner Bros till mid-June. He will let me have sundry invitation cards and biographies when next in Johannesburg. Sends his regards to you – needs his one slide back in due course, after printing pamphlet or making a copy.*

*Phoned rectory at St Peter's, painters busy for another week, then new priest moving in, so will drop key in letterbox next Tuesday. Staying at Daphne and Ava for another week, Ava being away next week and Joanna this week, and I'll move then probably onto Schwanecke.*

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May**

*On way to Copystat I was pick pocketed by a black guy, very cleverly, but I'll tell you more when back in Beatenberg. I lost my purse, plus abt. R8 and the AA card, nothing else in it, but I took it as a sign from the Lord, next time it will be worse. And that made my decision final - I'm not keeping the last office any longer!*

*Saturday morning I finished signing the first batch of 1200 letters, the Potgieter's came, bid on 2 works and purchased the yellow wood/pine cupboard for R2000. Johnny and Leechie passed by on way home and took one filing cupboard - will take the rest end of the month (tools, plastic, paper rolls, tables, chairs, crockery etc.). He is bust but being married under A.N.C., Leechie retains all furniture. The Scott's will try and buy the land by borrowing from the Landbank, hope the deal is OK, then all that is lost will be the movables including the animals, no more commercial banks being owed anything.*

*Jane was supposed to come on Sunday at 4 p.m., but forgot it is Mother's Day, so seeing her Wednesday 6 p.m. Ava off to Cape till Thursday. Judy and Gary are thinking of visiting us next June (1966) and also the UK.*

*I hope you had a nice Mother's Day and that the children remembered it. I am glad you are giving up work on the farm - you cannot be in too many places at once. Just sad I couldn't be there, but that's life. I was there in thoughts.*

### **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May**

*Finished signing, clipping, folding, inserting 1600 SA appeals and posted them all to-day and to-morrow morning, got Mia to agree to take big safe for free. Trevor, the auditor, came Monday. Yesterday I had Norman Mankowitz bidding, saw Fred and Sybil for supper, to-day another couple bid for Lucas Sithole, so now all sold and total up to R76'000, but the big excitement will happen by Friday. Fort Hare couldn't get a financial backer, so no sale there. Perskor telephoned, first reaction to my book orders, delivering Maggie Laubser book. Tatham Gallery telephoned, have a Sithole purchased at Sotheby's some months ago. Jack Ginsberg offered R1000 only for either of the two Adrian de Villiers, told him it was an insult, but Hilton will discuss on Friday. So I'll be able to get rid of everything in the gallery. Now sorting out and throwing away old files. Closing a chapter one could say (1961-1995).*

*Jane Theron came to-night at 6 o'clock for a drink, she is looking well, business better, doing SABC project, has got big station wagon, sends her love etc. I must send her copy of the THF Memorandum of Association and extra bump.*

### **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May**

*Stella Sithole came and got tape of burial from Elza Miles – the official verdict of death was “repeated heart failure”! Fuba moved, no funding, but Sepalma carrying on. Elsa moved all files to JAG library.*

*I cancelled/discontinued our tel. no. 8386630 as from 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Just got from Copystat last 4’200 letters for overseas, so busy signing them to-night!*

### **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May**

*It is nearly mid-night. I’m having time now to carry on with my story. Additional bid received on Thursday later afternoon, and as by Friday 11 o’clock there were no more bids or visits from museums or universities, I phoned Hilton R to come as he’d lost his 4 bids and we had received lousy bids on 2 big works. He came with partner, bought 3 LS for R19’500 and Victor/Vanquished in Switzerland for R30’000 and 2 Adrian de Villiers for R10’000 which he collected by this morning. Told Gishen Estate would get about R90’000 net and he was pleased, we had done a good job. This was after agreeing to make a deal on the remaining works in Switzerland at the average price obtained in South Africa and CH for 5, less our discounts. So HR has now got 5 works there and we the rest, all paid for. And there will be some cash over to transfer. By 10 o’clock this morning, works from all but 3 clients had gone, and 90% of light fittings donated to the Potgieter’s (Mrs just started her own business), and yellow cupboard – **there is no more art left!***

*Yesterday, we had another noisy parade in the city – **Whites** in their cars hooting and blocking traffic, complaining about the crime rate in the North, and this morning there was a huge singing protest in Commissioner Street.*

*Jack Desmidt phoned yesterday too, confirming none of the Nedgroup companies could help Fort Hare University – they’d done enough (UAL, Nedbank, Perm, Syfrets). The guy from the Foreign Affairs Dept. never came! More books I had ordered are arriving – will send surface mail.*

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May**

*Signed and started folding overseas appeals for the USA, packed bags, Ulrich collected me at 5 pm. I have a fold-up bed and en-suite bathroom! One of my upper remaining teeth hurting more and more, probably rotten, must go to Dr Burger a.s.a.p. Ulrich busy writing his poems on his computer.*

### **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May**

*It is now 8.30 p.m., first time I can relax. The Schwanecke’s are playing bridge with friends. I’m reading the paper and relaxing. Every night has been a frantic signing or folding, this morning the last 500 done which will be posted on Monday. That really was a big campaign, my eyes are all skew, and my legs are all wobbly. This morning, Eastside collected the balance of the stands, over 50 tubes, frames, varnishes etc. I took the opportunity to get 1600 envelopes transported to the P.O. Yesterday I had supper at the Meerkotter’s, the Harrs and Schwanecke families attending. The day before, the Pretoria Art Museum collected their books and next Monday, the University of the North will be collecting their 3 Sithole’s. Don’s Auctioneers coming to quote for the safes Saturday. I’ve been sorting out and throwing away lots of files, the Michaelis Art Library will accept my files on the Pelmama Academy – it’s better so as available for research. The auditor is bringing in the accounts on Monday and collecting 3 boxes of old data needed for record purposes. The dentist pulled one tooth out, so only 3 left on top! And Wednesday morning saw dentist again for clean-up. In between saw May’s chemist.*

*Saw Clive Nicholson at Ava’s place. More books arriving, will be posted surface mail next week with gallery master files etc.*

*Winston Saoli died this week-end – cancelled supper with Norman Mankowitz who wanted me to take samples of and sell his woollen products in CH (on a 5% commission basis only, not worth my time).*

Talk is the Barbican Building opp. Rissik Street P.O. is to be blown down with remainder of block. Leslie Sacks is in town as his father is very ill; has gallery in Los Angeles.

I'm sad I never got round to sending the kids a card or letter, but they and you have been on my mind a lot.

### **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May**

Just as well I phoned University of the North – break-down in communication as they should have paid and collected. Anyway, they'll fix it. Saturday I gave Gishen final account and cheques for abt. R90'000 due Tuesday. It will cost R100/hour to move safes down the lift, so Don's will sort it out, otherwise I'm leaving them for the next person.

Sunday I saw Tim and Rose at St Francis, a large church, but it has not got good acoustics. At 5 o'clock, Ulrich took me back to the Nicholson's who were in Natal that week-end. The final lot of books I had ordered arrived at lunch. Phoned Marilyn Martin SANG about Fort Hare as the intention of Dawn Zain is to move the collection under the control of a National Trust, as there has been no money nor a curator for months, and pictures appear to get lost.

Saw Ian Keorgan at church on Sunday, has aged quite a bit. On Saturday, after lunch with Gishen at the Koffiehuis in the Carlton went to Schimmel's to cut their berries which must have suffered from frost as no fruit this year. The Bank tells me it will take a month to get the SA Reserve Bank's approval for the transfer of CHF10'000 commission ex Estate! Auditors brought all accounts to-day; in general it has been a busy time, as sorting out my papers and emptying the safe. And early, to start off the day, I got a call from a certain lovely lady in Switzerland saying "ich liebe Dich" – how lovely, it made my day!

### **Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May**

Last night, I had last supper with Schimmel's, posted 6 parcels of books and files by surface mail, insured. Don's offered R500 for the 2 safes! But it is their problem how to get them down. To-night at 6 p.m., Ava came with his trailer and loaded the desk, chairs, boxes of stationery, the rolls of plastic and the brown paper for himself and John. University of the North couldn't collect, so leaving works with Mia and Stuttafords collecting and packing next Monday. Left files with Frost at Michaelis, also list of books sent to SA this year, very useful to them.

### **Thursday 1st June**

Don's never finished job, leaving in front of lift or entrance to gallery, so Amoils is taking them over for free. Had lunch with Hilton at Koffiehuis Carlton, got Zulu tapes from Juta's, paid Copystat, dropped Post Office keys and bank deposit books at Coopers & Lybrand, returned telephone to P.O. and was home at 4 p.m., having a good siesta till 6 pm. John Nicholson had first sale to-day which settles Land Agricultural Tenure debt, others to follow. Spoke a few words with Janet Christie.

### **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

Went to hairdresser in Melville yesterday morning, then had ¾ hour till next bus was arriving, so had coffee and tart at Greek Café where Henriette worked, then off to Swissair to confirm seat and get Rail Luggage voucher, then last mail at GPO, then collect cheque book and statements for Pelmama at FNB, then the same at Standard Bank and transfer liquid funds to a call account till draft ready. I managed to never put back my foot at Victory House. When I think, I had to clean the loo every 2<sup>nd</sup> day, some disgusting person kept on missing his aim, or worse.

This morning, Dirk brought me the Sotheby catalogue with Lucas Sithole reproduced, as now out of print, packed bag and now waiting to go!

**Bye bye South Africa, for a while!**