

Rich Nor Poor



Down Under

RICH NOR POOR

DOWN UNDER

CHAPTER 1.

When we arrived in Melbourne on 23rd July 1952, it was not exactly the "Sunshine Country" we were led to believe at the information evenings in the Netherlands. The weather was cold and there was a drizzling rain falling when we disembarked from the ocean liner FAIRSEA, to start a new life in the land "DOWN UNDER".

We had left the Netherlands on 19th June 1952. The FAIRSEA was a liberty ship, made more or less suitable to transport migrants.

We stood on the passengers' list as Jacob and Nel van Doorn with two sons, Wim 8, and Gijs 6.

For 35 days Wim and I slept in a hold below sea level with 181 other men and boys.

The accommodation was worse for Nel. She slept with Gijs and another couple of hundred ladies in a similar hold, but they also had the company of a mass of nappy filling babies, and no windows to open.

For 35 days we were on the oceans, looking at water and air and a horizon that went up and down, up and down. It would make you sick, and it did.

The first place where the Fairsea stopped at, was Sues, there we were not allowed to leave the ship. Instead, a lot of souvenir hawkers were allowed to come aboard. One would think that people on the verge of starting a new life in an unknown country, with little or no understanding at all of the English language, would be very careful with their money, and not spend it on this sort of souvenir rubbish. Not so, A smaller ship would have gone under from overloading.

The temperature in the Red Sea was around the 40 degrees Celcius. Body temperature is about 37 degrees, and you are walking around with that all the time. Why is it that a few degrees more can make life so hard to bear ?

Air conditioning did not exist in that time or, if it did the shipping company hadn't found it necessary for migrants.

Fourty degrees in the middle of the Red Sea, with no shadows, on an iron ship, where a thousand people sleep below sea level and where no windows are to be opened, is hot, believe me.

The horrible stink of the deasel oil made it impossible to stay in the holds. In the evenings when the temperature fell a little, we brought the mattresses on deck and slept, all the thousand of us, very cosy together in the open air. No sleeping in is allowed on board. The ship must be clean and when you were late, a seaman came very close with his water hose to scare you away.

There are no cleaner people than seaman and no kinder crew than our Italian crew, specially with the children, the bambinos.

I have nothing but praise for the captain and his men.

In the harbour of Aden we were allowed to leave the ship and go sightseeing, except that there wasn't much to see. Perhaps in the town of Aden, but not in the harbour quarter. There was a little street with some shops, and at the entrance stood a police constable. He ordered us to stay with him to enter the street as a group.

I still do not know if that was to protect us from the people, or the people from us. I only met kind shopkeepers who tried to convince us that the articles they sold were just what we needed.

(Thirteen years later I was in Aden harbour again. There was a large shopping centre, clean and cheap.)

Back on board we were just in time to see baskets of lemons arriving. A welcome sight, as we hadn't had any fruit since we left Amsterdam, except on doctor's orders. We were craving for fruit, vitamin C of course. The lemons that were sold to the passengers were very cheap.

Once out of the Gulf of Aden and into the Indian ocean the weather became cooler and cooler and the evenings were even cold.

Suddenly storm blew up and the large ship heeled over very steeply, first to port side and then just as steeply to starboard. We often thought, "Now the ship will not come up again, we are going under." But we did not. All that could move was fastened with ropes. Ropes were fastened so that people could hold to them when they had to move about.

If you weren't effected by sea sickness you became sick by the smell of so many vomiting people.

Not many passengers took part at the meals, which was just as well because half the crew was also sick.

The only two who thought that this sort of weather was fun, "just like Luna Park", were my sons.

On 15 July the FAIRSEA entered Australian waters. It was already dark and the ship anchored outside the harbour of Fremantle. The next morning, the pilote and other officials came aboard and two tugs brought us to the quay.

We expected to disembark straight away, but we were not allowed to do so. All one thousand of us had to pass inspections by doctors and other officials. We stood at the railing looking over the town, when a group of Dutch immigrants assembled on the quae shouted, " GO back, you were taken for a ride. There is no work here we are all unemployed. Not a very encouraging welcome when you just arrive from the other side of the world, but alas it was true. Not that we were taken for a ride of course, but there certainly was mass unemployment in the depression of 1952.

To go back was not easy as most of us would not have had the money for the fare back and no house in Holland to go back to. When finally allowed to go on land, we set foot on Australian soil for the first time and that's where I now write this, 36 years later.

Fremantle was not a town famous for its beauty we would not have been surprised if we had met a bunch of cowboys chasing Indians.

We walked around a while and for the first time went into an Australian milkbar. The boys had there first milkshake and we had a nice cup of tea. We tried meat pies but were not impressed. We would have loved them however in the hungry winter of 1945.

Just like tourists we started to compare prices in the shop windows with those in Holland. Eight Dutch guilders equalled one Australian pound. The prices didn't differ much in the two countries, while we knew that the wages were much higher in Australia. There was another difference too: Here there was a 40 hours working week while in Holland it was still 48 hours. Here, the Saturday was a free day, while in Holland we worked saturday mornings.

We did appreciate the rural way of living in Fremantle and as we later found out , also in the suburbs of the big cities, with wide streets, and trees on both sides. There were then no large three storeys housing blocks which we were used to in Amsterdam and which we now see being built in Australia.

At the front of one of the houses a lady was tending her garden. From the language we spoke and the way we were dressed, she understood that we came from the big ship in the harbour. She called us in and brought the boys to a fruit bearing orange tree. A stepladder was brought out and the boys were allowed to pick an orange each. It was for me and Nel, city dwellers as we were, the first time also that we had seen how oranges grow.

In Holland we just got them from a greengrocer. It was there, that for the first time I could try out my english . If it had been for an examination I would have gone through the floor. Our dear hostess didn't understand a word of what I was saying and I understood even less of what she answered. Learning english from a book and from a Dutch teacher , who of course also spoke with a Dutch accent is different to the real thing. It was very nice of the lady to make us so welcome in Australia in her own way , and I like to say that we did not experience anything but kindness from all the other Australian people we met.

I think the Australian people were a bit sorry for us and regarded us as displaced persons, who fled Europe for a civilised country such as Australia.

It was a mixed reception in Fremantle; Dutch immigrants who urged us to go back and the Australian lady who made us most welcome.

Back on board it wasn't long before we left the harbour encountering six days of cold stormy weather to Melbourne.

The ship was warm and the spirit of the passengers and the crew was excellent. The captain gave a party that lasted till three o'clock in the morning. And why not ? Why not be jolly and free from worries, before one had to face the hard reality ?

In Amsterdam we had to bring all our footwear to a quarantine station, with the exception of course of what we were wearing. With that pair we had to shuffle over a thick mat, soaked in a disinfectant. The Australian authorities are deeply concerned of the danger of the fatal foot and mouth disease to their millions of sheep and cattle . A wise precaution.

In Melbourne we got our shoes back. I carried them in a hessian bag and I carried Gijs on my back. Gijs was sick with a cold and had a temperature. The nurse on board had whispered in my ear, " Don't tell the doctor, he'll send you all in quarantine. Happely there was no need for it. After a good night's sleep in a bed that stayed in the same place, he was as good as new the next morning.

To the customs officers we must have looked very untrustworthy. They made us unpack every piece of luggage, before we could pass to build up a life in Australia.

CHAPTER 2.

It took some time before we saw our sponsor, Jan van Walcheren, an architect.

In Amsterdam I had contracted work from him for 16 years. He was at the quay to welcome us with his 16 year old son Simon and 12 year old daughter Liza.

His wife Jane had stayed home to prepare for our arrival. Jan had not made a big name for himself in Holland, but he had made a very good living. Just like us, they had migrated more for adventure and fly from war torn Europe, than for financial reasons. I think that this was so for the majority of the Dutch immigrants.

Two taxis brought us to the Peoples Palace, a Salvation Army hotel.

We were not looking for spiritual guidance, but the hotel was cheap, clean and the food was very good.

Neither Jan nor I believed in spending more than necessary before we found our footing in Australia. Darkness had fallen and it was raining very hard.

The rooms were not heated, we kept our winter coats on to keep us warm.

When the children, with the exception of Simon, were in bed and sleeping, Jan said, " I have to tell you something very unpleasant."

In the letters we had received from him, he had told us that he was working as a carpenter because his English was not good enough to be engaged as an architect. However, with high wages and much overtime he was making a very good living. His boss, a building contractor, had offered them a large house, free of rent, if they were willing to take in, as boarders, single Dutch building workers in his employ.

From this Jane also earned a substantial income. They had already bought two adjoining blocks of land. On one stood a large temporary dwelling, which he had promised to us. They were living in their boarding house.

" Well " said Jan, All that is not true anymore."

" At the moment , Australia is going through a deep economic depression. My boss has had to stop all his building work, and he has sacked the whole staff. He sold the house where we were living in, and therefore we are now living in our temporary dwelling, I had promised to you."

No work, no roof, 20.000 kilometres from home, -- what could I say ? All I could think of was , " Hoorah for emigration". Going to a migrant camp would have been much better. I could hardly blame Jan for the situation. He told me that he had built a little shed on his land, 12 ft by 8 ft, from a hardwood frame with waterproof cladding outside. This was for us to live in. Electricity could be brought in with a lead from his place and for water we had to share a tap outside.

In the 16 years we had known each other we had addressed each other always as Mr van Walcheren and Mr van Doorn. Hardley four hours in Australia and we were on first name terms. Jan and Jacob, Real Dutch.

Jan had already been unemployed for three weeks and had applied to the local Council for a job as a draftsman. It took another three weeks before he got the job and later he became the Council's architect and townplanner.

" I just remember .., " said Jan, " Tomorrow, before we go back home, you have to buy an electric heater and a pair of long boots."

That we needed an electric heater I could understand. I could feel that, but long boots ? I had never worn boots in Amsterdam, not even wooden shoes.

" How far from here is the place where you live Jan ?"

" The part where we live is called Gippsland in a little place called Newborough. From here we go by train to Moe and then a short bus trip home."

I remembered the name Moe.

All migrants coming off the ship received a railway ticket, either to the camp or to the place they were going to live.

An Australian officer asked me where we were going. I knew already enough English not to pronounce Moe the Dutch way. I had learned to pronounce the name of the thriller writer Allen E. Poe to pronounce as Poh. So I said,

" Moh." " Moh, "said the officer, " Never heard of it. "

His off-sider was already looking up the name in a list of place names. " Not on the list,," he said.

" Do you know how to write it ?" asked the first officer. That I knew and I wrote " MOE".

" Oh Mau-ee, you mean."

Zero point again for knowing how to pronounce the Australian language. The next morning after shopping, we went by train to Moe. The train was old and slow, but clean and warm, and without graffiti. The little bus from Moe to Newborough was cold and damaged, but luckily it was a short trip.

When we arrived at the bus stop in front of Jan's place, it was already dark, cold and raining. When I left the bus I stepped into a pothole full of water that came above my knee.

" Now you know why you need boots " said Jan.

Jane gave us a really nice reception. She had dinner ready. Meatballs, boiled potatoes with gravy and shredded raw carrots.

" Much healthier than boiled vegetables," said Jane.

A couple of days later, when we were more or less installed in our shed, Nel invited the van Walcheren's to dinner. Meatballs, boiled potatoes with gravy and cauliflower with a white sauce. Real coffee after.

" Cauliflower, real coffee, " said Jane, " it might be nice, but if you, as migrant, start to live so luxuriously. then I'm afraid you will be a failure here in Australia."

Nel took that on the chin and did not reply, but after Jane, Jan and the children were gone, she said, " I still want my coffee."

" So do I " I said, " So let us risk failing."

Eight days later our timber cases with our luggage from Holland arrived. I had packed everything solid and had the lids screwed on. As I said before, the customs officers didn't like immigrants. They had opened the cases with a crow bar, had disturbed everything and had closed the lids with 5 inch nails. They must have been standing on them to fit the lids. With the exception of one vase all that could break was broken., plates , cups, saucers, etcetera etcetera. An oil painting of sentimental value was torn to shreds.

We were ninety miles from Melbourne. Neither we or the van Walcheren's were able to telephone Melbourne to complain, so we accepted our losses.

We dug a deep hole at the back of the yard and gave our things a ceremonial funeral. R.I.P. dear crockery, R.I.P. aunty Jo's paper thin china set. Eight days since we arrived in Newborough I was still looking for work. I started to go by bus to an employment office in Moe and told the man behind the counter that I came from Holland, that I was a housepainter by trade and that I was looking for work; all in my best English.

"Wait a moment" he said, and went out into another room from where a girl of about sixteen or seventeen years came, and took place behind the counter.

"I'm from Holland also" she said. "What do you want?" I explained in Dutch where I came from.

"Oh" she said, "We are not allowed to give you a job if you are not a member of the Union."

"Well," I said, "Give me the address of the Union and I will join." Then she said,

"You can't join a Union if you haven't worked for three months in Australia, , and," she continued "We don't have requests for painters on our list."

The last words were enough for me. I would have wasted my time trying to explain to her how illogical her reasoning was. She would not have understood it anyhow. In Moe I saw a steel frame going up for a multi story building. Maybe there is a painting contractor on that job, I'll ask somebody. The first man I asked for the painting contractor, shouted something to a group of men standing on a steel beam on top of the frame. One of the men started to come down the ladders. When on the ground, he introduced himself and said,

"I am the foreman."

" Please to meet you, " I said. " I,m a painter looking for a job."

" Christ," he shouted, I thought you were the bloody architect. Piss off."

I did not like the man. This should have been a lesson to me, but I,m not a fast learner.

The next morning, before seven o'clock, I stood in a queue at the railway station in the same outfit the foreman had thought, was an architect's uniform. A Fawn coloured raincoat, felt hat and ^abriefcase with my sandwiches. I had read in the local paper that the railway wanted labourers. If they don't want me as a painter, maybe they want me as a labourer, I thought. I needed a job urgently. The little money we had brought with us diminished rapidly. The applicants before and behind me in the queue were dressed totally different to me. Most of them were wearing shorts and a sort of black singlet. " How dare they apply for a job, dressed so casually " I thought.

Quarter past seven a car arrived and a well dressed gentleman went inside the office. Not a minute later another man came out the office and asked me to come in.

" You see," I thought , " It does pay to dress well, I'm the first he calls for."

The man from the car introduced himself as Mr so and so, engineer.

" I called you in," he said, " To save you waiting. I'm afraid that you are not altogether the man we are looking for."

I still think of him as a gentleman , for not letting me waste my time. I went everywhere where I thought they could maybe use a man. I did not care any more what sort of job it was. I was prepared to take any sort of work that would be offered to me. In the Netherlands, before I started my own business, I had never been unemployed, not for one day. Now I had already spent eight days looking for work.

All in all it took 12 days before I had a job.

CHAPTER 3.

Looking back, 12 days is not very long, but when you arrive in a foreign country, with a wife and two children and little money to spend, it seems like ages.

I had written to some Dutch friends who arrived in Australia before me, asking them if there were any jobs for me in their area. On the ninth day I got a reply from a friend who lived with his family in a little town about eighteen miles from Newborough. He was also a painter. He had asked his boss if he could use another man, but the boss wanted to see me before he committed himself.

There was no public transport to that place, so on a Sunday morning, at the crack of dawn, I stood beside the main road trying to get a lift. A friendly gentleman took me aboard and brought me to a bus stop in another place from where I could take a bus to a railway station from where I could get a train to the place of my future employment.

My friend and his wife made me very welcome. Now in 1988 and a thousand kilometres apart we still send each other Christmas cards.

My friend's boss was not a painting contractor, he was a builder, stopped in the process of building fourty cottages for a local paper mill. The depression had stopped the mill and the building work, but the cottages already built had to be painted. In the afternoon I went with my friend to the boss' place. He was a tall broad man, standing on his verandah with a glass of beer in his hand. In less than a minute my friend and I stood also with a glass of beer in our hand. The man asked me if I really was a painter. I had some references, translated into English with me, but he was not interested in seeing them.

" You can start tomorrow, 7.30 sharp. Sixteen pound ten per week. No good, out by twelve. "

Pfff. I had a job.

Eighteen miles is not a great distance with good transport , but in the way I had to travel , it was around the world. Monday morning at 7.30 sharp I was there.

My friends invited me to be their paying guest from Mondays till Fridays. After a couple of days working together on the outside of a cottage my friend resigned from the job to start for himself. That left me with a 69 years old colleague, who helped me a lot with the Australian way of painting and with the spoken and written English language. I had ~~the~~ impression that he was much better educated than the average house-painter.

Some days after work his 29 year old wife waited for him at the gate with her baby. Other days she was there on her own and together they went to the tennis court. An amazing man, an amazing couple.

I was satisfied with the job and the boss was satisfied with me. So far the weather had been worse than in Holland.

Therefore, when I got a telegram from friends in Sydney that they had found employment for me, I cabled back,

" Will be there Monday morning stop arriving 11.30 stop."

I was sorry that I had to leave Nel and the children behind , but I could not take them with me. The journey to Sydney took 24 hours by 3rd class railway travel. No upholstered seats at that time, no sleeping cabin for me.

In the middle of the night, in Albury, we had to change trains. Not to go in a different direction, but because the width of the rail in Victoria was different to that of New South Wales.

Now and then the train stopped and the conductor walked along the platform, shouting something that I didn't understand. Some of the passengers went out for a while and at one such a stop I followed them . We went into a waiting room where trestle tables stood, loaded with cups of tea and horrible coloured little cakes. Later I found out that the conductor had shouted, " Ten minutes for refreshments."

My Sydney friend, another Jan met me at the Central Station and from there we went by an electric train to a southern suburb.

CHAPTER 4.

Jan and Bea his wife were hard work^ers. They were in Australia already a couple of years and lived in a temporary dwelling with a large workshop attached on their own land. Jan was employed as a carpenter and was building his own house in his free time.

The first night in Sydney I slept on the floor of their temporary dwelling. We talked till the middle of the night about their experiences in Australia.

They told me that my new boss was also a Dutchman, called John Friend, who also had arrived some years ago.

The next morning at the appointed time, I stood outside the railway station at Taylor square.

A quarter of an hour later John Friend still hadn't arrived. I began to wonder if there had been a misunderstanding somewhere.

I spend two pennies to ring his house. His wife Loes answered the telephone.

" Oh, you are Jacob, the new painter: John is a bit late but will be there in twenty minutes ."

A short time later John arrived in a brand new utility. We went to one of the northern suburbs where John had contracted to paint a shop with living-quarters attached.

Although John made a good living from the painting business they had also leased a corner shop in Paddington, selling groceries etcetera.

During the week days Loes looked after the shop and during the weekends they worked there together.

Loes had found a boarding house for me opposite their shop. That evening I took a tram to the centre of Sydney, a town that I loved from the first moment. If you could say it of a town, I would say, " It was love at first sight."

I worked six and sometimes seven days per week. After two weeks I put an advertisement in an ethnic Dutch paper. " Couple with two children want to rent a temporary dwelling . "

On the next Saturday evening a lady came to my boarding house, She offered her garage to rent for two pounds per week plus something for electricity. The next morning I went to her place near Paramatta. The frame of the garage was hardwood, the outside fibro sheets, and the inside wasn't lined at all. The floor was mother earth, stamped hard. There was electricity and we had the use of a water tap outside. It was bad accommodation , but the sooner the family was together the better. The situation in Newborough had become a bit difficult and there was some friction between the two women.

The next weekend I went to Newborough to pick up the family.

John paid my wages and some holiday money, which came as a surprise to me and was very welcome because a return ticket for me and single tickets for Nel and the boys took about all the money I had in the world.

When I left Holland I had to pay all outstanding taxes in a lump sum. Even two days before the boat left for Australia I was called back to the taxation office. They had worked out that since I paid the lump sum, a couple of weeks before, I must have earned something and they worked out how much I owed on that. I had to pay on the dot.

In the Netherlands they did not make emigration easy for us. but neither did Australia to help us. That is, apart from the free railway ticket from Melbourne to Newborough.

Nel and I got a little blue book each when we left the ship. This was a sort of identity paper, that we must keep beside our Dutch passports. We had to show this paper at the police station in the place we were going to live. In Newborough there wasn't a police station, so we never did show it and no one ever asked for it. Later when I had been given Australian Nationality and applied for an Australian passport, I handed the little book back to the officer who gave me my pass. He found it interesting, but didn't know what to do with it. Did was the first time he had ever seen such a booklet.

As a matter of fact I do not see myself as an Australian nor as a Dutchman, but rather as a member of the world population. Just an ordinary human being.

I applied for Australian Nationality for two reasons. The first was, that after five years in Australia every year we received an invitation from the government to apply for citizenship.

" Well we like it here, we have no desire to go back „ why shouldn't we do it ?"

The second reason was Gijs. He was only sixteen years old when he got his Leaving Certificate from highschool, which was five year in that time. Gijs did an audition for the National Institute for Dramatic Arts, (N.I.D.A.). His audition was succesful, but he was told that to have Australian nationality would be desirable. Gijs was not yet seventeen when he started the course at N.I.D.A, and too young to apply for Australian nationality himself. That could only happen if Nel or I took the Australian nationality, and then he could take it out also.

Nel said, " No " She would not have minded if she didn't have to swear off allegiance to the Dutch Queen, " Why can't I have two Queens ?" she said

I never checked if it had been really necessary for Gijs to obtain Australian Nationality to go to N.I.D.A. but I had found it a good excuse to take the step of changing Nationality for myself.

If you would ask me if I ever regretted taking Australian Nationality, I would say, " Very much so."

This has nothing to do with a sentimental feeling for the country I was born in, neither that I have anything against Australia. It is purely a financial matter.

In the Netherlands people pay a part of their wages towards an age pension. When they are sixty five years of age they receive this pension, even if they are millionaire, because they have paid for it. I was in Australia when that Old Age Insurance became law. Dutch people living in another country could join by paying the premium. I paid the premium from 1956 when the insurance became law till I became 65 years of age in a lump sum.

What I did not know, that if you changed Nationality you became entitled only to 40 percent of the full pension. I had never read about that and never got an answer on my inquiries.

On the other hand, here in Australia, you get only a part pension or no pension at all if in your working days you had saved a bit for later. It is hard to win.

When Gijs was twenty he went on his Australian passport to Holland. He applied for a work permit.

" No, boy," said the man behind the counter, you became an Australian before you were eighteen years old. You did not loose your Dutch Nationality and now have two Nationalities.

Gijs was very pleased with that, till a couple of days later he was called up for the army.

He had to come for a committee, but they gave him an exemption.

When you are over forty as Nel and I were when we came to Australia you need a special language talent to speak it like the people born here, but my boys like all emigrants children learned fast and without an accent. If children spoke with an accent they got that from their parents who tried to speak English in the family circle and some of them even forbid the children their native language.. They did that for the bestwill of the children, so that they didn't have to learn two languages. There is no need for that, I have met children from diplomats who lived in several parts of the world and who spoke fluently three languages.

When I had written that I would come to Newborough to pick them up for Sydney, Nel started packing and found that she needed another container. A strong carton box. As she did not know the word for box she looked up the Dutch word which is "kist" and found several English words for it. She had to choose one to use. So, with her youngest son beside her she went to the grocer's and asked,

" Do you have a little coffin for me ?"

The man must have thought,

" You can never trust these foreigners."

My English had improved too, and I was able to ring a carter in Melbourne. I was even able to talk his price down from forty pounds to twenty five pounds, which was only fifteen pounds more than normal, as I was told by the driver who delivered our luggage in Sydney.

Nel and I packed our belongings in the wooden boxes we had brought with us from Holland.

This time I screwed the lids on again and as this time our possessions did not have to go through the hands of custom officers nothing was broken when the boxes arrived in Sydney.

On Sunday we took leave of the van Wieringens and thanked them very much for what they had done for us and that certainly was not little.

CHAPTER 5.

The twenty four hour journey with the little boys was no holiday trip. Nel and I stood for hours in the corridor to let the children sleep on our seats. We were all exhausted when we arrived in Paramatta, from where we took a bus to Wentworthville.

The landlady received us with a smile, but that was all. They belonged to a very strict religious group and were disgusted that we had travelled on a Sunday.

I asked her if she, coming by ship to Australia, on Sundays had stepped off the ship and walked the waters? She was not amused.

In the evening we took the blankets we had taken as hand luggage and spread them on the earthen floor. We put more cloths on and slept, the four of us, the children in the middle, on the floor with one blanket covering us. Next morning when we woke up, there were a lot of snails on the blanket. The boys were delighted. They had never seen an animal carrying its house on its back. Nel was not so enthusiastic.

Untill now, to go to work, I just had to cross the street and step in Jo's utility. Now, every morning at five o'clock I was waiting for the bus that would bring me to Paramatta, from where I took the train to Lakemba and walked from the station to the job in about half an hour's time.

John had a contract there for repainting about seventy Housing Commission houses.

After I had left twenty five pounds with Jan van Wieringen for the transport of the cases, and had paid the travelling cost and two weeks' rent, I was the proud owner of one pound and some shillings.

Just enough for Nel to get some food in the " house " and to pay for my travel tickets. The silly thing was we were neiter disappointed nor worried. We were glad to be in Sydney and have the family together.

During the time I was boarding in Sydney I had done two important things. I had joined a medical fund and I had taken out life insurance. This gave us the security that if anything should happen to me, Nel and the children were at least covered for some time. It would give Nel the time to make up her mind of going back to Holland or to stay in Australia.

This remind me of how I became a member of the Manchester Union of Odd Fellows' medical fund.

When I was working in Gippsland, I had asked around if there was such a thing as a medical and hospital insurance fund.

The man I was boarding with although he had a wife and four children, had never thought about it, but one day he told me, " Yes, there is a sickness Association, and the secretary will pick us up by car to drive us in the evening to the Insurance office.

" You must have misunderstood him," I said.

" No that's what I'm told and it isn't a 'he' it is a 'she'"

" I believe it when she calls for us."

She did. She was well in time to bring us in her Holden to the insurance office, only the Insurance office was not an office but a church hall.

People mingled among trestle tables loaded with plates full with savouries and sweets.

An Insurance office ? My mind boggled. Nobody went round with the cakes and nobody took anything.

Then all people left for another hall and we were asked to stay behind till we were called for. Neither my friend or I had any idea what was going on, but that evening we joined the membership of the Manchester Union of Odd Fellows.

I will not write how that happened. The members of that Union would be right to think that it was not my business to tell anyone, anything about their organisation.

Some three or four days later I left for Sydney. Maybe that was the reason why I never got a membership card, or was asked for a membership fee.

One day in Sydney I saw a huge building in Elizabeth street with the words ' Manchester Union ' on it.

I stepped inside and told a man behind the counter that I was a member of the Medical fund and that I had come to pay my fee. Apperently the man did not understand me.

" Wait a moment he said, I'll get a countryman of yours."

The man who replaced him spoke Polish. I shrugged my shoulders and he asked,

" Don't you come from Poland ?"

" From Holland," I said.

Then he said in English, " That's the same for them" and pointed over his shoulder to the office.

Between us we managed and I left the office with a membership card of the Health Insurance. I was a member for twenty three years till the government health insurance took over. Later I found out that one had to be a member before being entitled for a refund. Nel fell ill long before the three monthsⁿ were up.

We were invited to spend New Years Eve and the night at Jan and Bea's place. We had a pleasant evening and it was very late , or rather early in the morning when we bedded down on the mattresses on the floor of the house Jan was building and which was in the lock up stage. New Year's day we stayed at their place but went to bed early and on the second Januari 1953, very early in the morning, I went back to work.

When I came home to Wentwo²thville in the evening, instead of finding Nel and the boys, I found Jan and Bea packing our belongi ngs into their panel-van.

Nel had woken up very sick. A doctor was called for and he sent her straight away to the Kogerah hospital. Kidney poisoning. Our friends took care of me and the children , for the four weeks that Nel was in the hospital. Her sickness fell within the three months that one has to be a member of the Health Insurance fund, so I had to pay the doctor's and hospital bill , and was now the owner of six pounds and some shillings.

That was certainly not because I had to pay too much in boarding fees. On the contrary, it was difficult to persuade Bea to accept at least something towards the cost of the food.

The situation for migrants is now much improved, for the medical costs are free untill you are able to pay.

When Nel came out of the hospital, Bea had found for us a very good temporary dwelling, containing a livingroom, with kitchenette, two bedrooms and a toilet outside. In that time there was no sewer in that area and the 'pan' was changed twice a week. Water and electricity were on in the dwelling. The owner, a Dutchman also, had already been two years in Australia. We paid a very low rent, but on the condition that, if he would lose his job, and consequently his house, we would have to move out within a week. All went well in the first half year of 1953.

In July I thought I could make a start with self employment. I had two jobs to start with, a new weatherboard house in Jannali and the external of a brick house in Concord West. The first one was about two kilometers from the place where I was living and the second about forty kilometers.

I had saved enough to buy a ladder, two stepladders, a scaffold plank, paint, brushes and some money to live from, for some weeks.

I started in Jannali, but when that house was finished I did not have transport to bring the gear to Concord West. I did not have enough money to buy a car and decided to buy the whole outfit again and have it delivered in Concord West.

The gear and materials from the first job I carried back to our dwelling on my shoulders.

We had been more than a year now in Australia. We met more and more Dutch immigrants who had been here longer than we had.

They all had some advice for us.

One man told me;

" If you ever want something to achieve in Australia then you have to work seven days a week."

This was another forecast of our failure, for after three weeks, twenty one days working in a row, I decided rather to fail than to die working.

After that I never worked more than six and half days per week, till I was a bit more secure. I mostly didn't work more than five days, not counting lawn mowing etcetera.

Another man told me, " You need an overdraft at your bank."

For a couple of months now I had a cheque account .

" Why do I need an overdraft,?" I asked him.

" Because he said, you never know when you need money urgently ."

" But I do not need an overdraft ."

" That doesn't matter. You ask for an overdraft of 50 pound and promise to bring it back in a month's time. You put the money under your bed and bring it back on the appointed day. That will give the impression of reliability."

I saw something good in it and although reluctantly I went to the bank and asked for the manager.

" You want an overdraft ? What for ? "

" Well Sir, I.m in business for myself and it is possible that if my clients don't pay me on time, I won't be able to pay my bills in time."

" Hmmm, what are your assets?"

Although I was now more than a year in Australia, my English was still restricted to the most common words. I had never heard of the word Asset but I presumed that it meant debt,so I said ,

" assets Sir ? Not a cent in the world."

" Mmmm, " he said, " That's a great help of course. How much do you need ?"

" My last paint bill was seventy pounds, I think seventy or eighty pounds would be enough."

He had a file in front of him.

" I see that your account covers that for three months, why do you really want an overdraft ?"

" Just in case Sir "

" Hmmm," he said, - he was a great hummer.

" Can't I get an overdraft Sir ?"

He wrote something down.

" I wrote here", he said, That you are allowed to overdraw your account by seventy pounds if there is any need for it."

I thanked him very much, but I was never overdrawn.

For my work I needed a vehicle to move my gear.

When I was a young man in 1929, I was admiring one of the beautiful new cars in the shop window of a Dodge Car dealer.

" Will I ever be rich enough to own such a car ?" I thought. In Holland I never was, but here in Australia, it was 1953, I had hardly been here one year and I was able to buy a Dodge. - Model 1929-.

I called her, 1 on 1 on 1. One mile, one gallon of oil and one breakdown.

CHAPTER 6.

In August 1953, some Dutchmen met and discussed the possibility of forming a Dutch Club.

We all knew some other Dutch people and we spread the word to come together one evening in a coffee shop in Sutherland. There were more than sixty people , - new comers-- as immigrants where called at that time.

In 1988 the club members celebrated the 35th anniversary of the Club.

Soon after the club was formed we started a drama club. As very few of us could understand a stage play in the English language, we took it on ourselves to perform Dutch plays.

We did this for twenty five years. Then the club was dissolved. not because the ' new comers' don't want to hear Dutch plays any more, but because the performers became too old. Some passed away, some moved to other parts of Australia and some went back to Holland.

Their children mostly don't speak Dutch.

The government of the early fifties, had two policies that effected immigration. The first was, the White Australian policy , no people with coloured skins were allowed to enter Australia as immigrants. The government was not very honest about it . They didn't say, " No nigger you aren't wanted here."

They politely asked the applicant to translate something from one language into English, making sure that the man or woman did not know the language that they had to translate from.

We are long past this sort of thing. I read somewhere that one in fourteen people in Australia is now Asian, and there is very little fraction between white and non white.

The second policy was that immigrants were encouraged to integrate as soon as possible into the Australian way of life.

Forget your language, forget your culture, become an Aussie.

I don't think the Greeks and the Italians took much notice of the Government's wish, but the Dutch , to their loss, did. They tried to speak English at home and forbad their children to speak Dutch. I remember a Dutch friend saying;

" We were at a school night of our eldest boy . He recited a poem and the headmaster said to us,

" He did that very well, it is a pity that he has such an accent."

" I don't understand it," said my friend, " He was born here and we always speak English at home."

He did not realise that it was at home that he picked up the accented English of his parents. When they become older, then of course they lose that accent and learn the Australian accent.

That later in life, they cannot speak or understand Dutch, is in some cases a great disadvantage. It is well known, that many persons, but not all, lose their second language when in their old age. So it happens that a mother of 80 can't understand her son of fifty, because as a child she forbad him to speak Dutch.

This was one of the reasons that I started Juliana Village, Homes for the Aged. But that was still a long time off.

When we formed the drama club, we were lucky that one of the members had been a professional actor - with much resting time -- in Holland. He had some Dutch and from English in Dutch translated stage plays with him. which we produced with our best talent under his direction. When we ran out of texts , I started to write something myself.

The first thing I wrote was a sort of revue of a Dutch migrant family, father mother and daughter, a family which had become very rich in Australia, and went for a holiday back to Holland. To sent them by plane was not very common at that time, so I send them by ship.

We were also lucky that we had amongst us a very good soprano and a very good tenor. For them I wrote a couple of songs. Here is the translation , not in rhyme, of one of these songs. Keep in mind please that most of the people in the audience had not very long ago left their parents and other relatives.

When you board the ship that will bring you back to the land where you were born, your thoughts go back the many years since you left that country. How many of the friends and relatives who were standing on the quay to see you off, will be there now ?

Often in all those years you looked at their photos and read and re-read their letters, till you received the last one.

A black bordered one.

But many of these you love will be there. In front of the crowd there will be your old mother, to see for the first time her garand child.

By that time, out came the hankies. Was it sentimental? of course it was and they loved it.

To emigrate is not just looking for new pastures, it is also leaving a lot behind .

Early in 1954 we had bought a block of land in heathcote. , one of the southern suburbs of Sydney about 40 k.m. from the G.P.O.

Heathcote was a rural place with maybe less than 100 residents at that time. Water was just laid on, telephones came about a year later and sewerage came twenty years later.

Heathcote adjoins a National Park, that started right behind our back door. In the park there were two waterholes, The Scouts' Pool and the Rovers' Pool, where our boys spend most of their free time. They learned to swim in these pools and with a few other boys and girls they shared hundreds of acres as their private playground.

This was vastly different from the way I spend my preteen age years, in the streets of Amsterdam. Luckily the streets were not so crowded as nowadays. The only motorised transport we saw was the steam bike from the doctor.

Of course there were more cars, but they seldom came to our workmen's area. Police officers walked the streets and when they were supplied with push bikes, people shook their heads and said,

"What is the world coming to? How can they see what happens when they go by with such a speed?"

I'm talking of course of the time that I was four to twelve years old, 1915 to 1923.

In 1953 I was standing on the balcony of a little train that ran between Sutherland and Waterfall. Another man was standing there reading the Dutch Australia Weekly an ethnic paper. It didn't take long before we were exchanging our experiences in Australia. He was a highly qualified engineer. I told him that I had just bought a block of land in Heathcote, and he told me that he had just finished building his house.

He had lived for some years in a temporary dwelling and if I was interested I could have it for nothing because it was now a nuisance on his land. The same evening I had a look at it, and on Saturday morning I was back with a truck and driver. The shed, for that was what it was, was made of assembled panels. Corrugated iron sheets on three foot wide hardwood frames. Every panel weighted about half a ton. The inside was not lined. Finally the owner, the truck driver and I had the shed taken apart and the panels loaded on the truck. The truckdriver and I put it on my land in Heathcote. The next Saturday I loaded my 1 in 1 in 1 with some tools and some friends to help me set it up. It reached the lock up stage that same day. The next two weekends I spent making it suitable to live in. I build a kitchen bench and some shelves. A water tap was just outside. and electricity was brought inside from a pole in front of the land. It was not much to look at but in my view it was a palace. Our own place to live in, on our own land.

Before that happened, about three months before when we were living in the hired dwelling, the owner had a row with his boss and lost his job and his house. We had to vacate the place so that they could move in. Where could we go? We could not afford hotel rooms. Very few houses were for rent and all those were too expensive for us. I took a day off from work and went from house to house. Where a garage was attached I knocked on the door and asked the owner if he or she was willing to let his garage as a temporary living dwelling for us.

I was not succesful. Most people claimed that they needed the garage themselves, either for their car or as a storage place.

I could not blame them. Who wanted to have anything to do with a stranger with a bad accent, who with his wife and two children wanted to live on his land, in his garage ?

One kind lady, living alone said,

" My garage is not suitable to live in, but if you are desperate you may move in. I can not and will not ask you to pay for it."

I should have kissed her, at least her hand, instead I thanked her very much and promised her to look very hard for other accommodation before bothering her.

At this time I pay tribute to her and apologise for not having had the courtesy to go back to tell her that I had found another place and didn't need to make use of her generosity.

When I came home, a young Dutch chap was waiting for me. He was the owner of a three bedroom fibro cottage with a garage. Two of the bedrooms were let to a German couple who hadn't paid rent for six weeks. The man was a brute and when the owner asked for payment he threatened him with violence. The young man offered the two bedrooms to us if we could get rid of the couple. He asked for full board instead of rent. I assured him that I wasn't afraid, and to leave that couple to me.

" Be very carteful he said, the man has a bad temper."

I went straight to the police station in Sutherland and told the story to a sympathetic se^rgeant. He ordered a constable to go with me. The couple weren't home and the rooms padlocked. That was no problem for the constable, who with the approval of the owner had them off in no time.

The couple's furniture was brought to the garage with a note from the constable.

" If there is any trouble," he said " Call the station.

There was no trouble. The couple came with a utility when only Nel was home. She told them what had happened and showed them the note of the constable. They packed their furniture on the utility and went without paying the outstanding rent.

We lived there for six months with our very pleasant landlord-boarder till we could move to Heathcote. Just as well because his mother had come from Holland to live with him.

CHAPTER 7.

From then on I spent much of my free time with our drama club, acting, writing, directing. We travelled to clubs in other places where we gave performances. I had traded in my 1 in lin 1 , for a second hand Morris panel-van. We put the scenes on top and the props inside together with a couple of 'actors' who didn't have their own car.

The van served me well, with very little maintenance cost. After three years I traded it in for a new Morris Panel van. With this car we made our first holiday trip, a weekend to Newcastle. We booked rooms in a hotel that was about six storeys high, with a self- service lift. Gijs, about ten at that time appointed himself as lift driver and spent hours operating the lift to bring people up and down.

That we chose Newcastle as a holiday place shows how ignorant we were about Australia.

The following year we bought a tent and camping gear and went to Surfers Paradise.

We spent nearly a week getting there, taking by-ways where possible and camping on the way. To drive, even if you take the shortest road, takes a long time, but if you look it up on the map, it is only a very small piece of Australia.

Australia has the same number of population as Holland but is two hundred and forty times as large. We had good weather all the time. In Surfers Paradise we had visitors, about a million of them. Sand flies They bite or sting or whatever they do it hurt terribly. We all suffered from it, but Gijs the most. His arms and legs were covered in blisters. We went to a doctor who prescribed an ointment, but the pain stayed for days on end and it took months before his skin was normal again.

In Holland, corporal punishment was forbidden long before I went to school in 1917. When we came to Australia we became aware that the cane was still used here. I was, and still am sure that only bad teachers need a cane. I told the boys that if they ever were beaten with a cane, they should tell me and I would have a word with the teacher.

I never had a complaint from them, but long after their school years they told me that they both were beaten several times, but did not wanted to tell me, being afraid that the teacher would take it out on them. Most probably that would have been the case.

One day, I asked Gijs how he was doing at school.

" " Not so well," he said, " We have a new teacher and for all my work in writing he gives me two out of one hundred. You know I'm left handed, but he wants me to write with my right hand and I cannot do that.

The new man was also living in Heathcote.

" Come with me Gijs," I said, I want a word with your teacher."

The schoolmaster was working in his front garden.

" I'm Gijs father, Sir, may I have a word with you ?"

The man came to the front fence and looked as if he was afraid that I would attack him.

" Gijs," I told him," is left handed. That's not from choice, he was born that way. To force him to write with his right hand is against nature, to give him two marks out of a hundred for his written work is unfair. I want Gijs to write with his left hand and I want you to be fair. Can I count on that ?"

I did not threaten him, certainly not in a physical way, but he nearly fell over backwards to show me that he would oblige.

Later Gijs told me that this man made life at school miserable for him, calling him a coward who ran to his dad when he got bad marks.

When corporal punishment was abolished in New South Wales, the new Greiner government brought it back.

This reminds me of a very interesting television show ' Hypothetical '. The star is Geoffry Robinson.

On the stage, about twenty men and women from all walks of life, sit on one side of a very long table and Geoffrey walks in front, firing difficult questions to the people and plays around with their answers.

One day the subject was ' corporal punishment '. Geoffry asked his team if they were for or against it. With the exception of one man, who said he would be for it if the majority was for it, all others were against corporal punishment

Mr Greiner, the new Premier, was amongst the twenty people at the table. Geoffrey asked him,

" You Premier, are you against it too ?"

" One hundred percent, " said the Premier. Then Geoffrey said,

"Except for young school boys, Premier, is that not so ?"

CHAPTER 8.

John, my former employer came often with his wife Loes to visit us. John had done very well in his business, and he had invited me several times to become his partner. So far I had declined. This was due to a former bad experience. John was ambitious and wanted to tender for big painting and renovating jobs. At that time I employed about seven men. By the end of the year my accountant told me that my income was not much larger than when I was working on my own, only my worries were larger. I discussed with Nel why and where I had gone wrong. Maybe my business was either too large or too small. With tendering, supervising, bringing around the gear there was little time left to do any paintwork myself. What would be the solution ? I never liked painting and it would not appeal to me to work all the time with the brush. To grow larger was easier said than done.

I was often asked,

" Why for heavens sake have you become a painter if you dislike it so much ?"

" Well, that happened on ' professional ' advice. I was about twelve years old when I left primary school, and was too young to start work. One had to be fourteen years old to be allowed to work.

My father asked me what I wanted to do to earn a living, but I had no idea. I did not even know what sort of work there was in the world. Architect, Accountant, Journalist, I hadn't even heard the words. With eight children in the family, and my father a civil servant on a small income, there was never a thought about a higher education. Beside that I did not want to go to a high school. The teachers on the primary school, with one exception, were uninspiring. One has to be born an inspiring teacher and no teacher's college or University can make you one. The only good teacher was a young man who died young, twenty five years old, from tuberculoses.

In Amsterdam there was a job counselling office, which gave guidance to young boys and girls in the choice of their future employment. If they guided me it must have been by remote control. They had never seen or spoken to me. My father went there for advice. He was asked what my hobbies were.

"He likes drawing" said my father.

"In that case send him to a trade school, a sort of lower grade technical school, to learn the trade of house painting."

And that was it. I liked that school. The teachers taught well, but they taught me a trade that was out of use for a fifty years or so, but it was fun to do it. It is a pity that in all the forty six years I was in the painting trade, nobody asked me to paint his doors in "Bloom of Mahogany or Slavonic oak or asked me to paint their walls in marble.

After I left school my father allowed me a fortnight's holiday. With some friends we toured the Netherlands by pushbike and slept in a tent.

It was at that time, that I started to appreciate the beautiful hundred years old villages and their cottages with thatched roofs.

Back in Amsterdam my eyes were opened for the old streets and the many canals lined with huge trees and grant houses.

I found an employer the first day that I went looking for one. For months my work was to paint wooden stairs in large blocks of flats, priming, undercoating and a finishing coat. I hated it. My salary was three guilders per week . To have an idea how much that was in 1988 terms, one could buy 15 loafs of bread or one tyre for my push bike. After nine months I applied for an apprenticeship with an advertising agency. I had to draw something, so that the boss could see if I would be any good to him.

" Well" he said. " You can start Monday. One guilder per week and next year I'll double that.

I was sorry, I would have loved drawing advertisements but I could not afford to lose two guilders per week. I did not have to pay board at home but I needed at least three guilders for pocket money, clothing, for the maintenance of my bike and for the fee of an evening college I was going to. In wintertime I rode fourty kilometres per day. Twenty to and from work and twenty to and from classes. In somertime the evening college was closed

This is all a long time ago, let me go back to 1957.

I was still not sure what to do, work by myself or enlarge the business with all the difficulties and risks involved.

" John on the phone," said Nel.

" Listen, Jacob, " said John, " I've got here a specification for the painting and renovating of a large army job. It's too large for me. I know that you don't want a partnership but what about of doing just this job together ?"

He could not have called at a better time. We met the next morning on the site. The work to be done consisted of carpentry, plumbing, tiling, electricity, concreting, and of course painting.

We worked out the cost of the painting, made a guess at the carpentry and asked quotes from sub contractors for the other jobs.

We put our tender price in, kept our fingers crossed and did not get the job. Five firms quoted a higher price than we did, but one tenderer was far below our quote. We were convinced that he never could do the job for that price and so was the architect of the department of works. He called the man into his office and pointed out to him how far his estimate was below of that of the department. The man withdrew his tender and we were called in.

The architect told us that our quote was very close to the department's estimate.

" But," he said, " have you ever done a job of this size?"

My father told me never to tell a lie and I think so did John's parents, for at the same time, we both said,

" No Sir,"

" Mister architect " I said " We both did a lot of small jobs and that added up is one very large job."

He smiled and said, " Not altogether logical."

He asked us about our financial position, how much capital we had and how much gear, who were our suppliers and how was our credit with the bank ?

He told us that his Clerk of Works, at the end of the month would estimate the value of the work we had done and that on the 28th of the next month a sum of 90 percent of that value would be paid out to us. Two weeks after this interview we were invited to sign the contract.

We needed all our cash to finance the first two months. We engaged new staff for that job and left our own staff to finish the other work we each were doing.

At the end of the second month we received our first cheque. This was more than twice as high as our own valuation of the work we had finished. Of course this was very welcome and made business much easier. The cheques came as regularly as clock work untill the job was nearly finished. Then there was no cheque at all. The Clerk of Works had forgotten us.

CHAPTER 9.

Contracting is always a risky business. When you work on a quote, you hope to get the job, but when you get the job, and are the lowest tenderer out of many, you always fear that you have made a mistake. Why should I be right and all the other contractors wrong? On this job we were right.

It was on this job that I saw for the first time the work of white ants. The frames of the barracks we were renovating were made from hardwood. In some of the 75mm by 100 mm studs the ants had eaten all the soft parts and the roofs were held only by the hard parts of the grains.

It is amazing that some of the buildings didn't collapse. Clever ants.

The roof covering of the barracks was corrugated fibro sheets. This was dirty and fungus was growing on them. This had to be removed before the roofs were painted. We employed two labourers to do this with steel brushes. We did not know at the time how dangerous asbestos was. They were hardworking men doing this job and after a couple of days they asked us if they could sub-contract the job from us. They asked for a price we could afford, but we could not see, that from that price they could make more than their wages.

The following day they did not turn up for work. Maybe, we thought they saw there mistake, but that was our mistake. They came back with a second hand lawnmower, the sort with a roller at the front. They had taken out the roller and a row of circular steel brushes had taken its place. Small brushes for the top of the corrugations and larger to reach the bottom. They brought the machine on to the top of the roof, where one of them held the weight with a strong rope and the other guided the machine along the roof. These clever men earned in a short time a substantial sum of money. We were pleased for them. There are not many men with that sort of initiative. I only hope that alcohol didn't spoil their brains. As with so many working men they went straight to the pub when work was finished.

As new contractors for the Department of Works, we were under the strict supervision of inspectors and of the Architect.

We did the job to the best of our ability, we did not try to cut corners and had no trouble.

In a month that there was no cheque I went to the office of the Clerk of Works' in town.

He was sitting behind his table with a dull look in his eyes. When I asked him why he hadn't send us a cheque, it seemed that he did not know what I was talking about. Soon after he fell asleep and I asked to see the Architect.

He was in a conference and I sat in his waitingroom for more than a hour. When I told him why I was there, and that the Clerk of Works apparently was sick, he said, " Oh not again."

He would make some enquiries and let us know the result. I hope that the Department did something for that man. Alcohol can ruin a life.

A couple of days later we were informed that the Department would send out two quantity surveyors to revalue the work we had completed. It was as well that we had received too much in our first payment, because it took two more months before we received another one. The total now tallied with our own calculation, so finally there was nothing wrong.

The large army job finished satisfactory for us.

John asked again , " What about a permanent partnership ? Together we can do better than each on our own. ."

I agreed on the condition that a proper partnership contract should be made up by a solicitor.

In all the years that we worked together, neither of us felt the need to read the contract again.

It did not take long before we had another Government's contract and another.

John did most of the supervision and I did most of the quoting. When our private work was finished we asked our staff to work for the partnership. Most did and got their long service leave with us(three months paid holiday). The Dutchman amongst them went to Holland to see the relatives.

Very soon we needed someone in the office to do the bookkeeping , answer the telephone and type a few letters. The set back was, that although we had now a lady, we did not have an office. The lady sat in John's living room. We looked everywhere for a large store room and an office to hire. After a couple of weeks and having found nothing suitable, we decided to buy a block of industrial land and build on it what we wanted. We found a good block for a price we could afford without a mortgage. The owner offered us the two adjoining blocks with the sum we paid for the first one as a deposit. Keeping in mind that more expenses were coming for building work , we declined the offer. If we had thought differently about loans then by now we would be either very rich or bankrupt.

Although I spend most of my time working on quotes , Thursday's I helped John bringing the wages around . We now employed carpenters, labourers, someone in the work shop, a truck driver, but mostly we employed painters. After many years , going through the books, it worked out that we were only the successful tenderers for one job in thirteen.

We got a large job in Lithgow, about 150 kilometres from Sydney. This job consisted of painting and renovating a large number of houses belonging to a Commonwealth factory.

Until then I had never seen an Aboriginal , but on this job we employed one. A man of about twenty five years old, who had never learned a trade, so we took him on as a labourer. The external sides of the houses to be painted had to be thoroughly washed down before we started the painting. That was his job. He worked hard and with intelligence and was liked by the other men on the job. Maybe liked too much. After work they took him with them to the pub and shouted him too many schooners of beer. Some Aboriginals , just like some white people, do not know when to stop. Many evenings he had to be helped home. One morning he did not come back.

CHAPTER 10.

Having this man working for us made me think about the history of Australia. Shortly after I arrived in Australia I was already told that Aboriginals were drunks, they were lazy, they were stupid and good for nothing. They were a sickly race and fading out. If the last was true, Aboriginals surviving 40.000 years , dying out now that the white people were here, was not a good report of the behaviour of the white people and the sicknesses they brought with them.

" Good riddance, to them," they said.

In the past they did there utmost to help them out of the world. Black pages in the history of Australia. In the book of every country are black pages and there are many countries where even now pages are being painted black- or red - from blood and murder.

What happened in the forty thousand years in Australia before England dumped its 'criminal classes' here, nobody knows.

Captain Cook wrote in his journal about the Aborigines:

They are far happier than we Europeans, being wholly un- acquainted with the super fluos and-unnecessary conveniences , too much sought after in Europe. They are happy in not knowing the use of them. They live in tranquility which is not disturbed by un-equality of conditions.

Killing Aborigines went on until 1928, when massacres took place. There was a difference from the killings in the nineteen century, when nobody really cared. In 1928 seven white men were hung for it.

As far as stupidity is concerned, a race that invented the boomerang, (A piece of wood to kill a bird, not for fun, but for food, which when it missed comes back into the hand of the hunter) cannot be stupid. All over the world people have lit fires to keep them warm. They sat around them roasted in front and frozen at the back.

The Aborigines made a circle of small fires and sat in the middle.

Slowly, the white new-comers started to see Aborigines not as animals any more to shoot at will, but only as a sort of second class humans. They even started a sort of program to help them, or perhaps better put, to 'tame' them. They did it in a dictatorial way . They send the missionaries in and gave them power over the Aborigines.

Happy as they were with their 40.000 years of dreams, they were now forced or at least persuaded , to accept

the Christian religion. Groups were rounded up and had to live in camps the European way. Half cast babies from, usually, raped single mothers, were forcible taken away till they were old enough to be sent away from the missions, to serve white masters. The word slave was not used.

Now Australian is celebrating its 200th year since the first fleet came here. Many Aborigines are still mourning the deaths of their forebears. However there is a sort of guilt feeling under the more intelligent and sensitive whites, as expressed in the words of the Prime Minister Bob Hawke.

" Let us admit the wrongs, but let us try to make up for it."

In the last few decades Governments have already tried to remedy the wrongs. Here and there large parcels of land have been given to the original owners, sometimes with a grant for stock, building material and machinery.

Some of these communes do very well, but you never hear about them. Some groups are mismanaged, although I never read anywhere that money disappeared into the pockets of the leaders,

the groups who did not do well or even very badly, were heralded in the newspapers loud and clear and discussed on radio and television. It makes sensational news. That in the white community many enterprises are badly managed, lose the money of their shareholders, have receivers appointed or go bankrupt, is not news. It is too common to be sensational.

What Australian need is higher education for more Aborigines. They can be the teachers of the next generations. Their brains are as good as anybody else's, but their environment often makes it impossible to study. As long as this is not changed they will forever live in bad conditions. Although I hate boarding schools, it might be the solution to have Commonwealth boarding schools for able young black and white people to study if they do not have the right environment to do it (I give this advice free to the Ministers of Education.)

I think it is a more advanced idea than bringing back the cane. When in 1952 we arrived in Sydney, there were at the edge of Mascot Airport, dwellings for Aborigines.

They were made from corrugated iron, hessian bags and carton. Later there were houses built for them in La Perouse. My son Wim had met an Aboriginal boy who had done very badly at school. The family lived in La Perouse. Wim met him through a school friend and one day the two boys visited La Perouse. When Wim came home he was really upset.

" Papa," he said " it is not his fault that he did not do well at school . He isn't stupid, really he's not, but he is living in a house with a lot of little brothers and sisters. There is hardly any furniture and there is not a quiet corner in the house with a table where he can do his homework. There is not a book in the house. His father drinks a lot and is unemployed.

Yes, with exceptions, for most of us, the environment in which we spend our youth often decides the rest of our lives.

It is not that long ago that Aborigines were not allowed in pubs and to buy liquor. That did not mean at all that they did not drink. White trash bought drinks cheaply and sold them expensively to the Aborigines. A sort of Australian bootlegger. Then came the time that the Government found it undemocratic that whites were allowed, what was forbidden to Aborigines. It was a sort 'Apartheid'. So open went the doors of the pubs. It was well meant, but not wise.

Before the Aborigines were allowed to enter drinking places an education course on the dangers of alcohol should have been held by Aboriginal, non-drinking teachers.

CHAPTER 11.

We had trouble at home. Nel became more and more depressed. When I asked her if she was homesick and wanted to go back to Holland, she said,

" No way, I like Australia."

Thinking that part of her depression could be missing her relatives and friends, I invited her mother, who had become a widow, to stay with us for a year.

The boys loved to have her mother at our place. Now they had a Grandma just like their Australian friends. I liked my mother in law too. We had been always good friends, but it was Nel who was soon irritated to have her mother in the house all the time.

I must admit that Grandma liked to tell her daughter, several times a day, how to run her household.

Grandma liked to be with us, especially because once a week I took the family to a good restaurant for dinner.

When Grandma was on her way to Australia, I traded my panel van in for a Vanguard station wagon. I could hardly put grandma amongst the pain pots.

Nel's mother did not have any difficulty in speaking English. When she was not understood she said it again in Dutch, but just louder, and aside to me.

" is that man deaf ?"

She said, " I can't understand that those people can't speak Dutch . It is so easy, in Holland even small children can speak it. "

Although our business did well, our health did not. Nel's depression became worse and worse, and I now had trouble of my own.

It was November 1959. In the middle of the night I woke up with severe pain in my breast and left arm. I also found it difficult to breath. I did not want to wake up the family so I sat on the back verandah till 6 o'clock when Gijs woke up. He rang the doctor and a hour later I was laying in a hospital bed in a room where three other man where recovering from heart attacks. After the pain is gone and in my case that was very soon, you don't feel sick at all. When in the morning the paper boy came we bought, beside the papers cigarettes and matches. Now and again during the day the nurses gave us clean ash trys.

Visitors brought us more cigarettes and chocolates and cakes and all sorts of things which are so very good for heart patients.

We read the papers and discussed the news, careful to avoid politics and religion.

We exchanged books and gossipped about the Matron , who in our opinion , was much too harsh to those nice young nurses, who cared so well for us.

We discussed what was wrong in the world and how to cure it. When the discussion came to the depression years of the thirties and of the last war, I felt left out. My experiences of these times were so much different from theirs. It was then that the thought came up, that when old and maybe living in a retirement village, an immigrant could be, in the midst of very nice people , very lonely.

It was 1969, ten years later , that that thought came back to me and now in 1988, I.m writing this at the table of my self-contained unit in Juliana Village, Homes for the Aged.

" This is a village for aged persons of both sexes gratuitously or otherwise irrespective of religion creed , race or kind of such persons all this in particular but in no way limited to those who are or whose forbears are descendants are of Dutch origin."

This is what the layer wrote in our Memorandum of Association, when I told him that I did not want it just for Dutch people but for every body.

From this village, now housing 104 persons, of which about one third are Dutch, I was the founder and for eighteen years the chairman.

Things change in time. For heart patients , no cigarettes in the hospital, and no chocolate or cakes. No seven weeks bedrest anymore , exercise as soon as the pain is gone and back home in four or five days.

While in hospital Nel and the boys visited me every day. They had to come by train, change over into another one and walked from the station to the hospital, while my new Vanguard stood idle in the garage. I persuaded Nel to take drivers lessons and when I came out of the hospital she was there, with the car, to pick me up.

When grandma came to Australia, she shared a cabin with a grandma from another family. While I was in the hospital that lady decided to cut her visit short, they were now nine months here and our grandma decided to join her again, in a cabin homewards.

To have guest is nice and social, but to have guests for nearly a year is a different thing. Often things do not work out as well as expected.

Nel was fond of driving and it make her feel good. Three months after I came out of the hospital we bought a Mini Minor for her, a marvelous little car, which was her pride an joy. She was a very good driver and thought the boys to drive when they came of age.

CHAPTER 12.

In 1960, John and I had a store and a little office built on out industrial land. Here, some years later we started to make our own paint. When the store became too small we extended it and at the same time built four more workshop, to let to small businessmen. For our painting contractor business we bought thousands of gallons of paint each year. Although we bought with a large discount we could save a lot more if we could make our own paint.

We looked also for other ways to make our business more efficient. We could do nothing in the way of wages. The Employers association and the Employees Union had fixed that. and in my opinion the workmen certainly were not over paid.

I think that they were at the lower side of the average wages.

So our thoughts went to making our own paint.

We contacted a firm which made the raw materials and they proved very helpful. They told us where to buy the necessary machinery and made a list of materials to start with. They gave us formulas for the different sorts of paints we wanted to make and when we had everything ready to start , a Chemical engineer came to our workshop to help us with the first batches. We saved about 50 percent of the cost. We had samples tested by a State Laboratorium and it was found to be first class.

We also tried to sell paint but that was not successful

We put an advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald for a salesman. We engaged one and bought a panel van for him so that he could carry some paint with him for small orders. He did not get small orders , let alone big ones. When one day he came to the office to get his salary I had a peek in the panel van and found wet fishing gear and some undersized fish. We sacked him on the spot, and decided that we did not have the right talents become merchants.

The lady who did our books, first in John's lounge later in our office gave notice. She was a Jehova's Witness. She needed an operation but in accordance with her religion she had refused a blood transfusion if this proved to be necessary.

Awaiting the time that the call would come from the hospital, she became too sick to work. I did her work for some time. She survived the operation but was not able to work again, so we engaged another lady.

In Australia it is common that suppliers send their clients a little present at Christmas time, a calendar, a diary or sometimes a bottle of whisky.

For years now we had been working for the Department of Works. With Christmas we decided to send a present to the office of the Architect, where we are mostly working for. We made up a little basket, with a bottle of whisky, a bottle of port, some bottles of wine and some boxes of chocolates for the female staff. At ten o'clock we sent a man to town. I did my rounds and when I came back at 4 o'clock the basket was on my desk. The man who had brought it back had told our secretary,

"The architect and his staff don't accept bribes."

Neither he or any of his inspectors had ever asked for a bribe. If we had been inclined to bribe our way instead of doing a honest job, we should have thought in hundreds if not in thousands of pounds instead of a little basket with Christmas presents.

Recently I met that architect. He told me that he had been retired for eighteen years. He bent over forwards a little bit and showed his age, which must have been over eighty, but there was still nothing wrong with his brains. I asked him what happened to the Clerk of Works with the alcohol problem?"

" Oh", he said " Mr so and so. His alcohol problem wasn't all what was wrong with him, he was a liar, and unreliable. One morning He left my office with a list of jobs I had given him to inspect.

Some time later I wanted to ask him some questions so I rang a few of the jobs he was going to, but nobody had seen him. I tryed again ar 4 p.m. but I got the same answers.

The next morning I asked him how the jobs were going. He gave me a minute description of how evey job was going. I looked him in the eyes and said,

" You are a bloody liar, you haven't been anywhere."

Straight away he shook my hand and said,

" Sorry mate, it will not happen again."

" Mate" to his superior, that is real Australian. That would not happen in Holland, certainly not in the time that I was living there.

The first week that I was working in Sydney, painting some shelves in a large factory, a man came out of the office and said,

" I.m Harry mate, what's your name ?"

" Van Doorn, " I said"which I quicly changed in Jacob van Doorn."

" I hope you like it here in Australia mate " and he walked on.

I was flabbergasted when I was told that he was the Director and owner of the Company.

Some stories are written about people who became rich in Australia. Many more stories are written about people who are not happy here, people who do not have the brains to manage their life and their finances and whinge and blame the country for it.

Journalists love these people . From them they hear things they can use in their sensational writing for the press. Virtually nothing is written about the other 98 percent immigrants, who are happy here, and are either rich nor poor. Most of them have visited their mother country at least once.

Since we bought the land to built Juliana Village on in 1975, I'm interviewed many times by journalists. All of them promised me to send me their papers with the articles, but they never did, not one of them. Not that I have not read their articles. Relatives of friends send them to them and they gave them for me to read. If you read between the lines it boils always down to ,

" Even if they tell you that they are happy in Australia, it is easy to see that they are really not. They all have a sort of nostalgia for their homeland. They all have Dutch ornaments on their walls and chimnies, plates from Delft or embroidery with a Dutch motif.

One lady journalist started her interview with,

" Now Mr van Doorn, will you tell me now your side of the story ?"

" My side of the story ? What do you mean ?"

This was in a time that we hadn't start building.

" Well," she said, " I'm told that a lot of people are against your plan. "

" Madam, the world is full of people who are for or against a new initiative. Those for are mostly the people who create and those against are mostly the people who criticise. "

I was wondering what she would write and asked,

" May I read your article before it is published ?

" Oh, no, " she said, I can't do that"

" Then there will be no interview" I said and walked out.

The majority of my friends and acquaintances came to a point that they had some money to invest. Some bought a holiday house on the coast, to use for themselves and to let, Others bought a flat or home Unit to let. We did not want to be landlords of families. What can you do when they can't pay the rent ? Put them on the street ? We could not do that. We did not have any trouble with the small business men who rented our workshop. We got the rent in time and the ones who moved out did that because their business was growing.

CHAPTER 13.

Australia is well known for its horse races.

" Sport " they call it what's not true of course. It is gambling. To be called a gambler doesn't sound so nice, so they call themselves sportmen.

Gambling is highly regarded in Australia, more or less on the same level as charity. Income from gambling is just as free from tax as donations to charity organisations. If you know the ropes, you can win large amounts and live off it as a king. Knowing the ropes means , knowing how the races are fixed. You have to be clever and not over confident like one of the big bookmakers and his son who are now banned from all race courses.

This 'sport' can also become a sickness, an addiction. Proof of this is that a Government Minister of the jails system released prisoners for a fee which he then spent on the races and lost again. This man is now sitting out a very long jail sentence himself.

But who am I to criticize ? I myself lost as much as a pound on the races. We had been in Australia for seven years and never seen a race course. We had seen pages and pages of race informations and results, we were deafened by the radio announcements but we had never seen a race. So on a Saturday I packed wife and children in my vehicle and we went to Randwick, one of the largest race courses in Sydney.

Nel went reluctant and the boys enthusiastic.

" It is very un-wise of you to take the boys to a race course. It is the start of ruining their young life" said Nel.

On the race course you can lose your money in two ways. You can give your money to a bookmaker or you can donate it to the State which is the biggest bookmaker of all. Nel would not spend one penny on either collection point. The boys were very keen so I gave them a pound each, which may be the equivalent of five or six dollars now. We did very well. It took us four of the seven races before we had lost our money. Back in the car I assumed the role of a wise father.

" Boys " I said, " I took you to the races today to show you how wrong it is to gamble. You saw how easy it is to lose your money. Let this be a lesson to you. "

" Ah, but we did it all wrong." said Wim. We are amateurs, we should have a system. I'll make one this week."

" I'll help you " said Gijs.

Every evening of the week they bent over the 'sport' pages and made notes of the jockys, the horses, their blood-stock and the distances they were good at.

The next week I gave them the train fare and another pound each. Nel did not speak to me. They came home early. The system didn't come up to expectations.

As far as I know they have never been to a race course again and that is not because of my wisdom. One shiffers to think what would have happened if they had won a fair bit.

What none of the four of us liked, indeed what we very much disliked was the way the jockys put the whips to the animals. . One sportsman told me,

" The horses don't feel it. "

That's just what the sport fishermen say.

" A hook in their mouth ? they don't feel it "

I suppose that in a former life the one has been a race horse and the otherone a fish, how could they be so sure otherwise?

Beside the race horses there are plenty of other ways to lose your money. the trots, the dogs, casinos, lotto, sweepstakes, lotteries with prizes up to a million dollars, scratch tickets and poker machines. These are mainly in clubs, which I don't mind so much , because the profits are spent on good buildings with good restaurants. When my friend and I have lunch in a club , big spenders that we are, we always donate to the club by spending two dollars each in the poker machines. We cannot help that the last two times we went there, that after a good lunch we left with more money than we came in.

In our early twenties, my fiancee, her brother and several friends started a lottery club. Every week we put ten cents each in the ' bank' to buy a lottery ticket. For three guilder and fifty cents we bought a one twentieth part of a ticket. There were 100.000 numbers in the lottery and for six weeks a portion of the numbers were drawn. The big prise of hundred thousand guilder could fall in any week. You had to pay twenty percent tax if you won anything. If you won ten guilder you got eight.

After the last draw, no other draw was made for six weeks. We never won anything except a free ticket.

In 1960 when Wim was sixteen and Gijs fourteen they were both in the same high school in the same year. They both had already their Intermediate Certificate and were now doing the last two years for their Leaving Certificate. That they were in the same year was because they were put in the same primary school class when we came in Australia.

The history teacher at that ^{high} school gave also lessons in theater and drama. The last years students performed under his directions the play 'Green Pastures.' A play telling how the negroes of South America imagined heaven would be; a calm flowing river, with grassy edges, where angels lived, seated around little fires, where the fish jumped out of the river into the frying pan. The good Lord, also a negro of course walked around presenting ten cent cigars to the men. Racist? I do not believe it. White, black or yellow, they all have the right to create Heaven as it suits them.

Gijs had a part in that play and that hooked him on acting. I myself, from the time I was fifteen, went to theaters, comedy or drama. Cheapest seats of course, just under the roof. I would have loved to be an actor.

In Amsterdam, on my push-bike paint pots on the handles, I passed a school where young boys and girls waited for the doors to open for the Netherlands Drama School. I would have loved to be amongst them, instead as going to paint more stairs. I had already tasted a little of the limelight.

When I was thirteen years old my father was pensioned as the years he spent in Indonesia, then The Netherlands Indie, counted double to get the necessary years to apply for a pension. We moved to a small village ten kilometres from Amsterdam. My father was a born organisor and story teller. This was of course before every house had radio and television. He told with the help of a magic lantern stories to children after school hours. He was also chairman of a neighbourhood group. A mandoline club and a drama club was formed. My youngest sister and I joined both. What we performed was maybe the worse amateurism possible, but I loved it.

At that time I had three aims in life, to become a famous painter,- to become a famous actor, - and to become rich. I'm seventy six now, who knows ?

When Gijs talked of becoming an actor, doing the opposite of more intelligent parents, I encouraged him.

He did an audition for the National Institute of Dramatic Art.(N.I.D.A.) and was accepted , " subject, as he said of having Australian Nationality."

Gijs left N.I.D.A with a good diploma and got work with a company that toured Australia performing Shakeare's plays. He was in a few television serials, did some advertising and was in stage plays. That was all spread over about fourteen years.

Between work he was 'resting', as they call being unemployed in stage circles. He might have been resting but he was not idle. Together with a friend he bought an old house, renovated it and sold it with a profit. They did that several times. Gijs also has always been interested in antiques, and one day he rented a stall in the antique market in Sydney.

He went to auctions, visited people who wanted to sell, gave up acting and started a business in antiques and fine art. After some years he gave up the ^{now} seven stalls he had in the market and opened a shop in the centre of Sydney.

Wim's life went in a different direction. When high school was finished I asked him what he wanted to do.

" I do not really know," he said, " but as teachers have the longest holidays I'll try that."

He went to teachers college and got his diploma.

Nel and I were in that time in Europa. He wrote us about his college result and added,

" Don't think that I'll spend my life in front of a class till I'm sixty five. I'll do it for a year and then I'm going to see more of the world."

When the year had passed he came back home fore some weeks and then went to New Zealand to start his world trip. That was twenty years ago, he is still in New Zealand although he has been overseas for holiday.

The first year in New Zealand he did all sorts of jobs. He went with a team of sheep shearers all over the country, He drove a tractor for a farmer and on the snow fields and he painted roofs.

He is a fanatic ski-er he sought and found work on a ski-slope and slept in one of the cabins. One evening, a couple of students discussed the philosophy course that they were doing at the University. Wim was very interested in the discussion and enrolled the next year in the university in a course of philosophy, English and History. When he finished the three year study and got his Bachelor of Arts degree he was asked by the University to stay on as a junior lecturer and study for his Master's at the same time. He declined. In all these years of study, he never accepted financial assistance of us. He did all sorts of odd jobs to pay his way. He only allowed us to pay his fare when he came for a holiday in Australia.

Instead of taking that job at the Uni, he started a 'Commune' with some other graduates. Together they bought a beautiful large old house in about half an acre ground. They did all the housework (or forgot it). They kept pigs, bought a small bakery and baked very tasty health bread and kept free range chickens. It all paid its way, so well, that they bought a house and ground similar adjoining their first property. Wim married in that time and after two years he moved with wife and son out of the Commune. They engaged an architect to built a nice house for them in one of the suburbs. His wife looked after the child for a year and Wim took a job with a sprinkler firm. The next year she went back to work giving English lessons on a high school and Wim looked after the baby , kept chickens, two sheep called Victa and Mowbry to keep the lawn short and grew their own vegetables.

In that time, together they started to design a new high school system, which they called ' School without Walls'. It was called so because studies would for a large part be done outside the school building and as much as possible be practical. Pupils who had to make up their mind of what they wanted to do for a living after school, did, say for bookkeeping some weeks in an accountants office. Boys or girls who wanted to become nurses or doctors spent some time in a hospital. Others in a laboratory, the zoo, with an architect etc etc, supported by school lessons. When the draft was finished they send copies to the Education Board, to the Minister of Education and other people whos opinions they respected.

One evening there was a knock on the door. Wim stepped over some toys and other things to open the door.

A man introduced himself as The Minister of Education and his wife. Wim kicked some toys out of the way and said, " Come in please?"

The Minister and his well-educated wife told Wim that they were very impressed with the draft for the new school system. Wim told them that his wife had played a large part in the concept.

The four of them discussed the scheme till the small hours of the morning, and with the note that the Minister would approve the system they went to bed. The Minister and his wife spend the rest of the night with them. The University where Wim and his wife both had studied made a large house available for the 'School without Walls'.

Wim had to apply to the Department for a job as a teacher in English and History just like other teachers, but he got the job. After some years he became deputy principal, but when the principal resigned after five years this job was offered to Wim, but he declined. He was looking for new pastures.

He was always involved with social work. He had been one of the speakers at a Royal Commission about the alcohol problem in New Zealand. He and his wife, together with other friends, did a lot for people who for one reason or other did not fit into the normal way of life. When he gave up the school he got an invitation from a large hospital to accept a job there as a social worker. with full salary to enroll in the University again for a two years study in psychology and Social work.

While working for many years in the hospital he made a study of Psycho-Drama.

With three friends, who had the same qualifacations he started a clinic of counsellors for people with special problems. Many are sent to them by the courts.

But enough about my sons, let them write their own biographies.

CHAPTER 15.

In 1960 my partner John, went with his wife and four children for six months to Holland. From the day we started working together John and I had only taken the same wages as we paid our foremen. Now we drew money from the bank. John to spent on his holiday and I to salt away to go for a long holiday also, when it suited us.

We made arrangements that the one on holiday should not draw wages but would share in the profits.

Nel and I decided in 1965 that our turn had come to go to Europe. Neither of us were keen to be guests of relatives, so I had written to the daughter of one of my sisters, asking her if she could arrange the hire of a flat, a house or even a caravan.

We did not have an answer when we boarded the ship. Neither did we get one in one of the letters from her which we got in some harbours.

This time our place aboard was not in a hold with 183 people, rather we had a nice comfortable cabin: for the two of us. Very soon after the ship left shore Nel was much better than she had been for the last months.

She took the initiative of pinning a note on the notice bord if there were people aboard to play Klaverjas with, a sort Dutch card game.

There were enough players to form two tables, so I did not have to be the fourth man. I'm not fond of card games.

On second April of August we left Sydney harbour. This is not a travel story, but a journey around the world on a luxurious liner, which was such a big thing in our lives that I can't help but want to write about it.

I can't much write about the first 48 hours, I was too seasick. In Melbourne we stayed a very short time, just to take more passengers aboard. In Adelaide a bus tour was arranged to see the nice little well laid out town. When in Fremantle we thought that if that harbour place had looked like the way it did now, we would have a much better impression of Australia than in 1952, when a group of immigrants advised us to go back.

We had time to go by train to Perth, where we saw the black swans, and, long before we got them in Sydney, a plaza, a street closed to cars, the footpaths widening to form places where restaurants could put their tables and chairs and their customers could have their coffee or food.

From Perth to Colombo was a pleasant trip. The sea was calm and the weather sunny. In Colombo a row of guides was waiting till we disembarked. One approached us and offered us a tour around the city in a large car. We were with two friends of the ship. I asked him the price and we agreed on two thirds of what he asked. The guide was dressed in what I would call an old fashioned woman's nightgown.

He was an excellent driver, a good guide and gave a on commentary of all we passed.

At lunch time he brought us to a more or less European style restaurant. I invited him to have lunch with us, but he wanted to stay with the car. I offered to have food brought out to him, but he declined that also.

When we got back to the ship I paid him the amount which he had asked for in the first place. He was pleasant surprised.

Before we boarded, a small boy, about six years of age, insisted on blacking my shoes. His skin was the colour of the boot polish with which he was very generous. I think he put more on my socks than on my boots. He was so cute that the ladies would have liked to take him with us.

The next step was Aden. A complete different place than in 1952.

In Suez we left the ship and were brought by buses through the desert to Cairo. Here we saw the golden treasures from the grave of Tutankhamen.

From the town, a bus brought us rather close to the pyramids. There we had a choice of going the last part by camel or by a horse drawn carriage. Nel found a camel too high and took the carriage but I dared the camel.

The animal was not friendly and tried to bite me. He or she was also very disobedient to its master because it ran away must faster than the man wanted.

So much is written by people who know much more than I do about pyramids , that I confine myself to saying; I stood in awe and thought what inspired a man to have built a burial place for himself of such dimentions, and how did they do it ?

From Cairo we were driven to Port Said where, late in the evening, and chilled to the bone, we boarded the ship that had come via the Suez canal.

Naples disappointed me. There is a saying; 'See Naples and die'.

I took it always that it meant, "After you have seen Naples there is nothing in the world worth seeing."

My opinion now is, 'be careful or you'll die from shock'. Certainly if you see the part where the poor people live.

Pompeii is a very interesting place to see. In the year 79 the Vesuvius erupted and the town was completely covered with lava ashes. What lived in the town was killed instantly. In later times people started to dig away the ashes and now most of the town looks like it did in 79. The streets were paved and the houses were built from brick and stone, with small swimming pools in the house and water came from taps. One can learn something too. The women were not allowed to enter the houses where the walls were painted with sex lessons, they were very annoyed with that and when the men came out they wanted to be informed in detail.

I cannot write about the Bay of Biscay, I was too seasick. The sea was very rough. The captain stayed on the bridge all the time.

When we came through the Mediterranean sea the water was like a mirror, an Australian lady and I had a conversation with the Captain, who was a very friendly man and mixed with the passengers when not actually on duty. Of course the Captain is on duty twenty four hours a day. The captain told the lady about the Netherlands.

He told her so much that was good, that I thought,"
Why in heaven's name did I ever leave that spot ?

" Rotterdam madam ? The best harbour in the world.
Never a hold up. The warfies know their job. Five
hundred ships every day in and out of the harbour.
Perfect organisation.

Leiden ? A beautiful town. It is a pity that that
famous town hall burned down.

Delft, were the famous Delft crockery comes from and
from the Delft's University come the world's best
engineers.

Amsterdam ? A jewel madam a real jewel. Herring ? Yes
you are right the Dutch people eat them raw. Once
tasted, you can't stop. "

Finally late in the evening we came to Southampton.
The ship was too late. There was no connection to
Dover any more. The Captain allowed us to stay that
night on the ship and the ship's company would make
sure that we and our luggage would get transport per
train to London, where a bus would wait for us to
bring us to Dover.

We send telegrams to relatives in Holland that we
would come a day late. The following morning, we were
up early, waiting with our luggage for a bus to come,
and for the promised truck which would take the
luggage. The bus was very late and the truck did not
come at all. At the very last moment we carried our
luggage, and that was not a little for six months
holiday, into the bus. There was hardly room to stand.
In London there was no bus. We waited and waited and
then all of us took taxis to Waterloo station and
just got the train to Dover. So much for
organisation.

The boat to Holland was just at the point of departure when we arrived. The North Sea was very rough. For the coast of the Hook of Holland we went on deck. The rain tumbled down. Nobody stood on the quay to met us. When we disembarked we had to drag our heavy luggage to the custom building. No porters, no lorries to use. It was real Dutch weather, to make sure that we felt at home.

Once inside the building, were it was nearly as hot as in the tropics, stood behind a glass wall, about twenty relatives and friends waving to us.

Twenty minutes later we sat around a large table in a cosy waiting room having coffee and cake.

We talked and we talked. Every body found every body looking well and not a day older than thirteen years ago. To my nice I said,

" You never let us know if you found accommodation for us."

" Oh", she said, " We will take you there."

That's what she did, to their three storey house boat in a small canal in the town of Haarlemmerliede. One storey was in use by themselves, one storey was for their teen-age daughter and the other storey they had converted into a self contained flat for our use. It consisted out a lounge, a bedroom and a kitchenette. We had to share the bathroom with the family. They would not accept any rent, not even something towards the cost of the conversion.

CHAPTER 15.

We spend the first days visiting the families. Nel's mother was in a retirement home. She complained that we were the first visitors she had seen for three months. We were disappointed with the family but when we checked up with them, it became clear that grandma was losing her memory.

On the day that we were there , her brother-in-law and his wife had visited her. He son came in in his lunch time and her eldest daughter stopped every evening for a couple of minutes when she passed from her work to her home.

We bought a note book, with on the cover a request to all visitors to put their name, the date and the time of the visit in it. It was soon clear that she was not forgotten.

I bought a second hand car and slowly we toured the Netherlands and Belgium from one point of interest to the other. After about three weeks, with not one day that it was not raining at least for some time, we visited Nel's sister, a district nurse in the south of Holland. She invited us to stay till the weather cleared. That took two more weeks and a lot of playing scrabble.

With two of Nel's sisters we booked a guided tour of Paris. This was arranged by the French Railways. We travelled in a luxurious department of the train from Amsterdam to Paris. We had lunch in the dining wagon, but were not accompanied with a guide. They were waiting for us in Paris when we arrived there. Most passengers on the train belonged to our tour. We were split up in groups of twelve and each group got its own guide.

Our guide was a Dutch student who spent his long summer break from the University guiding tourists. I think he knew more about Paris than many born-and bred Parishioners.

We were brought in buses to our boarding houses near The Place de Cliche, where our assembly point was, and from where we went sightseeing and where in a large restaurant we mostly ate lunch and dinner. Our 'Hotel' was very shabby. Nel and I had a room of our own and Nel's sisters shared a room. Toilets and a dilapidated bathroom were in the corridor. A handbasin with warm and cold water was in our room and also a bidet. Breakfast consisted of delicious croissants with butter and cafe au lait. From the hotel we walked to the meeting place where we were told that that day we would visit the Palace de Versailles, the hunting lodge of Louis the Thirteenth. We all were given a box which proved to contain an excellent lunch packet.

All furniture in the Palace has been removed, but there is plenty preserved of the ceilings and walls decorations, not forgetting the English style gardens.

Some days the bus drove us around, other times we went by the underground railsystem, which ran at two minutes interval, and brought you to every part of Paris. One evening the guide took us to an underground cabaret. We were seated at wooden tables at wooden chairs and before the show started we were served with a very nice very strong French cocktail. I don't believe that even one of the artists was under 65 yearsold. They sang and mimed. Although Nel and I didn't understand a word of what they were saying, those people were so talented , that we enjoyed the show very much.!

The cabaret itself, together with a small museum is part of a political prison of former ages. It houses the guillotine of Lyon which is smaller than I imagined to be and a nasty bit to look at if you think where it was used for. The prison is below the water level of a neighbouring canal. When a prisoner was put in his cell a sluice was opened and inch by inch the cell flooded till the water came above the victim's head. So it is not all fiction what is written in the sensation novels. How cruel is mankind.

The Netherlands is a country of rivers and canals. We wanted to be off the road for a time and were thinking of hiring a small cruiser for some weeks. I was looking in a Newspaper 'for hire' column to see what was on offer. Suddenly I got a pain in my chest and arm and within one hour I was lying in a hospital bed. It was a very old but good hospital. Kind nurses and a matron just like an ordinary human being, but my complaint was about the cook. The meals were so nice and interesting that I gained seven kilograms, one kilo per week, for I was there for that time. Smoking in bed was not allowed. But when I was allowed to walk round a bit I got permission to go to the smoking room. When I opened the door of that room I fell back from the smoke and the stink that came out of it. I turned and never smoked again, although I nearly became addicted to peppermint.

The heart specialist who gave me a check up in his surgery before I left Holland said,
 " You have to realise that you will be an invalid for the rest of your life.

You have to give up all work and avoid stress. Do everything slowly "

Not such a nice ending to our holiday.

Back in Sydney, Gijs and eight or ten friends waited at the quay when we disembarked from the liner. We all went for coffee in a shop at the Cross, and we told how we spent the holiday in the home country.

I made an appointment with John to see him next week in the office.

When we arrived home we were very pleasantly surprised. Gijs had made a big sign 'welcome', ^{AND} had put a lot of flowers in the house and for each of us a nice present. House and garden were meticulously clean and tidy.

He was sorry to lose the use of Nel's Mini Minor but soon after he was able to buy a new one for himself.

We were only home three days when a male nurse from the psychiatric hospital where Nel had been , came to visit us. We talked a bit about the holidays and about the hospital. When he left I brought him to his car, I told him,

" You see, she is not better but not worse either from this holiday."

" Oh" he said, " But her doctor did not send me to see her, but to see how you were coping with her all that time. "

Then I told him about that heart attac and he said, the doctor, a lady, had been afraid of that.

John and I had a heart to heart talk the next morning. As I had been told that I would be an invalid for the rest of my life, I agreed with John , that I should retire from the business.

John paid me half the value of the assets , there is no good-will in a painting and renovation business, and together we kept the work shops that brought in rent. With the rent and the money john paid out to me securely invested, Nel and I could cope.

John said that if ever I was able to work again , I was welcome to work as many hours as I wanted for a good hourly rate.

I went to my local doctor and gave him the letter I got from the heart specialist in Holland. He asked me if I was willing to spend a day with the heart foundation. A research institution into heart sicknesses. I agreed of course.

The morning hours were spent with social workers who probed into my past from babyhood on. In the afternoon an intensive physical examination was done by a specialist.

When I was dressing he said,

" Forget what the doctor in Holland has said about being an invalid. The best you can do is to start work again without overdoing it "

That was exactly what I wanted. I started now as an employee in my own business. First one day a week in which John and I discussed several aspects of the business, but it did not take long before I was working full time. It suited me to work as an employee. John did not want me as a partner. It suited him the way he was going and I did not want to start another business with the possibility that one day I could get another attack.

After some years however, when John's eldest son joined the business I taught him how to estimate and started to take it more easy. Wednesday's afternoons I took off for painting lessons from Molly Johnston. Later I extended the weekends by taking off Fridays,

It is clear, that by working short weeks and taking off now and again a week for a little holiday beside the four weeks we closed starting with the Christmas^S week, you cannot become rich. I was not really interested in money for the sake of it. What I wanted was security. As soon as I got that I did not have the urgency to earn more. I really do not understand Mr Bond and his likes for wanting another million and another million long after they have obtained security for theirselves and their families. They are not lazy rich people. They are hardworking rich people maybe working sixteen hours per day. Mr Bond takes a prominent position in the Australian Community. He is often admired, envied, despised and is a subject of conversation. The people who admire him say, " Look how many people he gives employment to. That is not rue at all . He did not create companies, he bought companies where the people already were employed. On the contrary, after having bought a company the first thing he does is to look at how many people he can sack without damaging the company too much.

CHAPTER 16.

One day in 1967 I was visited by the chairman of the Netherland Society in the Sutherland Shire. He was a medical doctor. He told me that he was leaving Australia for an unknown time to study in England and Holland. He wanted to propose me as his successor as chairman of the 'Dutch Club ".

I didn't think that I was the right man for it and said "No thank you, rather not."

He accepted my decision but I had to promise him to come to a meeting at his house together with other people to discuss the future of the Dutch Club.

While we were talking his wife rang that there was a call from a patient he had to attend to.

The meeting came a week later and I accepted the position as hon. secretary. As such I was elected at the next general meeting.

I had that job only for a very short time. At the dinner of the society I met a couple of which the woman had been an office secretary. I persuaded her to take over my job, which she did extremely well for about twelve years

In the time I was secretary I brought new life to our club magazine 'THE CLUBPOST' and of this paper I was the editor for twelve years, sometime writing under three different pseudoniems to fill a decent number of pages.

At one of the committee meetings in 1969, I brought up the idea of establishing a retirement village. With the exception of the hon. Secretary and the treasurer, both ladies, the committee members were not very enthusiastic, but they didn't vote against it. In the next Clup Post I wrote (translated)

Once will come the time, that age creeps up on us. A time in which we still hope to be healthy and enjoy our years in retirement. Then the time may come that we have enough of mowing the lawn and do all other things that has to be done to keep house and garden in good shape. Then we want our leisure, now is the time to plan for it. To plan for a retirement Village where we can speak our language with each other and with the staff if needed.

In the following months we had one of my sisters with her husband as guest. They planned to travel back on the 23rd of March 1970. We decided once more to go for a long holiday in Europe and to travel back to Holland in the same ship as they were sailing. I wrote to a dealer in motor caravans in London and asked for a brochure and conditions. We paid a deposit and put the balance of the cost price in a branch of my Australian bank in London. We made all sorts of travel plans and I wrote to several consulates from European countries, asking for information of what to see and what to do in their countries.

I received two large carton boxes full of papers. We were so busy in that time not only with my work and the travel plans, but also showing my relatives something of Australia, so that I had little time to work on my plan for a retirement village.

The secretary of our Dutch Society wrote a reference for me to show to the administrators of retirement houses in Holland to see how they did it there.

Finally we boarded THE AUSTRALIS, the ship that would take us to Southampton. The ship was apparently old and therefore the cabins were roomier than the cabins on the liners built later. It had just been completely overhauled and beautifully decorated. Floor coverings, curtains, door furniture, it was all in excellent taste.

Something spoiled the trip for us and certainly for my sister and husband. The latter had a heart attack while we were sailing between Sydney and Auckland. The ship's doctor did not want the responsibility of looking after him and insisted that he should go to a hospital in Auckland.

The ship was hardly at its berth when our son Wim came aboard. He was in Auckland to address conference at the University there. He arranged board for my sister for the time that my brother-in-law was in the hospital. When recovered they flew back and where there before us. We visited him there in a hospital. He had another attack and passed away soon after.

This time that we sailed to Europe, the Sue canal was closed, and therefore we travelled by different routes to and from Europe.

The itenery was; Sydney-Auckland-Suva-Los Angelos, then through the Panama Canal to New York and from there to Southampton.

In Southampton Gijs met us with a large hire car instead of his own little one to take us to his place. At that time Gijs was living in London. Together we picked up the motor caravan and tried it out on the London roads. It was a brand new vehicle but after driving about half an hour we found that the brakes had stopped working. Slowly and carefully and using the hand brake we crept back to the dealer's where we had to leave the car for repair. We picked it up two days later.

In the mean time Gijs showed us something of London where he had been lived for a year.

Gijs went with us for the first three weeks of our travels to Belgium-France-Spain and Italy, leaving us at Milan from where he went back to London.

Nel and I went on. First to a beautiful old town called Sienna. Then to Florence where we spent more than a week. One just cannot get enough of seeing the art treasures of the middle ages.

By day we left our mobile home in the caravan park and went by foot or bus to the town centre. For lunches we avoided trendy restaurants where the Prices went trough the roof and found some places where the common Italian men eat.

We had some damage to the roof of the van. One hot day I parked the caravan onder the shadow of a tree. A partly sawn off branch penetrated the part above the window screen. I fixed it with plastic and glue, but it was an eye sore.

When Nel and I were washing our vehicle, a similar motor caravan drove in and stopped at the office.

" Look Nel," I said, " How nice that caravan looks without that hole in the front. Not a scratch on the whole car. "

When the people passed us we saw that there wasn't a scratch on the rear, no the rear was completely pushed in , half a meter. The glass of the rear door was broken and the door was kept with iron wire. We gave the owners time to settle and later went to them for a chat. ' It was a couple of our age and a very jolly couple it was. They were Australians using his long service leave to travel.

" You have got a nasty dent there at the rear."

" Oh, you mean that little ⁿting at the door ? that's nothing, you should have seen the car a month ago."

" What happened then ?"

" We were in Spain, we did not drive there but went by ferry from England with the car. When we drove off the ferry my wife said, " Bob we need bread for lunch" She had looked up the Spanish word for bread. Suddenly she said, " Look Bob a baker's car. Its going under the viaduct."

I made more speed and followed the baker under the viaduct. On the other side I came out without a roof. I misjudged the height of the viaduct. We just could catch the ferry back to England where we had to wait a fortnight for the repairs to be done.

" And what happened to the rear ?"

" Well, I was backing out somewhere and I did not know that a tree suddenly had grown behind me."

He and his wife roared laughing. The whole thing was a big joke to them. Lucky people, and I was worrying about a two inch hole in our caravan.

When tired of exploring the beauties of Europe in the day time, we had supplied ourselves with books and magazines to read in the evenings. I wrote an article every month for the Club Post and quoted some of the things I had read. Here are some examples:

Kruschev:

While he was speaking to a large audience in Moskou, he was interrupted.

" Where was you, when Stalin committed his cruelties and murders ?"

Kruschev, " Who said that ?. Stand up, where are you ?"

Nobody stood or answered.

Kruschev, " This is your answer, I was where you are now."

From a book by Upton Sinclair.

Wild tribes defend their land with armies, fleets and air fleets, but we Christians trust in the righteousness of God."

From a Swedish Diplomat,

It is amazing with how little wisdom the world is ruled.

Isaiah.

They shall build houses and live in them. They shall plant vineyards and eat there food. They shall not build and another inhabit. They shall not plant and another eat.....

Today he would be called a bloody communist.

We travelled Europe for about six months. A motor caravan is an ideal vehicle to see something of the world. We could not have afforded to sleep in hotels or motels and eat in restaurants all the time.

I often thought about a name for our village to be. It had to be a name with a bit of sentimental value and a little bit of nostalgia.

The queen of the Netherlands, Juliana, was well known for her feelings for the social welfare of the population, and as we needed the sympathy and the money of the Dutch immigrants, I thought of giving it the name JULIANA VILLAGE, subject of course of the approval of the club members.

A former Dutch Prime Minister, Dr Willem Drees, by many remembered as 'father Drees', because it was under his Prime Ministership that the age pension, without means or asset test, became law, told,

"Once when he came to the queen with the Defence Budget, she said,

"What a pity we can't use this money to diminish the housing shortage."

CHAPTER 17.

On 14th November 1972, our Association was officially recognised by the Corporate Affairs Commission. as ' THE JULIANA VILLAGE ASSOCIATION LIMITED'. In that year I retired totally from business. I spend most of my time on the future Village. I had worked out that I financially could afford it. I was encouraged by the then Prime Minister of Australia, Gough Whitlam. He wanted the age pension the same for Australian aged as in most Western countries. He wanted to work carefully and bring this in, over a periode of five years.

He started to give people 70 years old the full age pension, free of any test. The next year he would do that for people of 69 etc, until it stopped at sixty five. I had worked out that I would get the pension when I was sixty six years old. I retired when I was sixty one, using some of my investments to live from.

I did not know that Whitlam would be kicked out and that Frazer would abolish the scheme, with the exception of people already seventy years old. The amount was frozen however on the level when it was introduced. After the Frazer Government the Hawke government came in and put in the assets test, so that now even the quality of your furniture affects the pension.

During our holiday in Europe I visited several retirement villages in the Netherlands. Without exception we were welcome everywhere. All the administrators, managers, matrons, whatever the name of their position, were proud to show us the premises.

And really they could be proud. A retirement complex that we visited in 1965 because an aunt of Nel lived there, built, just after the war, was when we came there in 1970 already demolished and rebuilt, up to date, with the requirements of the time. I learned a lot how to built and to run a village and also what not to do.

Later back in Australia I visited many more retirement villages and went to seminars where the subject of age was discussed. From all that I got a picture of how a retirement village should work, how large it should be made to be feasible, and what to avoid.

For instance the very democratic board of a retirement village in the south of Holland, had opened its leisure centre for the neighbourhood. They did this to bring the elderly out of their element and to mix them with young people. Very idealistic but it worked out the th elderly could hardly find an empty chair, and that extra staff had to be engaged to clean the hall. We were just there when the signs went up to tell the neighbours that as from this moment the centre was for the residents and their relatives only.

Another example of what not to do was;

The chairman of a board of directors of another retirement complex whispered in my ear,

" never take a nurse as Matron, they are too bossy and they regard the residents too much as patients."

I asked him what sort of person he recommended as head of a retirement village.

" Well" he said, " We are very satisfied with our head now, she is a doctor in philosophy, she's very democratic."

" What do you mean with democratic?"

" Well , for instance she changed the whole way of seating in the diningroom. Mix, is her principle, We have a professor here, who sat in the diningroom with a medical doctor at the same table. She changed that, That is the clique mentality she said, she put the doctor somewhere else and put a bricklayer at the professor's table. No class differences you see."

It was not up to me to criticize or to argue, so I didn't say anything, I thought, " If we have our village we'll leave it to the residents to choose their own table company."

What happened in Holland, and never here in Australia, was that in religious centres, especially the nuns, the first thing they showed us was the Chapel, sometimes with an open coffin, with an ex-resident on show.

In a very large retirement centre in the middle of Holland, I had a conversation with one of the male residents. The house had a variety of activities to keep the residents occupied, such as painting lessons, woodcarving, clay modelling, a billiard room, a table tennis room and a card room.

I asked the man if he took part in many of these activities.

" Me ?, he said. " I'm not crazy, I've worked my whole life , I refuse to do anything. I have no complaints about the house, the food is excellent, the staff are all darlings, but I don't want to be kept busy like in a kindergarten. I'm not the only one who thinks so. A couple of weeks ago the directors asked for volunteers to do some weeding in the garden because the gardener could not do it all on its own.

On Saturday morning, the director , who is not a young man himself, had donned an overall and stood in the garden pulling weeds. not one resident was there to give him a hand. Half the occupants stood behind their windows admiring his work."

I asked the man, " How do you fill your days if you do not have any hobbies ?"

"Oh," he said. I'm a member of the funeral committee. I've already helped thirty of us towards eternity "

I think that he was pulling my leg all the time.

Driving through the really beautiful country of the Netherlands, where you can practically put a spirit level to see that it is really flat, and where a large part of the country is below sea level, and where the sea is kept out by dykes, I thought of a story I heard from another Dutch migrant. He was one of a group of men, coming as immigrants to Australia, who had left their families in Holland for the time being.

When they left the ocean liner in Sydney, they were put on a train to Bathurst, where a migrant camp was situated. As the train approached Katoomba, in the middle of the night, one man yelled out, " Mountains, wake up Mountains, "

and all men hurried to the windows to see the Blue Mountains. They are not even very high, except for Dutchmen. That was in 1950, but that is different now. Every family in West Europe has at least one car to bring them through the whole of Europe in their five weeks' holiday. They have seen the Alps. The teenagers prefer to use their pushbikes, with rucksack and tent to explore their own country than to race with mum and dad through Europe.

" Oh no mum, not Italy again."

Our holiday came to an end. We crossed the North Sea with our campervan on the car ferry and drove to London. We brought the van back to the dealer and stayed at Gijs' place for a couple of weeks.

Gijs had also been a year in Holland and there he got the titel part in a television play " The Peeping Tom."

The family of course was glued to their television sets. One of my sisters wrote to me,

" Why did they give him such a nasty person to play, he is such a nice boy."

Gijs took us to Southampton when the time came to go back to Australia. This was the fifth time that we were to cross the oceans. Nel was never affected by sea sickness and I was not a bad saylor either, except that for the first twenty four hours at sea I was always sick.

If you have never been seasick count yourself lucky, it is horrible.

This time however I knew what to do. Once on board I went straight to the doctor and asked for anti-seasick pills. I took them at nine o'clock in the evening and went to bed.

I never slept better in my life and had not been sick at all.

No wunder really, because when I came on deck I saw that the ship was still laying at the same place as when we boarded. Something had hold up our departure.

On board you met all sorts of people. I played quoits with a retired bank manager and Nel found a card group.

We also met a Dutch migrant family who were migrating for the second time to Australia. After they were here the first time the man found many faults with the country and wanted to go back to Holland. There he found out that Holland wasn't to his liking either, and now they were on their way for the second time to Australia. A family of six, man, wife and four children. Their money had been spent on travelling and from their last pennies they had bought a tent to put up on a camping ground to live in.

Some people, luckily a small percentage, should never have emigrated in the first place. They do not migrate for positive reasons but for negative reasons, and then soon find things to complain about in their new country. They never settle. They finish up as poor as church mice and blame others for it. They are really people to be pitied. This man was not lazy, he just could not plan his life. I felt sorry for his wife who was the mousey type with not much to say about anything.

CHAPTER 18.

In the Netherlands, beside the Christmas celebration there is on the fifth of December an other celebration and that is the birthday of St Nicolaes, a Saint who looks after seaman and children and who is now in the black book of the Vatican. The Netherland's society in the Sutherland Shire organised every year a ball night on that day.

At the Sint Nicolaes ball in 1969 , the year before we went on holiday with the motor caravan, I announced the club's plans for a retirement village. There was applause and the first donations came in, a total of forty seven dollars.

From that start, and twenty years hard labour, has grown a retirement village of which the buildings are now insured for five million dollars, and where one hundred and four residents live in 87 units. One third of the residents are from Dutch origin.

At the annual general meeting in 1970, when I was in Europe a steering committee was formed of which they had made me chairman in my absence.

When I came back the capital had grown to forty seven dollars and fourteen cents, the latter being interest.

The steering committee was enlarged with a number of talented people and together we were able to open the first part of the village with forty four units in 1980.

It was twenty ninth November 1980 when the Juliana Village was official opened. All Units were already occupied by residents.

An opening day was organised. Four hundred guests were invited, amongst them the Shire President, The Minister for Social Security, The Ambassador of the Netherlands , the Consul General of the Netherlands and many others.

The official function of cutting the ribben would be done by me. The scissors to do this would be handed to me on a black velvet cushion. The lady who would do this had told the organisers that this was her eightieth birthday.

She was a jolly but a naughty lady. When I looked it up I found that she was still one and a half year of her eightied birthday. She admitted that, but she wanted so much to have her photo in the local paper.

The Ambassador sat on the dais with the other officials. They had all given speeches except the Ambassador. When his turn came, the Consul General handed over to him a large and a small packet. Then the Ambassador called me in front of him and told me that the Queen of the Netherlands had bestowed on me a knighthood. ' Knight of the Order of Orange Nassau.'

He also gave me a large photo of the Queen with her signature on it. Then he pinned the Decorations of the Order on my breast.

I was overwhelmed. I did not have the slightest idea of this to happen. In my mind I had prepared a speech to thank all persons for attending the function but nothing about this.

In my words of thanks I said, that this great honour was regarded by me as a symbolic recognition of the work of all of those who had helped to establish the Village.

CHAPTER 19.

The life of one migrant family doesn't give a broad picture of the Rich nor Poor immigrants. Therefore I'll write something about friends and other people I know. I'll use other names of course.

John and Bea,

The couple that cared for us when Nel was in the hospital in 1953.

They came with the first ship load of migrants from Holland in 1949. They came with two daughters both under ten years of age. John was a carpenter and an excellent one. After some days in a hotel in Sydney they bought a quarter acre block in one of the southern suburbs.

For the first months they lived on this in a three foot high tent, until the temporary dwelling, with a workshop for John attached, was built. They built it together. She mixed the concrete for the floor, blue metal, sand and cement, by hand, and John brought it by wheel barrow to the right spot where he dumped it and leveled it off. This took a long time, because John had a job that took him away from early morning untill late afternoon. When John started to built, Bea was his labourer. They avoided an overdraft from the bank and every week from John's wages they bought some building materials.

When the temporary living quarters and John's workshop were finished they moved into it and John installed his woodwork machinery that he had brought with him from Holland and started to make wooden toys.

Bea did the sanding and the spray painting. They bought a second hand panel van and Bea took driving lessons and obtained a licence. When the first batch of toys was finished Bea took them in the van and started selling. She is a very good sales woman and when that batch was sold she had so many orders that John gave notice at his job and started making toys full time. They did well until Christmas, then came a slack time. They got a loan from a building Society and John started to built their house with Bea as his helper.

When money became short, John took a job and Bea finished the sanding and the spray painting of the toys for the next season. Now they worked on the house over the weekends.

When the house was finished a neighbour asked John to build this house for him, and it didn't take long before he employed two carpenters to help him building the houses he got orders for. Bea did most of the negotiation with the customers and did the paper work. In mid-year she went travelling and sold the toys left. She had slept in many motels and had her mind set to own a motel herself. When a suitable block of land came up for sale they bought it and John and his carpenters built the motel. John finished the houses he was working on, and after that, he and Bea ran the motel together.

On the day of the opening the livingroom was full with flowers, but the guestrooms stayed empty. Next day we asked how the business was going, but the answer was the same, no guests. After that we found it embarrassing to ask but we drove past the motel to see if there were any customer's car

This went on for a week at least. It made John very nervous and Bea persuaded him to go with some friends who were going on a fishing weekend.

That same evening we passed the motel, saw plenty cars and the sign ' No Vacancy ' was lit. We went in to congratulate Bea who opened a bottle of champagne. When John came back two days later , he was surprised to see many cars in the parking places. From that time on the business went very well. As time went by the two daughters married, assets increased and before they would be too old to enjoy life they sold the business. They bought a nice house in a trendy area and beside travelling they spent much time on their hobbies.

Neither Rich nor Poor but happy.

Not everybody is a business man or woman. Wise are those who know that for themselves, and do not burn their fingers doing things they should not do. Thus wise is my friend Chris de Leeuw. He came to Australia in 1953 with his wife and a baby in arms. Chris was more than usually good at his work. After a while he started contracting and employed two men, but soon found out that he was better off by working by himself. He had to make the same decision that I had to make in 1957, go back working on your own or grow. I did the latter he stuck to the first. The difference between us was that he liked his work and that I hated it. They own their house, own their caravan take plenty of holidays and enjoy life. Besides being a good craftsman he is also an excellent observer and knows how to write about their travels with a fine subdued sort of humour. His job was his hobby like writing and painting very good aquarelles. Another of his talents is to be a good actor and he was one of the best players in our drama club. Psychologist tell us that the environment wherein we are born , greatly influences the rest of our lives. I think that this is so to a large degree. I think Chris intelligence was such that he would have made a success of every profession he had chosen. His father was an excellent tradesman and Chris became one also. If he had been born in a family where the children went to an University maybe he would have been an excellent medical man. Would he have been happier ? That's the question. Money for him and his wife is a medium to live securally and not just to multiply. They are not poor but will never be rich.

Bert van der Steen and his wife came with their two children to Australia when he was already in his mid forties. He came into my employ the first day that he

arrived in Australia, and he was long there after he had had his long service leave, in which time he went to the Netherlands to see the relatives. He was a steady and reliable worker. When I started my partnership with John he came with me and we made him foreman on one of the jobs. He accepted that job reluctantly as he didn't feel himself the 'bossy' type, looking around to see if the other men are working. It did not take long for him to find out the way to get a good days work from the staff under his guidance without being 'bossy'.

His house is paid off. Their children have University degrees, He drives a sturdy car, are happy with each other and with their children and grandchildren. They are not poor and will never be rich.

Lucy and Pim,

He is a hardworking pastrycook. She is a housewife and does all sort of jobs beside, paid or voluntary. She does a lot of fine social work and one day might become a member of the board of Juliana Village. Pim now has an executive job with the company where he was employed. He never watches the clock. Poor ?, certainly not, Rich ? Only if they win the jackpot in Lotto. Happy in Australia they are.

Bill and Trudy.

Bill is now retired from a large company where he was a salesman. Trudy long ago gave up her waitressing job. They travelled all over Australia and Europe in their caravan.

They have a very good marriage and both have a sense of humour. He was also one of the best actors in our drama club, especially in plays for the children, and it was a pity that he had to give it up. There was a reason for it. Trudy noticed that by spending too much time in the company of Dutch friends his English suffered. That was not good for his job as a representative. It was wise from Trudy to point that out to him, but it was a big loss for the theater group. The children adored him and so did their mothers and their grandmothers.

Bill was physically a special specimen of the human race. When we gave him his first stage part of a man of about twenty, we were amazed to learn that he was forty. Now that he is over sixty five he looks forty. It must be in the family. One day I met him with his daughter. I thought that she was a teenager, but she told me that it was her birthday and that she was thirty now.

Of course, there are also immigrants who live a less colourful life. Two of my acquaintances got jobs as lower civil service workers soon after they came to Australia. They did that until they retired at the age of sixty five. A boring life as far as I can see and no initiative required.

Their wives helped by taking jobs when the children were at school. Unhappy in Australia they were not. They obliged the Government by forbidding their children to speak Dutch. They had a secure feeling from the first day when they received the Government's pay envelope. They were reliable at their jobs. Came always on time and left on time. They never had the urge to earn something extra in their free time. They were never poor and never tried to become rich.

I've also some friends who do not fall under the category Rich nor Poor, They became rich, full stop. They started with not much money, but with excellent brains and the will to work hard. Of course they have good houses. They drive good, but not showy cars. They do not show their wealth around like peacocks. They are still careful with their money for themselves but not for others. They are happy in Australia.

Other Dutch immigrants I know are plumbers, electricians, shop assistants, carpenters, bricklayers, salesmen, metal workers, They are all paying off their houses or have already done so. Often their children obtain tertiary educations.

CHAPTER 20.

Time for another holiday, the Great Barrier Reef. We bought a tourist packet deal. We flew to Brisbane in a Jumbo, and from there to Mackay in a smaller plane. In Mackay we moved over in a five seater including the pilot. He was an ex K.L.M. flyer, who wanted rather to be more at home with his wife and children, than all over the world. Therefore he had chosen this beautiful area of Australia and was home every evening. During the day he ferried passengers to the Coral Reef islands. Not only our luggage was weighted, but we were also, to make sure that the plane wasn't over loaded. The other two passengers were a retired American General with his wife. He was a nice man just like a normal human being. He even shook hands with us

I had never shaken hands with a general, not even when I was in the army as a private, and thus a colleague. When I think back I'm not even sure that I ever saw a life general before.

We had a marvellous time on Lindeman Island. Every day a cruiser came to take us to other islands or to the underwater observatory. We also went in a glass bottomed dingy and saw the colourful fish under us. We were given special shoes to step overboard and walk on the reef it self. I don't want to write about the food on Lindeman Island. It took weeks to lose weight again.

The coral moves with the waves and looks woolly and soft, but it is rock hard and not for bare feet. On the Island we were warned not to sit under cocos palms. Now and again a cocos nut falls down and from a great hight can give you a real headache.

Whithout forming a ghetto and blending in very well with the other members of the Multicultural Society, named Australia, there is still a strong although nearly invisible tie between the Dutch born.

They value some traditions highly and not wanting to be too dependant on the Australian community, they try to look after themselves. This resulted in Juliana Village in Sydney, Beatrix village in Melbourne and other retirement associations in other towns which have not built yet. In Sydney land has been bought for a second village. THE ABEL TASMAN VILLAGE.

Also in other ways are the Dutch looking after their own. In the first world war, when Dutch sailors came to Australia for a spell, they were looked after by Dutch settlers