

Correspondence from Walter Baumgartel, Travellers Rest, Kisoro, to Charles Pitman, London, 1961-1963¹



Introduction

Charles Robert Senhouse Pitman, 1890-1975, was Chief Game Warden, Uganda Protectorate, 1925-50. Walter Baumgartel, 1902-1997, owned of the Travellers Rest Hotel, Kisoro, 1955-1969, was honorary game warden and ran gorilla tours with Reuben Rwazangire as chief guide. The hotel was a base for many international primatologists and other researchers of the flora and fauna of the Virunga Mountains. He is known for his English and much translated book: *Up among the Mountain Gorillas*. 1976²

The letters cover gorilla behavior; problems caused by a black leopard that killed gorillas; expansion of native cultivation and cattle grazing; and the difficulties regarding the transition from colony to independence as a hotel owner. The Gorilla Sanctuary is now Mgahinga NP and Kayonza Forest is now Bwindi Impenetrable NP. The Albert NP originally covered both Rwanda and DR Congo; they are now Volcanoes NP and Virunga NP respectively.

Letters

12th January, 1961

Some years ago, when reading your two most valuable 'Game Warden' books borrowed from the Game Dept. in Entebbe, I thought of writing to you, but somehow I never did. Of course, the chapters on the Kayonza Gorillas were of particular interest to me and I made notes on some points in which our observations differ. Unfortunately, I lost the notes and cannot remember now what they were about. Were your books not out of print and difficult to obtain, I would have acquired them, for I collect everything

¹ Typed correspondence on hotel aerogrammes; Pitman Collection, C 82, Natural History Museum, London, UK. The written comments are by Pitman, date received and subject Salutations are omitted.

² An obituary: https://www.berggorilla.org/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/journal/journal_en/gorilla-journal-16-english.pdf

that has been written on gorilla. Should you by any chance know of a second hand copies being available at a reasonable price somewhere, please let me know.

However, this is not the main reason I am writing to you; I require some information which only you can give.

I am preparing an English version of my German book, *König in Gorilland* which was recently published by the Franckh'sche Verlagshandlung (Kosmos) in Stuttgart. Having had no literature and reference books at my disposal when writing the book, depending only on articles and such unreliable sources, it probably contains some inaccuracies and unjust statements which I should like to rectify in the new version.

There is the case of Martin and Osa Johnson which worries me a little. Some years ago the American magazine *Holiday* brought out an article by Dan Mannix on Gorilla which was really an interview with you. Mannix got some things entirely wrong – he even did not know the geography of the country he was writing about – and so I don't trust him. Speaking of brushfires, when the females put their young in the tops of trees, he quotes you as saying “A man and his wife who were famous as wild-animal photographers discovered this fact and started a forest fire to get pictures of the young. They got the pictures but if I'd ever caught them...” Am I wrong in presuming that you had Martin and Osa Johnson in mind? And, if so, where actually did they start the fire? Your “if I'd ever caught them” sounds as if it happened in Uganda. Or did Mannix perhaps misunderstand you? The matter is not of great importance but I would like to know the facts.

I have a further question to ask: Do you know of chimpanzee having ever been found on our three volcanoes? We know the area pretty well and have never come across any evidence of their presence. Dr Haddow, in an article some years ago, said that he had heard a chimpanzee while camping on Mgahinga. We had correspondence about it and he accepted my assurance that he must have heard gorilla. Now I received a letter from the German explorer Adolf Friedrich Herzog zu Mecklenburg who maintained that the ape he shot in 1907 on Mgahinga was classified by Professor Matschie as ‘Tschege’, belonging to the chimpanzee family. I know of chimps living the Nyamulagira-Niragongo area and in the lower forests of Mikeno, I believe it is Scheinfurth's Chimpanzee, but the Duke's ‘Tschege’, as described by him seems to be a different species altogether. An adult male, 1.42 m in height, it had no resemblance to the lowland gorilla in West Africa, the Duke says, and it almost sounds, as if Matschie, on the strength of the new material, changed his mind and re-classified also Beringe's specimen as ‘Tschege’ which, some years earlier, he had called *Gorilla gorilla berengei*. Can you shed any light on the confusion? There is no

longer any doubt that our apes are gorillas and that such differences as do exist between the various types are only due to environmental influences.

I hope you don't mind that I bother you with my problems and your help in solving them would be much appreciated.

29th January 1961

I thank you very much for your letter, containing such to me valuable information, and also for sending me the only copy of your paper on the Gorillas of the Kayonza region. This will be returned to you in a couple of days, by registered second-class airmail. I shall include the article by Dan Mannix which might amuse you. Though it is rather tattered it is still readable and I should be grateful to have it returned to me. When reading this article you might remember whether you met the man or not; it would interest me to know whether the interview is genuine or a journalistic invention. It made me suspicious from the start that he connects you with the wrong three volcanoes, and there are many other inaccuracies in this article. It relieves my conscience that, at least, the story of the Johnsons making a brushfire is true; so I did not wrong them in my book, as I was blamed to have done by an East-German University Professor. Your story of King Albert ordering the equipment of the British party to be confiscated, though the administrator had declared them innocent of killing the 17 adult males was new to me. I knew of various people, like the Foster brothers, having seen and even captured gorillas in our volcanoes, but the serious study of gorilla behaviour and ecology has only started some years ago, first by Rosalie Osborn and then by Jill Donsisthorpe, followed by some Japanese scientists and the two American Zoologists, Prof Emlen and Mr Schaller. Schaller lived for about 4 year practically with the gorillas in the Karisimbi-Mikeno region, sleeping near them and sitting on the same tree with them and the results of his observations are quite astounding. Neither he, nor the two English girls and I have ever gone up into the forests armed and we have been as close as 6-7 feet from a raging male. The Japanese almost stepped on a sleeping one and once a male jumped on top of my tracker with one of the Japanese, of course also unarmed, standing just behind him. Some months ago my guide Reuben was attacked by an apparently hysterical female (quite unusual) while the old male was watching the performance from nearby without interfering. The young lady tried to strangle Reuben with both her hands around his neck, he hit her with his panga, and she in return, bit him in the right hand. Falling on his back he then succeeded in kicking her with his foot back into the bush. A few days later she tried it a second time, but Reuben, now wise, did not give her a chance. This female was one of 5 widows of a male who had recently died of gastro-enteritis and the widows had joined a family of three – father mother and child – 12 days after the loss of her husband and protector. The dead male, by the way, was the father of Little Reuben, now at Regent's Park Zoo. Maybe, the

youngish widow was not satisfied with the new arrangement and had to have some outlet for her temper, for females, as a rule, are very timid.

It will interest you to hear that your friend Kenneth Carr is also a great friend of mine. He lives on the slopes of Karisimbi in Ruanda, where he has a pyrethrum plantation; his other plantations in the Congo must be considered lost. He often visits me and always brings a bottle of French Red Wine, to make up for the 14 gorillas he shot in 1921 for Prince William of Sweden, as he says. He is still extremely fit and just got himself a prospecting licence for Ankole, As for the Wambutte of the Kayonza region, our local people – the Batwa and Bahutu – maintain that the Wambutte are Batwa and not true pygmies and our Batwa, in their songs and ballads, always call themselves ‘Wambutti’, and they definitely are only pygmoids but not pygmies.

Larger gorilla groups have more than one adult male and they seem to be polygamous. Schaller, in the Karisimbi area, observed a mating scene between a female and a young outsider, a bachelor, who lived alone and joined the troop only temporarily. The ‘old one’ was sitting nearby and did not take the slightest interest in one of his wives having fun with an outsider. Our largest group over here consists of 18 members, In Schaller’s region there were many troops of 20 and more, one even over 30. Therefore, groups of more than 2 dozen, abnormal in the Kayonza forest and in our Sanctuary, in the Mikeno-Karisimbi area they are rather the rule than the exception.

We have never seen a communal bed in our area, our gorillas sleep always alone, apart from mother sharing her bed with an infant.

Most of the beds here are on the ground or, in the bamboo, 10-15 feet above the ground, but we have quite a number of nests high up in the trees. In the Kayonza forests where on first sight it appears that all nests are in trees, many have been found – on the ground. Dr Niels Bolwig of Makerere wrote a paper on nest building, I shall ask him to send you a copy. All my friends who spend days or weeks in the Kayonza Forest found it difficult to locate the animals but once tracked, they could observe them for hours. They found the Wambutte excellent trackers, but on approaching gorilla they always made so much noise that the animals often melted away. Sometimes the Wambutte lose the direction and Schaller one night got only back to his camp with the help of his compass. This letter is rather disjointed, but I have the house full of Congo refugees and am constantly interrupted.

2nd June 1961

I was very happy to receive the spare copy of your gorilla paper which makes an essential addition to my literature. Many, many thanks for sending it.

As you wish me to report anything special in connection with our gorillas I will let you know the following.

In February my guide Rueben found two dead gorillas within three days on the slopes of Muhavura above my saddle camp. Both were killed by a leopard and Rueben surprised him 3 times over his prey. The first victim, a youngish male, had been taken by surprise, the leopard jumping at him while he was still in his nest. They rolled together for about 50 yards, then the leopard left the dead body lying and killed a red duiker which happened to be near, The duiker was still breathing when Reuben came to the spot. This first gorilla body could be preserved by injection and handed over to the Medical School Kampala in perfect condition, just as he had found it. The second corpse, of a young female, was half eaten, all intestines and sexual organs were missing, but rump, arms, head and shoulders were untouched. The leopard, it seems, goes first for the groin, for both bodies showed the same injuries, and the doctors maintain they result in almost instant death. This, I believe is the first time that the story of leopard killing gorilla has been proved. However, our leopard is probably an exception like, say, a man-eating lion. In September last year we found a gorilla skeleton with some remnants of putrid flesh on it. We first thought that the animal had died a natural death and that the corpse had been eaten by hyena. I am now inclined to believe that this gorilla had also been a victim of the same killer. The surviving members of this troop 4 females and infant – escaped down into the Ruanda sector and the leopard spoor indicated he had followed them. I feared for those unprotected females and their child, but to my relief they returned some weeks later with another troop, they had joined in Ruanda, now forming a new unit of 1 very powerful silverback male., 8 females and 2 infants. This troop is the only one in the whole area we know of and we have seen and observed them repeatedly very high up on Muhavura. We have been trying for months to shoot or trap the gorilla-killer, but he has never been seen again on our side. The Belgian Park authorities have so far taken no steps to destroy the leopard and the Game Dept.'s suggestion of combined action has, as far as I know, met with no response from the Belgian Game Warden in Ruanda. Dr Verschuren, the biologist of the park and now in Brussels, has taken up our cause with the President but without success. The Belgians, as you know, reject human interference in the course of nature and so leopard can exterminate the whole population unhindered, unless he comes one day to the wrong address and will be killed by a strong and clever gorilla. In the past – we know of 39 different individuals – our gorillas wandered freely from one side to the other, but no signs of movement have been observed for almost a year. It is therefore quite possible that the family of 11, I mentioned, is the only one left on both sides. I am very anxious to investigate the status of the gorillas in the Ruanda part, but without Belgian permission or co-operation this cannot be done. Should it later be established that there really is only the

one troop left I would not hesitate in blaming these Belgian paragons of Wildlife Protection publicly for the disappearance of our gorillas.

A further serious threat to the gorilla's survival is the encroaching native cultivation on our side. The peasants take now possession of the strip of gorilla land which was ceded to them by Sir Andrew Cohen. There is now little left of the lower forest which till recently was their best feeding area. Once given, the land cannot be taken back again from the people and, in any case, it would now be too late. The days of our gorillas are therefore counted and one can only hope that those in the remoter impenetrable Kayonza region will survive a little longer. In the Congo they are more numerous than formerly believed; the American zoologists Emlen and Schaller made a survey last year and suggest an estimate between 3000 and 15000 Mountain Gorillas in all. Schaller who has done magnificent work in the Karisimbi-Mikeno region is now writing up his notes which will be published next year. They will be the most thorough and authoritative studies on Gorilla behaviour and ecology ever been undertaken.

The Albert National Park under the new Congolese conservateur is still intact, but for how long!? Funds are short. There is now a serious outbreak of rabies across this border and nothing is being done by their government to check it. We, too, have had some fatal cases, but all our dogs have been vaccinated and a number shot. The situation in the Congo is hopeless and we expect serious trouble and renewed bloodshed in Ruanda later in the year, when U.N. will try to bring the Watutsi back.

Your friend Kenneth Carr still lives over there but I have not seen him for a long time.

23rd July 1961

Thanks for your letter of June 16th. Of course, I have no objection to using parts of my previous letter to you for an article in *Oryx*. I only hope that it is not an attack against the Belgians which would be a premature accusation. For meanwhile I have heard from the Game Dept. that they received the following reply from M de Leyn, the Conservateur of the Ruanda Parks:

“To my regret I must inform you that I have no recent or accurate information about the gorilla population on the Virunga Mountains. It is however possible to confirm to you that large herds of cattle are continuing to enter the area of the Albert National Park in the Ruanda sectors and are putting in danger the conservation of the Gorilla habitat. I am intending shortly to make a prolonged survey of the situation in the Virunga Mountains and I will send you details of my observations on return from this trip. I can assure you that I am very worried about the situation in the volcano area and that it is occupying a great deal of my time. I wish to express my great desire to collaborate with the Uganda Game Dept. in this matter and any suggestions from you will be most favourably received.”

I don't think that M de Leyn has undertaken anything yet, but at least he has agreed to co-operate with us. It seems that the Belgians don't succeed in keeping native cattle out of their parks, which are destroying the gorilla habitat and are a greater danger to their survival than the few human, including myself, who have asked for and always been refused permission to enter these parts. The new African conservateur at Rumangabe, last year with Schaller's help, managed to drive the Watutsi and their herds from the Karisimbi-Mikeno area in no time, which the Belgians had tried for years in vain. Of course, Africans may be more ruthless than Europeans and need not consider political implications, as the Belgians had to do in the Congo and have to do in Ruanda, which is now more or less a self-governing Republic, (though end of August there will be a referendum and new elections held over there under United Nations, which probably will cause changes and renewed bloodshed between Watutsi and Bahutu). So their hands are rather tied at the moment.

We have had 2 gorilla troops on our side recently and quite a few people have seen them. One American Zoologist observed one troop for over 2 hours at the beginning of the month, and he maintained that he saw clearly through his binoculars a Black Leopard stalking a sleeping gorilla male, but the old one woke up in time and both disappeared into the forest. This 'black' leopard is not identical with the gorilla eater, but Reuben reported yesterday that the original killer had returned. The boys went up today and I am anxiously waiting for their report.

Dr Verschuren, the biologist of the former Albert National Park has returned from Europe where he collected a little money for the Park and he is now back again in Rutshuru, He speaks very well of the new black Park authorities (M Anicat at Rumangabo) who have succeeded in keeping the Park intact and he is optimistic as to the future of the Congolese Parks, at least in the Kivu region. He also says that the rumour of the white rhino population in the Garamba Park having been wiped out is not true and that a Belgian Park Warden has recently returned there.

And for the gorillas in the Kayonza region no accurate estimates are available, but 80-100, I should say is a near guess. They are still fairly undisturbed and less in danger of extinction than in the Sanctuary.

I saw Kenneth Carr recently and he is sending you his best regards. He has trouble now in getting payment for his pyrethrum, as the flowers can no longer be processed in the Congo and have to be sent to America. The Congo plant is out of action and, in any case, it would not be safe sending his crops there. They do not get advance payments now and have to wait months for the money coming from America. He is rather pessimistic and talks of leaving Ruanda. But where to go?

Jill Denisthorpe's book (pen name Jill Wordsworth) *Gorilla Mountain* has now been published by Lutterworth Press, London, I received an advance copy today but have not yet read it

My business is still very slack and I had to send half of my African staff home, that is to say, they take unpaid leave in turns, so that each one earns something. This has made me rather unhappy but I had to cut down on expenses drastically, otherwise I would have to close down completely in no time.

11th January 1962

Thanks for your letter to which, owing to the Xmas rush I could not reply sooner. I had heard from Jean Mill that you had not sufficient time to come to Kisoro on your recent visit to East Africa; I had so hoped to meet you and talk gorilla with you,

Quentin Keyne's information is correct: the gorilla-killer is a black leopard, a form which, I believe, is rare and only met in mountainous country. My guide Rueben first called it a 'tiger' and described it as something between lion and leopard. Later he used the native term IKIMIZI which I found in the Duke of Mecklenburg's book *Ins Innerste Afrika*. Reuben saw the creature twice feeding on its kill and an American zoologist observed it clearly through binoculars, stalking a sleeping gorilla who, thank God, woke up in time and disappeared in the bush. The American was quite definite that it had been a leopard and a black one.

The killer has not been seen on our side for many months (only some unusually substantial droppings) and I hear that he is still at large and busy killing gorillas on the Ruanda side. The gorillas have become very scarce on our side, at the present we only know of a family of six whom we see now and then. There should be a troop of twelve as well, but they wandered down into Ruanda some months ago and have not returned.

Reuben recently found skull and bones of a full-grown male gorilla and we managed to collect most of the parts which were distributed all over a clearing. The animal must have been dead for some time, for there was no flesh left on the bones. A similar skeleton was found in September 1960 and I suspect that both animals were victims of the leopard which, of course, cannot be proved. The two dead bodies we found in February 1961 were definitely killed by the leopard, for Rueben surprised the creature in both cases shortly after the kill eating the intestines.

There is no poaching in our Sanctuary, but we do not know what is going on in the Ruanda sector which has never been properly controlled by the Belgians. Some years ago the natives hunted and killed 8 gorillas over there who had destroyed the beehives. I reported the matter to M Micha, but little was done

to punish the culprits. Now the Belgian Game Warden M de Leyn complains that the Bahutu tribesmen are driving their cattle high up into the Gorilla forest and that we can do little to prevent it. Since the ill-advised Sir Andrew Cohen ceded the best part of the gorilla forest to the peasants who now fell trees and plant crops there, the gorillas are driven higher up where the feeding is less good and so I fear that the gorillas will not survive the threat from both sides for any length of time.

I further discovered recently that in the Gorilla Sanctuary only the gorillas are protected and all other animals can be hunted, the scheduled ones against the usual licence, the unprotected ones, such as eatable rats and pigs, unrestricted. Reuben met a party of Batwa hunters armed with spears, bow and arrow and accompanied by their dogs, in the forest and managed to arrest one. A second one was arrested by the police the next day and the dogs were shot. The offenders were taken to the Police in Kabale but had to be discharged as, according to the law, no offence had been committed. The definition of 'hunting' in the game ordinance seems to me absurd, at least as far as its application for the Sanctuary is concerned. Photography is considered as 'hunting' and requires a special permit, but the Batwa and any Dick, Tom and Harry can hunt elephant, buffalo, duiker and pigs up there. To give the Sanctuary a more solid legal status it is planned to make it a District (National) Park which is to afford protection to all the animals, but with independence just round the corner the government has more important matter to deal with.

Schaller has only published a short paper on the Orang-Utan in Sarawak, his gorilla work should be available later this year.

Miss Donisthorpe's book I found disappointing and insipid; she does not really like the gorillas, nor does she like Reuben and there is no warm feeling for the country and the people.

As for the Oxpecker (red-billed tick bird?) I was told that it nests in stone heaps on the fields, but this is all I could find out about it. In Gill's *First Guide to South African Birds* it is said: "Nests in holes in trees or walls, or under rocks; eggs 2 to 4, bluish white spotted and blotched with dark pink". I shall try to find out more about it.

I had many guests over Xmas and New Year and we are still quite busy. But all Uganda-Kenya people, there are hardly any tourists coming to East Africa these days. The next few years will be rather difficult economically; with a large number of Europeans leaving and no foreign visitors it will be a hard struggle to keep afloat. I have no choice but to remain and hope for the best.

Kenneth Carr is with me and is sending you his regards. Things don't look too good in Ruanda and he wants to sit here on the fence for a little while.

21st March 1963

Filing piles of letters I came across one of yours, dated January 22nd 1962 which, I believe, I never answered.

A great deal has happened since then, Uganda has been freed from the imperialistic-colonial yoke and the gorillas have disappeared from the Sanctuary. Not that I suggest that the gorillas have run away from the new rulers, I am rather inclined to believe that the huge black leopard I mentioned to you before has eaten them all. I first thought that the encroaching cultivation on our side – the felling of the lower forest Si Andrew Cohen had ceded to the peasants – was mainly responsible, and also on the Ruanda side the lack of control since the Belgian Game Warden was killed by Watutsi raiders, but since we recently found the remains of another gorilla, undoubtedly killed by the same leopard, I give him the entire blame. We cannot say what damage he has done on the Ruanda side, but as the same gorillas lived on both sides crossing freely over from one to the other which does no longer happen, one can take for granted that there are none left over there either, for well over a year we had only one family of five on and off in our area, they were seldom seen, the last time before Xmas. The last dead one must have been a member of this group and the remaining three or four, I am afraid, must also be written off. Had the Belgians in Brussels been more co-operative and allowed us to hunt the leopard (or joined in our efforts to do so) in their sector, perhaps we would have succeeded in punishing the killer early enough. Eventually the last Belgian Game Ranger (Kagera Park) agreed to help us without permission from Brussels, but before things could be arranged he was shot dead by Watutsi raiders.

The disappearance of our gorillas is a sad loss, not only from the business point of view. Besides being the greatest attraction of my enterprise they were the centre at Travellers Rest and everything turned around them. Thank God, the country around here with the mountains and lakes is so beautiful and unique in many ways to make a visit to Kisoro rewarding without the sensation of meeting the gorillas in the wild. Now, a little too late, they plan to make the Sanctuary into a National Park and promised the licensed bamboo cutters a free hand in the Sabinio forests in return for the surrender of their privileges on Mgahinga. But the Forest Dept, quite rightly objects to having the Sabinio forests destroyed and so things will probably remain as they are. The locals, in their parochial patriotism and distrust of the central government, wanted to have their own Kigezi Park and thought they could make a fortune out of it. They don't know really what a park means and what it would cost to run one. I would have hated working with these narrow, naïve ignoramuses and so I have done my best to talk them out of the scheme. With the gorillas no longer available, nobody will come to a park where he has to struggle up steep mountains to see elephant and buffalo, that is easier done in the other parks from the comfort of the car. And those who

are genuinely interested in climbing the mountains, in flora and fauna, will not wish to pay a high entrance fee.

In general, life in Uganda is not very much different to how it used to be when we were still under the imperialistic-colonial yoke, things seem to work better than expected. Only the insolence of office, I think of the latrine-sniffers and such minor officials who have replaced their white predecessors make life often a calamity. They insist on their British-made rules and regulations..

But the British officials had the courage, understanding and imagination to ignore them when and where justified, e.g. pit latrines have to be 15 feet deep, but in our parts you strike solid lava rock at 10 feet and sooner, nothing short of dangerous blasting will make them any deeper. In the past nobody bothered about the actual depth, now the 'sniffter' drops a stone and thus measures the depth and will not yield an inch of the prescribed 15 feet. Maybe he would, if one offers him a bribe; I am not sure about it and not good at it. One also begins feeling a little lonely with all ones old friends leaving the country for good and often having nobody for to talk to on an equal base.

Have you seen Kenneth Carr who lives now on one of the Channel Islands? His ex-wife, as I hear; is still living on her plantation, but pyrethrum is not a profitable crop these days.

10th June 1963

Thanks for your letter of April 22nd. It will interest you to learn that I have been too pessimistic regarding the disappearance of our gorillas. Two groups have recently been seen – one of 8 and one of 4 – the larger one twice in succession near the top of Muhavura and later lower down, and the second one once in what is left of the lower forest on the Mgahinga slopes. But they do not remain for some time in the same area as they used to in the past, it means they move on after a day or two back to Ruanda.

An encounter is no longer a matter of skilled tracking but just mere luck; if they are on our side we usually find them, at least their last night's beds, and if we don't see traces of them they are, as a rule on the Ruanda side. They can no longer be considered an attraction to visitors nor can they be satisfactorily studied by scientists, but the situation is not quite as hopeless as I thought.

I have no idea about the status of gorilla in the Ruanda sector of the volcanoes, even under the Belgians little was known about that. There is now, I believe, a Ruandese Game Warden at Gabiro, Kagera Park, but so our Game Dept. has not yet succeeded in contacting him (perhaps they have never tried). Maybe the man would be willing to co-operate, though things are rather dead and stale over there.

As far as I know there are still plenty of gorilla in the Congo (Mikeno-Karisimbi sector), where Schaller studied them. He found little traces of them between these mountains and Sabinio, though he walked the whole was through difficult terrain. I do not believe that our gorillas would emigrate in that direction, as it is difficult to get from Sabinio down into the Congo, and furthermore we have seldom seen gorilla in the Sabinio sector on our side. They obviously preferred the slopes of Mgahinga and Muhavura.

I cannot say whether the leopard is still alive, the last skeleton of a gorilla we found about 4 months ago. There were pug marks around the spot leaving no doubt as to the identity of the killer.

Yes, I am often lonely now, having nothing in common with the commercial type of Indians who have now conquered the Congo with corruption and bribery, and who often are the only guests. They spend money and I need it, but as guests I do not appreciate them. In Kabale there are hardly any Europeans left and of the few who have remained so far, some more will leave soon. In the past I had daily somebody from Kabale here on duty or pleasure, I had no difficulty in sending my money by a reliable person to Barclays Bank there. Now I have my deposits often waiting for many days for somebody trustworthy to bank it for me. In many ways one does no longer feel secure and at home here. A number of people have been expelled for criticizing the P.M. or the Government and one must be careful like people, as I imagine it, had to be in Nazi Germany. The Safari Hotel in Arusha has recently been closed by the Government because of "alleged discourtesy to President Sekou Toure of Guinea," and the thought of Kenyatta as P.M. in nearby Kenya frightens me. If I could I would pack up and leave. But I cannot, as I have every cent I own invested here and do not feel like returning to Europe destitute. Human nature is strange; though I am convinced that I shall not remain here, I still work in the garden, removing stones and planting trees, etc., as if I would ever enjoy the results myself. Now I have made up my mind, to discharge most of my shamba boys and the carpenter and not to make any more new cushions and curtains and furniture. Just mark time and hope for a buyer. Business has much improved this year though it is by no means as it ought to be. Last year I thought I had to close down and now I am free of all pressing debts and have repaid my overdraft with Barclays Bank, who caused me much worries and anger last year. Now, when I do no longer need them, they have a Sikh Manager in Kabale who is more accommodating than his Irish predecessor.

The Congo is still a hopeless case, the franc sinks lower and lower, is now 45 francs to 1/- shilling on the black market. The whole country is corrupt and rotten to the core. Africa is a good place to keep away from for the white man, we have no future here.

13th September 1963

Thanks for your letter of June 16th

Regarding the 'Black Leopard', I am not sure whether it is only a darkish spotted one or a melanistic specimen. My guide Reuben first called it a 'Tiger', he described it as a creature between Lion and leopard! It seemed to be nothing particularly unusual to him, I had the impression that he knew of such creatures' existence which indicates the darkly spotted leopard which, as you say, is fairly common in the volcanic region.

However, a zoologist, Prof Dale Zimmerman of Silver City – New Mexico, reports in my book³ on July 3rd 1961 that he saw a black leopard appearing below the gorillas in full view during the last few minutes, stalking a sleeping gorilla, I, personally, had only a fleeting glance of the killer and am not prepared to commit myself as to its colour; all I can safely say is that it was dark and looked black to me.

Last week a member of Dr Coolidge's party (who visited Ruindi Camp, Albert Park) reported that he saw "a big black leopard, 15-20 feet away, disappearing quickly in the forest". The man, I cannot decipher his name, is an American Game Preservation expert (something like Dr Ruhle, Washington) and he seemed to know what he was talking about. I had hoped that the black killer had disappeared for ever and his reappearance rather upsets me. I fear he will kill off one by one the few remaining gorillas, of whom there are only two groups known. One of which we have not seen for some time and of 4 plus baby we encounter on and off in the Mgahinga region, usually down the Ruanda side.

The future of Wildlife in Africa? It seems that natives have come at last to understand the value of their game, the way how the Albert Park in the Congo has been kept intact at least is an encouraging sign. As for our gorilla sanctuary our authorities cannot quite make up their mind whether it should be a National Park under the Central Government or a parochial affair under the Kigezi local Government. Some wise guys here think they can make money out of it and simply won't see that it would cost them money and require some investment to get running. And with hardly any gorilla left, it would be wash out anyway. The Game Dept, who suggested the idea of making the Sanctuary a National Park, promised the licenced bamboo cutters (basket makers) and others a free hand in the Sabinio area, if they would give up their rights in the Mgahinga-Muhavura area, but they did so without asking the Forest Dept. This Dept. now quite rightly objects to letting the natives denude the Sabinio area, where it was found necessary to plant trees recently to save the forests.

³ Hotel visitor's book

My business has much improved and we have been very busy during the last 2 months. I am out of my worst troubles, but lack the funds for building more rooms, which are urgently required, as I must take the last of my huts down.

In a hurry and without perusing the letter and correct it I am sending you my best regards.