

THE STORY OF HERITAGE

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THE STORY OF HERITAGE

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INTRODUCTION

New members to HERITAGE, on their acceptance, often show an interest in how and when our club was founded. When told that the year of the club's birth was 1941 they are generally, with good reason, incredulous that at a time when Britain was at war fighting for her very existence, someone should even consider forming a naturist club.

Although brief articles in post-war naturist magazines had outlined the club's birth pangs, no-one had since attempted to chronicle it's history.

However, early in 1976 the management committee were discussing preparations for celebrating the club's 35th anniversary and Reg Preston, the Chairman, a member for some 20 years, many of which had been served on the committee, thought it would be a worthwhile venture to write the club history and have it printed in an issue of **Sundial** to coincide with the celebrations.

John C. (John and Sally) a former chairman and committee member since the late forties, produced many documents including minutes of meetings, correspondence etc. in addition to articles written by Roy Gill and John Rowlinson. These documents had been carefully preserved by John and as Reg sifted through them he discovered that the story which was unfolding was incredibly absorbing.

He read and re-read many times and then commenced writing, soon, the four pages or so he had envisaged for **Sundial** were quickly outstripped.

He stayed up after work late at night, writing, reading, re-writing - and slowly the number of pages mounted. His research carried him even beyond the available club documents, for example visits to his public library to check on the legal implications of the club's first proposed constitution and the issue of Trusteeship. Reg was at once filled with admiration for those early pioneers and fascinated by the events that led to the vital foundation of **HERITAGE** as a Members Club. Fortunately he (and I) was able to call upon the memory of Mary (Roy's wife) who was at that time our President and who had been so closely associated with the running of **Heritage** throughout those 35 years.

Betty, Reg's wife, recalls that during this period she had given up all expectation of him coming to bed at all, let alone at a reasonable hour.

Eventually, sometime after our 35th celebrations had become just a happy memory, Reg produced over 100 pages of A4 sheets closely written. The Management Committee at that time was dubious as to whether it was a viable proposition to produce it for sale to the members. It was felt that probably only a minority, a small one at that, would be sufficiently interested in those early events of the club's life, particularly as it was considered to be rather long.

As a regular contributor to **Sundial**, I had expressed an interest in the project from the start and as a result, I was asked to edit the history. I agreed, but confess to finding the task rather beyond my capabilities. It was indeed difficult to be ruthless and make severe cuts in the original text, particularly as much of it was crucial to the understanding of the events that had taken place. Although I did succeed in reducing Reg's original text, I also added some facts which were absent from the first draft. There the matter rested for a while but when our fortieth anniversary loomed and as we could now afford some extra pages for **Sundial** I suggested that I should write an abbreviated version in serial form in our Newsletter. Reg agreed, Martin the Editor agreed, and so did the Management Committee, thus the first instalment appeared in number 65 (Autumn 1981) and continued through until Autumn 1983. Sadly, Martin H. died while the first issue carrying the history was at the printers awaiting him

for checking.

It must be stressed that the production of this history would not have been possible without the tremendous work and dedication of Reg. My part is merely a faint, but I trust true, reflection of his work. This history is the story of a club, not just 4 and a half acres of land, but a story of people, people whose vision first created **Heritage** but also of those who followed and were to play vital roles in it's continuing development and it's success. Many names will appear, names of members whose contribution to that development is seen as crucial and significant. By the same token I realise inevitably there will be many more members who have been equally dedicated yet do not receive a mention. It was ever thus. A line has to be drawn somewhere but there is a deep appreciation of the work done by all those many members during the past five decades but who remain anonymous in this history. They have all played a part in making **Heritage** a club of which to be very proud. Reg found the **Heritage** story an inspiration. It is my hope that I can come somewhere close to doing it full justice and that in reading it, you as members, will feel that the efforts of those original pioneers of long ago should be rewarded by our maintenance of their original ideas, principles and enthusiasm.

From now on . . . the rest is history!

THE STORY OF HERITAGE

THE BIRTH

In July 1941 we were looking back on fifteen months of almost unrelieved gloom, as a Nation at war we had suffered setback upon setback and had been fighting virtually alone for the past year.

To many of you the Second World War may well mean just another boring history lesson or equally boring reminiscences of bombing and rationing, from Mum and Dad. To the younger generation 1941 must seem a million light-years away, yet to many of us it is still an all too vivid memory of austerity, hardship, camaraderie, brief gaiety, sadness, fear and much bravery. Those who were not in the fighting forces were working long hours in munition factories and other vital industries in addition to carrying out fire-watching and air-raid warden duties. It was indeed a grim period in our history and scarcely the time, surely, to think about forming a nudist club? In those days, the word "naturism" was not in regular use, indeed there existed a strong hostility between supporters of the two words to describe our movement.

It was against this background, in a small Berkshire town called Wokingham, two people, Frank and Muriel Chambers advertised in the local paper offering accommodation to a couple interested in naturism. John and Ethel Rowlinson had recently moved into the area and John, having visited two clubs prior to the outbreak of war, was immediately interested and at once replied. As a result a meeting was arranged and the five people present (a fifth was a Parson according to John's account) decided to form a group and advertised in the naturist magazines of the period. They were to meet fortnightly and were surprised by the response to their advertisement, some sixty people replied!

Of these only a few came along and joined, attending regular indoor meetings. This was in April 1941. We are indebted to an article by John Rowlinson for this information, which was published in 'The Nativist' in 1946 entitled "Adventures in Nudism." He goes on to tell us that it was at their first meeting when the name of **Heritage** was suggested by Muriel Chambers and this was immediately adopted. If that seemed a happy choice then, to us some fifty years on it appears as truly inspired.

One of the earliest recruits was a single man, John Gardner.

"He had a little money and a big vision. He wished to see established a naturist club that would be permanent for all time. He was not concerned with commercial naturism, merely that members and their children and their children to follow in succeeding generations, should have the unchallenged right to sun and air".

This is from an article that John Rowlinson wrote of his pride in being associated with Heritage. He says, "What little I did and it was truly little, has been repaid a millionfold in those five years." He listed the amenities of that time and wrote "To add to all of these is a quality I term **THE HERITAGE SPIRIT**".

There was also an article in Sunbathing Review written by Roy Gill and this also deals at some length with those early months and of the importance of John Gardner. It becomes obvious that this man was overwhelmingly enthusiastic for the project and impatient in his desire to get the club established. Most of the enquiries received not surprisingly were requesting facilities for outdoor naturism: so finding a site soon became imperative. This search led them to the 4 and a half acres that we now know so well but which must have presented a vastly different and somewhat daunting picture in 1941. It was untouched bushland, wild, overgrown and tangled, studded with tall pines and birch trees with absolutely no services available. The land was for sale at around £75 per acre and this constituted the first major

problem to confront the new club. None of the original enthusiasts could call on this kind of money, particularly for what might well prove to be a wild-cat scheme. It was then, quoting Roy, "There came a rescuer in the person of John Gardner. A lone figure of some mystery and no naturist background, he took on the entire purchase himself". In fact, John put down the deposit and agreed to pay off the instalments financed out of the twelve hour night shifts he worked in a war factory. Amazingly, just three months after the idea had been conceived, on 19th July 1941, Heritage was born.

On that date the official opening took place in the presence of five ladies and six gentlemen, according to the minutes. We have no record of their names but to them it must have been a wonderful and exciting occasion as they surveyed this wild expanse of bush, undergrowth and hundreds of trees: exciting? Yes, but surely also a little frightening. There was to be much hard work ahead but this was readily accepted by these stalwarts, all they asked for was time and good weather. The will to make this venture succeed was already there. The Heritage spirit in fact! Their first job was to hack their way in and create a reasonable clearing, doubtless they set about this with a fierce determination.

There was some concern about the financial arrangements regarding the club and the Landowner John Gardner. A committee of five had been formed and they asked his intentions regarding the land, suggesting that it should be rented from him for a year and the position reviewed thereafter. At that time they could give no undertaking about repaying him then - or in the foreseeable future. John did not find this suggestion acceptable and at a meeting called to discuss the situation there was some dissension resulting in resignations from the committee, including John Rowlinson. A new foundation committee was formed with John Gardner as President and those present at the meeting, including the retiring members, pledged their support. Muriel Chambers became secretary and by September 1941 the register of members had notably increased. Among the newcomers were two important names: Mary and Roy Gill. John Gardner had stipulated that the club should buy the land from him but with no time limit imposed. The club was to repay him when and how it could manage, and this was carried out faithfully with sums of £5, £10, and £20 at a time as long as this arrangement lasted. There was however, no written agreement!

Meanwhile, on the site, work continued with great enthusiasm and the first major step forward was achieved when a water diviner discovered water, estimated at some thirty feet. Preparations were at once put in hand to sink a well. Ten massive concrete rings were obtained mostly three foot in diameter, though two measured four foot and tapered. On the Sunday earmarked for the job, John Gardner was the first on the scene, impatient and unwilling to await help, he rolled most of the heavy rings to the spot and commenced operations. The procedure was to upend a four foot ring into position and then dig it in by getting inside it and using a short handled spade. The well was dug (unfortunately there are no records to say how long this took) and water was struck at twelve foot: this supply never failed, although (according to Roy Gill) it was sometimes sandy; but it still made excellent tea - always the main requirement. Barbed wire was strung along the boundaries mostly attached to the trees and when sufficient ground had been cleared, the first recreational amenity was constructed - a tenniquoit court. This game was much in favour at naturist clubs at that time.

By Spring 1942, the outlook for Britain was considerably brighter, particularly as we now had two powerful allies and thus could afford to feel more optimistic. At Heritage too, they were optimistic, proud of their progress to date and full of ideas for the future. The fees at this time were set at six shillings (thirty pence) single, and ten shillings (fifty pence) a couple, plus a shilling per visit: alternatively a full membership cost two guineas single or two pound ten shillings a couple. Short of a great influx of members it was certainly going to take a long while to pay off the debt to John Gardner. Early in 1942 Muriel Chambers found the secretarial work too onerous and Mary and Roy Gill took over as joint secretaries. The first building to appear was a 14 x 10 foot wooden hut which served all purposes. Roy commented,

"By special dispensation, I conducted business through the window of the Ladies dressing room, a corrugated iron annex. These iron sheets were precious beyond price, and few". He went on to say, "At that time no nonsense was talked about the balance of the sexes. More men joined than women, which was natural as Southern England was practically an armed camp. There was plenty of work for them yet always enough women and children present to give the club a homely atmosphere. Some of our most valued members first joined as unaccompanied males and no lady member ever complained about policy." The hut referred to did duty as an office until about 1968 when the present offices were added to the pavilion. After that it became the childrens play hut before eventually being dismantled.

The first A.G.M. was held in July 1942 it was indeed a momentous meeting. In response to questions, John Gardner outlined the financial basis of the club. His statement showed that at December 31st 1941 payments had been made to him amounting to £31 9 shillings. The liability to John at this time was £343-15-10. He intended, he said, that this state of affairs would continue until such a time as the debt was paid off, then it was his intention to take suitable steps to ensure that the ground remained for all time for the use of members in pursuit of the principles which they had set themselves in the first instance. "it was to be the Heritage not only of the existing members but of the generations to follow." He mentioned that apart from what he had done in purchasing the land everything else that had so far been developed was a result of the hard work of the members. His inspiring and encouraging words were greeted with great applause by all of those present. He went on to say that as soon as the time was opportune, a club-house should be properly erected and he was convinced that the club would develop sufficiently to meet its financial liabilities. When these difficulties were overcome the grounds and assets would become the members property for all time. He also said he was taking steps to safeguard this in the event of his demise.

The A.G.M. of 1942 had every good reason to react to such enthusiasm for had not the clubs future been secured? Reg points out in his original draft that we are now in a position to look back and judge how the ideas set out in John's inspiring speech have been fulfilled. No-one can doubt his utter sincerity at that time; even though he was in the "driving-seat", his concern was for the club's future and ideals. Yet within less than two years there was to arise a conflict between him and the other members that would threaten the clubs very existence.

A CRISIS LOOMS

Now, thanks to John Gardner, it would appear that the future of Heritage as a viable Naturist Club was assured and given a successful conclusion to the war, a solid foundation for peace time expansion could be laid.

For many months during 1942 the club was completely ringed by Canadian Army camps. In fact Roy described the trees as "growing a crop of khaki-clad figures". The Canadian servicemen were invited in, two at a time, to see for themselves what took place behind the barbed wire. Roy reported, "We overcame their curiosity and established friendly relations, soon getting to know them quite well. Our campers and their children grew familiar with Canadian chewing gum such was the soldier's generosity. Far from aggressive intruders they were revealed as ordinary, decent, lonely men far from their homes".

It was in 1943 that the obvious need for an overall naturist body was recognised. A meeting was called with representatives from most of the clubs, then active, taking part and this resulted in the formation of The British Sunbathing Association (B.S.B.A.) John Gardner, Roy Gill and John Rowlinson were all present to represent Heritage, the latter becoming B.S.B.A.'s first secretary. Both he and Roy were full of enthusiasm for the new body and worked assiduously to ensure that the Association would successfully represent the naturist movement, protect its interests and bring it credibility and respect. Heritage remained

strong in it's support for many years and indeed John Rowlinson stayed loyal to the B.S.B.A. until the eventual amalgamation that spawned the present C.C.B.N. More of that later.

At Heritage, in addition to the foundation committee, a welfare committee had been formed and this included Jack Burbidge. Early members will remember Old Jack as the first club Warden who, with his faithful guard dog Laddie, lived in a small caravan at the club until his death in 1965. Jack was normally the first person that a new member would meet when arriving at the gate.

It was in 1943 that John Gardner took the first steps to safeguard the club and it's grounds in the event of his death. He appointed three trustees, Roy Gill, Sandy Middleton and himself. The Welfare Committee was soon dissolved having proved ineffectual, instead it was decided that the foundation committee should appoint selected members considered suitable, to take charge of club events. This was agreed at the 1943 A.G.M. when a members chairman and vice chairman were also elected. John Rowlinson and Stan Briggs filled these posts. Stan was to play a prominent part in club affairs and much later became president. The club was now eagerly organising for the future, no doubt each weekend witnessed extensive clearing of areas for sunbathing and games. Meanwhile plans for a club-house, swimming pool and other desirable assets were no doubt in the forefront of members minds. Yet, as they worked and planned, a crisis was already looming. Although some of the money had been repaid by the club to John Gardner, a larger amount was still owing and in December 1943 he set about drafting a constitution while still exercising financial control. A draft constitution was drawn up by John's solicitors and consisted of 54 articles. We do have a record of this draft but it is perhaps unnecessary to list them all here, however it is necessary to list a few that were crucial, crucial because they could determine the kind of club Heritage could become, not just in 1944 but in the decades to follow!

This draft was presented to the committee in December 1943 and it undoubtedly produced shock waves that were to stun it's members, particularly Roy Gill. It must have arrived as an unwelcome Christmas present.

So let us examine some of the more controversial articles of the proposed constitution.

Example 1. The first President of the Club shall be W.J. Gardner who shall hold office during his lifetime or until he resigns and hereafter elections to the presidency shall be the majority vote of the trustees.

Example 2. The property of the club shall be vested in the trustees. There shall be no less than three and the first trustees are to be W.J. Gardner, A. Middleton and R. Gill.

Example 3. Admission of members shall be at the discretion of the majority of trustees.

Example 4. Powers of expulsion - the trustees.

Example 5. General management of the club shall be vested in the trustees who shall have all the powers in that behalf of an absolute owner and in the case of appeal of any member from the decision of the committee on any matter, this decision shall be final and binding upon all candidates, members and ex-members.

Example 6. Subject to the over-riding power of the trustees the management of games and sports shall be deputed to a committee of not more than five members, elected at an A.G.M.

Example 7. The trustees from time to time appoint from among their members or club members such committees as they deem necessary or expedient and may depute or refer to them such powers and duties of the committee as the trustees may determine. Such committees shall periodically report their proceedings to the trustees and conduct their business in accordance with the direction of the trustees.

Example 8. Annual General Meeting for the following purpose - to receive from the trustees a report, balance sheet and statement of accounts.

With much more in the same vein these examples surely suggest that there was considerable confliction with the earlier statements by John Gardner at that euphoric A.G.M.

when he proclaimed that the club, grounds and assets would become the members property for all time! In a letter to Roy (2-12-43) John had suggested that when he received the draft from his solicitors the three trustees should meet to discuss it and make any alterations thought necessary before presenting it to a general meeting. Instead it was produced as a fait accompli - a procedural pistol placed at the heads of Roy and Sandy.

Why the change of heart? Or indeed was there a change of heart? Or had this always been the intention of John Gardner, the financial founder? Perhaps he was doubtful of the abilities of the rank and file club members to run Heritage as he would have wished or even suspicious of their motivation. However, it would seem more likely that he was influenced by advice from outside, probably from his solicitors who after all would have little idea of the nature of the sun club.

Whatever prompted this U-turn, the result came as a complete shock to Roy and Mary who until then had never doubted John's intentions. The production of this constitution provoked an instant and none too agreeable reaction from Roy, who early in January 1944 penned a long letter to John Gardner, making clear his objections and doubt. He also wrote to the solicitors seeking clarification on certain points regarding the responsibilities, duties, replacement and appointment, etc. of the trustees. In his letter to John about necessary arrangements for a special general meeting, he pointed out that this constitution was unlikely to be acceptable to the members and also showed his concern about the running of the club. "Internally, as regards vetting trial visitors, receiving newcomers, dealing with trespassers, settling any disputes, dealing with complaints and seeing that things run smoothly etc. etc. I must say quite strongly that there is too much for Mary and myself to see to, when you and Sandy are not there. In the light of the proposed new rules all this rests on the trustees - which for more than half the total of the club's weekends will mean me only. It can't be done without weekends becoming harder work than ever, with little or no relaxation. A club does not run itself, someone more or less has to be at the helm at all time." He went on to say that either more trustees would be necessary or preferably a management committee of about seven consisting of dependable members. This, he considered absolutely essential. It appears that John Gardner and Sandy were at that time unable to attend the club very regularly and this caused Roy's concern at the prospect of being left virtually in charge. Particularly as this conflicted so violently with his own notion of a members club.

A special meeting was called for March 5th 1944 at Abbey Gateway, Reading, and in spite of Roy's letters there was no significant change in the constitution presented to that meeting, other than the articles condensed to 42. Roy, of course, was not the only member to be concerned, one in particular, Stan Briggs, was destined to be a key figure. Stan was appointed (there seems to be no mention of John Rowlinson at this meeting) the Chairman at this critical meeting and was far from happy as to how it should be conducted. He too had written to John Gardner expressing doubts and fears and seeking guidance regarding the procedure to be adopted. He had pointed out that the constitutional changes were not in accordance with the present principles of the club. He added that the foundation committee was still a functioning body and must be regarded as such.

Stan continued: "That a management committee must be constituted and care must be taken in defining that committees powers. There must be no potential source of conflict between the committee and the trustees. It is necessary to avoid making restrictions which are workable today but not so workable a few years hence."

Stan's long and thoughtful letter revealed that he had no illusions over the controversial nature of the proposed constitution and of the likely repercussions that would result at the meeting. As Chairman he cannot have relished the task confronting him on that March day in 1944.

When he declared the meeting open, 37 members were present. these members were to be asked to ratify a constitution presented by the virtual owner of the club, admittedly without whom it might not have existed, yet if ratified would deny them the

"members club" status which had previously been promised. Instead the ownership and control would be in the hands of just three trustees! There exists a lengthy (though not verbatim) account of this meeting, interesting as it is, available space dictates that only the briefest account of the main arguments can be included. inevitably and in spite of the chairman's valiant efforts this meeting proved to be chaotic, acrimonious and inconclusive with members obviously bewildered and unsure of what action they should be taking. they were aware and appreciative of John Gardners crucial contribution to the foundation of the club and on this score there were many tributes to him from the floor but in spite of this keenly felt loyalty they were becoming aware that this loyalty was directly opposed to their desire for the club's future.

John, in introducing the proposals said, "The time is right to get the club's tenure of the land on a proper basis." He told the members that he had taken the solicitors advice that Heritage should be formed into an unincorporated club, with trustees. He denied that the proposed constitution in any way inferred drastic changes to the policy of Heritage, all he proposed was the substitution of three trustees for the foundation committee of five. He argued that this was necessary as there must be trustees appointed to hold the land. In answer to a question about electing a management committee, the Chairman pointed out, "That this would be elected by the members - subject to restrictions by the trustees" A question about the appointment of the trustees evinced a sharp answer from John Gardner. "As he had the liability as landowner he had chosen persons he considered suitable." This question of trusteeship occupied much of the time, some considered there should be four and be elected at that meeting. One member remarked that a proprietary club was the alternative. There was also opposition to accepting John as a life President and this was amended to his being elected for a term of five years. The position of the foundation committee was argued at length and finally it was considered automatically dissolved. The potential power of the trustees was causing most unease and many amendments were being proposed to limit this power. One, proposed by Jack Burbidge: "That admission of members be at the discretion of the majority of the management committee," would significantly have transferred that power from the trustees to the management committee. Eventually a temporary management committee was formed, consisting of Stan Briggs, Mary or Roy Gill, Muriel Chambers, Jack Burbidge. Arthur E. Leonard A. and Lionel P. (Lionel was to be a stalwart for many years and heavily involved in much of the construction that later took place). It was decided that this committee should serve until the A.G.M. in July, meanwhile they would be profitably engaged in dealing with and amending the articles. The meeting closed at 5.35 - a day long grind which really had to be inconclusive except to alert the rank and file membership to the possible dangers inherent in the proposed constitution.

We can now but wonder just what John Gardner's feelings were as he left this meeting. Frustrated no doubt, shocked? disillusioned? All of these perhaps, but had he really expected to carry these proposals through with little or no opposition? As the clubs benefactor he probably felt deeply hurt, yet how could he justify this constitution with his previous promise of democratic club control?

THE BLOW FALLS

Immediately after the meeting in Reading, Stan Briggs wrote to John Gardner stressing his belief that the proposed constitution should have been discussed by a responsible body beforehand and then put into shape. He said that had this meeting continued, a deadlock would have been reached. Also, he apologised for his lack of proficiency and some of the confusion caused, adding that in view of the previous acceptance of general policy he was unable to challenge the right of the proposed management committee to undo what had been done. He sent a copy of this letter to Roy, who replied that while he agreed with some of

the observations he certainly did not agree with others. He was surprised that Stan, as Chairman had attempted to get the whole thing settled at once. Surely only the main points - trusteeship, committee and conveyance should have been dealt with first. Roy ended by saying "You and I seem to differ about the management committee, I'm a trustee pressing for it, you're a committee man against it, just like us to be different - cheers. Roy." It would seem that Stan was desperately seeking a compromise between two different views strongly held by two people for whom he had great respect. In another letter to John Gardner, Roy asked if at least two trustees could be present at committee meetings when discussing the new rules, he also stated that if the committee which were a pretty level-headed lot "did not have some definite powers they would have a job to get anyone who counts for much, to stand for it." He also said that "I don't see myself with trustees having over-riding power."

A meeting of the temporary management committee designated Roy and Stan to work on the regrouping of the rules, to be ready for the A.G.M. in July. On the appointed day the weather was appalling and proved the deterrent to many members, only 24 out of a possible 116 being present at the club. As it was discovered that only 21 of these were eligible to vote, they were thus without a quorum and a new date August 6th was fixed. The agenda for that meeting would deal mainly with the proposed constitution and rules, calling for their final acceptance.

One week later a temporary management committee meeting was called to carry on with normal business when John Gardner announced that he wished to say a few words. He said: "In view of what has transpired and what has been said at the committee meeting (July 9th) he wished to state that he definitely wanted to have nothing further to do with the proposed new rules."

He withdrew them entirely. John then left the meeting so that this statement could be discussed more freely. It was eventually decided that no purpose could be served by further discussion. A revised agenda was prepared for the postponed A.G.M. in August but there is no record of this taking place.

A solicitors letter dated September 15th 1944 was to produce the bombshell that would climax this traumatic year in Heritage history. Although the first page of this letter is missing, the remainder is all too clear, yet it's contents were to propel Heritage forward to a confident and successful future. The letter from John Gardner's solicitors went on to explain their client's aim, which "was to put the club on a more desirable basis within written rules. He was prepared to leave his money indefinitely as the club was able to pay, provided he was satisfied with the rules of the club." Then they stressed the apparent ingratitude shown by "certain members" to their client who had provided them with such amenities. The letter continued: "Your committee was formed to consider the question of leasing the land in the same way as another committee was formed in 1941, and we observe you do not want to leave it. In reply to your enquiry, our client (reserving all rights) is prepared to convey the land to the club on down payment of :

Amount paid for the Purchase	£382.10.08
Paid to the person imposing the Restrictive Covenants	£ 10.10.00
Counsels Fee	£ 3.04.06
Sinking of Well on the land	£17.01.09
His costs incurred with us	£20.00.00

	£ 433.06.11
Less Payments by Club	£ 166.09.00

	£266.17.11

provided this offer is accepted within a month from this date. Failing acceptance of this offer our client reserves all rights but will consider favourably anything he considers for the future good of the club in there being submitted to us in writing." The consternation caused by the arrival of this document can well be imagined, but it is clear that it was a reply to an enquiry from the club. Though carefully worded it could only be viewed as an ultimatum.

Mary recalls vividly the shock that it produced in Roy and herself while no doubt others were equally aghast. In 1944, £266 was a large sum of money in a country still very much in the grip of wartime austerity and restrictions, with the outcome of the conflict as yet unsettled. At first this must have appeared to be a mortal blow with just a month to raise the money; speed was essential and it is from an article of Roy's, in *Sunbathing Review*, that we learn of the successful effort. He wrote, "over £200 to find within a month and October well advanced! An extraordinary general meeting was called to raise the money on loan and such was the success that the sum could have been oversubscribed. A ceiling of £20 was fixed on individual loans. The land became ours and four trustees were appointed to hold it." This then was the magnificent response from the members which enabled the club to assume control of its own destiny and achieve the original idea of a naturist club owned and run by the members for the members. Among the club papers that remain from this period is a sheet of paper listing the names and amounts of the members loans. In all 37 members had made contributions that would be so vital for the club's future. A letter dated October 19th 1944 to the trustees of Heritage, confirmed the approval of the form of conveyance for execution and in November the transaction was completed - the final settlement for £283.07.11.

Although the club was to face several ups and downs in the years to come, at this time it could look forward with eagerness and vigour to a happy and settled future. It is pleasing to note the acceptance of the first presidency of the club by John Gardner. The decision to elect him to this position (not at that time with voting rights) reflected the members gratitude to the club's financial founder. The offer and its acceptance was truly in the Heritage spirit, following as it did, such a traumatic interlude. Looking back from 1991, it is difficult to make an effective analysis of the aspirations and the actions of those so closely involved with the club's birth and early development.

The name of John Gardner, inevitably, has been most prominent in this narrative to date. He has been described as "a man of mystery", a "loner", and then, "a man who knew what he wanted", "a man of vision", and some other things less complimentary. The real objection to his constitutional proposals was not to the proposed trustees of the trust law to hold the land - the issue was management by them. We can find no evidence to suggest that John, during the previous two years or so had in any way shown concern that the repayments were slow in being made. There seems little doubt that during the first three years there existed a community spirit in both work and leisure. *Statements from John like, "this club would be a club for the members for all time,"* encouraged them to anticipate that Heritage would be a members club, in fact the very early prospectus described it as such.

Whatever conclusions we may individually arrive at, one is undeniable: John Gardner's position in Heritage history is secure. Without him, would Heritage now exist? Who can tell?

Equally, it is only right at this juncture to pay tribute to the significant role played by Roy Gill, a man whose influence on these momentous events is incalculable. His stature, his integrity and his loyalty cannot be denied. He too holds an unassailable place in our history. It is a sad irony that within a few short years, these two men, plus the other original trustee, Sandy Middleton, would be dead.

THE EARLY POST-WAR YEARS

Disaster and Triumph

May 1945, with the war virtually at an end, Heritage members now had every reason to be optimistic about the future. It was on 20th of this month when Heritage attained full maturity. For it was then that the club armed itself with a new constitution which guaranteed its future as a members club. This constitution was framed, mainly by Roy Gill, to stand a test of time and represent its members determination for a sound and successful future.

Four trustees were appointed and one of these, John C. (John and Sally) was to continue as a trustee into the nineties. In fact, John and Sally made their first visit on August Bank Holiday 1944 and at once became deeply involved in club affairs. John proved to be a tremendous asset, serving as a Chairman and as a committee member for many, many years. His influence and his work for the club during the next two decades or so has been significant and the lure of Heritage ensured that John and Sally were still to be seen frequently until the late 1980's when failing eyesight forced John to give up driving. Stan Briggs was elected as first chairman with executive powers, while the newly elected committee included both Mary and Roy who had now vacated the secretarial post. Roy did not think that husband and wife should serve on the same committee, but the members thought otherwise and Mary said to him, "It's no good, you can't get rid of me." The agreed constitution has by necessity, undergone some changes over the years, but it provided the basis for the one which pertains today.

One of the earliest "amenities" was an underground kitchen, a deep dug-out furnished with a stove. The reason for this, according to Mary, was to avoid paying rates on the structure above ground. It proved quite successful, although subject to flooding after heavy rain. One way of getting hot water! The club now settled down to putting into practise some of the dreams and schemes that had no doubt frequently been aired during the previous four years. First, was the evident need for a sizable club-house to give shelter and some comfort to the increasing number of members. Roy reported in one of his articles, "1946 started a post-war period of boom and bustle." A member (not named) was able to secure a large sectional American Army hut (48x20ft) laid on a concrete foundation, and this proved to be an ideal pavilion. The winter attendances during the dire snowbound, frostbound winter of 46/47 were amazingly good and soon a piano had been introduced plus a table-tennis table and other amenities and members were naturally proud of their new acquisition - but it was to be shortlived. Tragedy struck! One March evening in mid-week, an unexplained fire destroyed the whole building, all within half an hour! It must be appreciated that in 1947 there were no near neighbours, no telephone, no site warden and the only available water came from the well. Earlier that winter a members marquee had also been lost by fire. Truly Heritage was not to be allowed an easy passage.

A year later in 1948, Roy was again writing in Sunbathing Review, "We are building again at Heritage." Undeterred by their ill-fortune the members were immediately planning for a larger, permanent construction. Members turned up in force at an emergency meeting to discuss future plans. There were no professional builders in the club at that time so information was sought from various quarters and plans for two types of building emerged. One favoured, was a building with large concrete blocks, while the other called for "pier and panel construction" with a shuttering of timber and concrete poured in to give four inch walls and 13 inch square pillars every six foot or so. It was by a small majority that the latter idea was chosen. This plan was forwarded by John K. who was then secretary, a painter and decorator by trade, the nearest to being a builder. John agreed to take charge of operations, surrendering the secretary/treasurer post to Bill He. With enthusiasm and grim determination the Heritage workers were once again ready and willing but it was to prove a long, hard slog before the new pavilion would be ready for use. Plans were drawn up and submitted to

Wokingham RDC. who had shown every sympathy toward the club and some three months later they were passed. Roy wrote, "We were faced with a short building season, a total lack of professionally experienced members or equipment, a not very deep purse, an irregular and shifting number of volunteer labourers and the handicap of having only Saturday afternoons and Sundays for the work to be done. Other handicaps were the competition from games, tea drinking and just plain lazing" (how often have we heard that since?) The foundations had to be the same whichever method was used and proved no problem but they were soon in trouble with the original "pier and panel" concept. A lack of stout timber for the shuttering and no available skilled carpenters rendered it impossible to undertake. Another body blow! One of the conditions of the Licence was that no paid labour was to be employed.

This effectively prevented the club commissioning a contractor to build the necessary piers on site for which a firm had estimated £73. The solution arrived at, was to build the pillars of bricks. Roy commented, "Don't ask me why - we prefer doing things the hard way!" Hard was to be the operative word for some time to come.

The A.G.M. in July proved to be a stormy affair with many members unhappy and of the opinion that the committee had progressed too far with the project without consulting the membership. Eventually, after a vote of confidence had been passed all was well and the decision to use concrete slabs rather than breeze blocks for walls was taken. The club grounds were soon transformed into a builders yard, the main area was dominated by a pile of bricks, stacks of slabs and in the centre of it all - the clubs pride and joy - a massive concrete mixer! This had been obtained in Wokingham for £10 after some haggling had successfully reduced the original asking price of £25. We have no record of the name of the successful bargainer. Pity. However it took all the skills and much hard work by one mechanically knowledgeable member to coax it into action. This was Lionel P. , with whom the mixer developed a love/hate relationship; it's frequent fits of temperament were always mollified by Lionel's unerring touch. Turning again to Roy we learn that there were no skilled bricklayers in the club, he comments "We found out the pitfalls by falling into them. We also discovered how sore hands can become and how difficult it is to chop a brick smoothly in half as well as how easy it is to lay two courses and not have a proper bend or lay three or four courses and find the result leans out of the perpendicular."

Progress, not unnaturally was slow, but they all remained undaunted by the many difficulties which constantly confronted them. While this work progressed another labour force were engaged in tackling the all-important matter of club screening. This they commenced by driving a fire-break round the boundary, a necessity in view of the thickly wooded nature of the site and its surrounds. The possibility of fire was, and indeed is still, a perpetual threat particularly in dry weather. The club spirit is frequently referred to and Roy wrote "We pay to work and give cheerfully of our labours and time. If I give the impression of hard work without leisure I must emphatically state the contrary. Some of our best workers are also our best players and we all enjoy the communal gathering. Some members never do a stroke but no-one worries, there is no dragooning of unwilling workers, voluntary labour may not make for rapid results but it does mean everyone is satisfied." Although the volume of membership was increasing, the number of members available, able and willing to work on this huge project was limited. The difficulties to overcome were severe and the tools and equipment by present day standards were almost primitive. Electricity was unavailable and water by courtesy of the well. Bad weather during the following winter hampered the work but the determination to succeed never wavered. It was in fact not until January 1950 that the pavilion was virtually completed and ready for use. After nearly three years of hard, unremitting slog the job was now done and we can, once again, only imagine the emotions of the members, particularly those who had been deeply involved for so long, as they surveyed their creation with pride and surely, much relief.

The question of mains water had been uppermost for some time, the well and various methods of conserving rain water were no longer practical for the club's needs. Main pipes were being laid nearer to the club but the estimated cost to bring water to Heritage was more than could be afforded out of existing funds. Various ideas were mooted, including a method of pumping water up from the well. One, suggested by John K. was called an Abyssinian tube well and, according to the proposer would be quite inexpensive - if it worked! However, this was not put to the test; in fact in the minutes of an M.C. meeting we read that "the lack of Abyssinian members might prevent it being a success!" By January 1950 it had been agreed that the only way to raise the money needed to bring in mains water would be once again, to call for personal loans. The previous loans for the land purchase had, by then, been fully repaid and the aim was now to raise £200. In fact they received £170 and this was enough to go ahead with the plan. February of that year witnessed the opening of the pavilion, a proud event in the club's history. It was in the form of a party and was the forerunner of the children's Christmas party which has been an annual event in our calendar ever since. Adequate lighting was provided by overhead lamps powered by Calor gas; these continued giving excellent service until replaced by electricity several years later.

Another significant event occurred when Jack B. became assistant secretary and moved into the caravan on site, to be our first club warden. This move had no doubt been precipitated by the disastrous fire which destroyed the first club house. Jack continued living at Heritage until his death (when in his 80's) in 1965. Mac's lifelike painting of Jack making a miniten bat and also one of Laddie, Jack's faithful guard dog, for long has held a permanent place in the pavilion. Fresh names were appearing in the records of committee members and officials, indicating not only the growth of the club but proving also that among the newcomers were members who already cared enough to share the responsibility of running it. Among these, Big Jack (Jack and Margaret B.) was a particularly important figure as his legal expertise was to be invaluable to the club both on a practical and advisory level. He served on the committee and later became a trustee. It is interesting to note that his son Andrew was, in course of time to serve on the management committee and he too became a trustee.

The coming of mains water now opened the way to that other high priority of any naturist club - a swimming pool. Provision of flush toilets were also another requirement as at that time a rather ramshackle construction in the woods concealed (almost) an Elsan toilet to provide for the naturists' natural needs. However the pool was first on the agenda and this was to be another gigantic undertaking. Originally, before the coming of mains water it was hoped to provide a pool on the site where the lower miniten court is now situated. There was a belief that natural water would be found there, according to some tests that had been made. However, after a considerable amount of digging the idea was abandoned to await the coming of mains water and site the pool more conveniently. The position of the pool directly in front of the pavilion was an ideal choice for this vital amenity and once again the 'club workers' were engaged in a long, tough and at times complex undertaking.

About the time that this plan was being formulated, a new member had arrived at the club, one who was to play a vital part, not only with the pool construction but in the club development for many years, Jim and Bette C. joined in 1949 and were quickly enthralled by the club and soon struck up a close and lasting relationship with John and Sally C. Jim was full of enthusiasm and never at a loss for ideas, an ingenious turn of mind and an artistic eye he was soon involved at many levels. He became Uncle Jim on rally days, organising the races and events for children and adults alike. Some of the ingeniously original and tortuous equipment which he constructed for these events had to be seen to be believed. This, remember, was long before the days of T.V.'s "It's a Knockout".

Together Jim and John were key figures in the pool construction. For some details of this momentous project, we again turn to a Roy Gill article in Sunbathing Review. This tells how John C. (then chairman) teamed up with newcomer Jim C. to prove an ideal combination. The

article is too long to reprint fully but it details many of the problems (some must have seemed insurmountable at the time) encountered and how they were overcome. The digging took 6 months, leaving tons of earth piled up high. Before they had progressed very far with concreting the base, torrential rain caused slides of the banks at the deep end. To prevent further falls John hired some massive steel sheets and transported them himself some 30 miles; they were to be used for five Sundays. Steel was very scarce at the time and a deposit of £20 had to be paid. They were bolted together and set round the deep end some nine inches from the earth walls. A maze of trunks wedged them into position and then they recommenced pouring the cement. With a time limit on the return of the plates, work had to proceed at a hectic pace. The first Sunday saw 34cwt of cement used from 68 mixes. This all had to be barrowed quite a distance then deposited into the slit and rammed down. Bulging was one of the biggest hazards and Roy reported "That the bulges were straightened is a tribute to the brute strength and sheer refusal to give in on the part of our foreman." They succeeded in getting the walls up and then had the job of dismantling the steel sheets and painstakingly cleaning each one before returning to their owner.

Reinforcement for the concrete was provided by masses of netting and steel rods that John had obtained at a bargain price. It was all terribly tangled and needed much work and patience, all by hand of course, to straighten it out before use; John still remembers that very well. At the end of each day's concreting a generous key to interlock the succeeding sections had to be made, otherwise a leaking pool could have resulted. Eighteen inches were added to the walls and eventually when filled the water level was a foot above the original ground level. A pump picked the water from the sump at the deep end and returning it to a fountain at the shallow end; this was situated in the kiddies pool. (The fountain has long since been dismantled). The entire surround was concreted and scribed into flags and on part of the surround the architect had inset a life size drawing of a marine god, copied from a Roman pavement. A member had loaned (long term) a white marble bench flanked by lion heads and also a flower urn. Unfortunately, the owner needed to recall these some 30 years later. Roy reported, "Even John and Jim had to own themselves pleasantly surprised by the beauty of the finished product, although Jim, in his first effort at pool construction had carried all along in his unerring mind's eye, a picture of what he wished to achieve. The rest of us were plumb thunderstruck! The total cost was about £200, more than estimated but much less than feared and it was in use a month earlier than Jim's schedule". Although there have been some superficial changes around the pool, mainly the enlarged surround area which has since been tiled, the basic pool remains the same - a great tribute to its constructors. The architect who also deserves credit, the late John Cu. was so pleased with the result that he described it, with plans, photographs and detailed budget for "Architect and Building News". We should add that the members who appeared in the accompanying photo were 'suitably' costumed! The pool was filled for the first time at the end of June 1952. Once again, Heritage members must have felt unbelievably proud as another major objective had been attained.

In little more than ten years a good part of that wild, thick woodland and scrub that had confronted John G. and his small band of pioneers had now been transformed into an attractive sun club with amenities that were at least the equal of most clubs of that period and superior to many more. Many members now camped regularly at weekends, hacking out sufficient clearings in the woods to accommodate them. Ex-army bell tents being particularly popular. A licence for 24 sites had been obtained from the council and some years later this was increased to 36. Heritage was not going to rest on its laurels and plans were soon underfoot for the first flush toilets to be built, also a decision had been made to lay a concrete miniten court in the sunken area once designated for the pool.

In a way it would seem appropriate to call 1952 the end of an era, from now on leisure would tend to play a larger part in Heritage life, although, of course, not to the complete exclusion of work. there was (and ever will be) always something to be done and

generally someone doing it. The end of this era was marked, and poignantly marked, when after an illness which overtook him in the latter part of 1952, Roy Gill was moved into hospital and died on January 25th 1953. Tragically, he was not to reap the benefit of his labours for Heritage, who had lost an irreplaceable member. To Mary and her young daughter Ann, it was a terribly cruel blow. The question that must have been uppermost in members minds at that time was whether Mary would have the desire and the will to continue at the club which had become such an important part of her life with Roy. We are all happily aware of what that answer was to be.

Heritage now moved forward toward a new era as outside war-time rationing, austerity and restrictions were at long last being left behind.

THROUGH THE FIFTIES

After but a few months, Mary was back at Heritage, welcomed back with great affection as she resumed her place on the committee and was immediately awarded honorary life membership.

Before continuing with the actual history, I beg leave to add a personal reminiscence. If 1952 was the end of an era for Heritage, then for Gwen and Bill Irwin it was the beginning of an important era that still continues. It was in the latter part of this year that we first visited Heritage, having just enjoyed our first Naturist experience on holiday at the South Hants S.C. We were met by "Old Jack" and duly shown round, introduced to Jim C., John and Sally C., and their daughter Shirley who promptly made a fuss of our sons, Donald and Colin, the latter little more than a year old. The old trusty tea bell summoned us for tea in the pavilion, this was served by Flo and Arthur E., from a trestle table near the fireplace. There was, of course, no kitchen then. We were proudly shown the new swimming pool and the miniten court and then walked through the thick belt of tall trees beyond the pool; they virtually cut the club in half; we then came upon the sun trap which was often referred to as the waddy. As elsewhere in the club it was sandy and dusty, , grass simply refusing to grow amid all the pine trees. Sun beds were a rarity in those days, members relaxed on ground sheets and blankets and were constantly locked in battle with the Heritage super ants. Nevertheless, it was here that most of the members who were not around the pool area, congregated. Indeed it was here that we met a particularly friendly, considerably tanned young man who never seemed to leave his "spot" whilst the sun was shining. It was he alone during our early visits who remembered our names to greet us by. Nearly 40 years on and Denis C., as friendly and even browner than ever can still be found in his accustomed place when the sun is doing it's duty. Beyond the waddy, apart from the small clearings occupied by tents the only other space was taken up by the volley ball court roughly where it is now. We had no hesitation in applying to join and on acceptance the fee was paid £1 per couple plus one shilling (5p) each for every visit. We chose this rather than the outright fee of £3.10s being uncertain how often we could afford the train journey. The paying of a daily visit fee was not a satisfactory arrangement for club or member. It was necessary to seek out the hard pressed secretary Bill He. or Old Jack who might not always be readily available. It can be imagined that quite a lot of revenue (not necessarily by intent) must have been lost throughout the many years that this structure operated. Among other members joining around this period were Joan and Graham W. and baby daughter Mary. Our consequent friendship with them has been everlasting and typical of most Heritage friendships.

Mention earlier of the volley ball court recalls the stentorian voice of Bill Ho. (Bill and Joan) whose cry of Volley! Volley! Volley! was guaranteed not only to summon the enthusiasts from all corners of the club but I often thought, liable to have been mistaken down at Crowthorne station for a train announcement. Around this time Bill was, for a period, club chairman. Even though the atmosphere was one of complete relaxation we were soon aware of

various jobs being undertaken, particularly by John and Jim who were by now engaged in the task of building the first flush toilets which were to replace the Elsan secreted in the woods. Another member who seemed to spend most of his time at the club working, often quite unobtrusively, was Jumper C. Sometimes on arrival he would chat briefly with a friend then disappear to become immersed in his chosen job; re-appearing in the late afternoon to swim a few lengths before leaving for home. He served on the committee for several years and was a much valued member. The second miniten court came into use in 1954. This was on the site previously earmarked for the swimming pool. Concreting this court was quite a lengthy and far from simple job but when eventually it was completed our first hard court became the first choice for our keenest miniten aficionados. A seat commemorating Roy G. was placed to overlook it.

Reverting to the building of the flush toilets, John C. tells how, after the drainage system had been completed they found themselves short of a manhole cover. With the Council due to inspect the work the following week a hasty search round a disused Army camp revealed a cover that did not fit. John and Jim were naturally anxious when inspection day arrived but Jim proved equal to the occasion. He opened up a series of manholes in advance and as each one had been inspected John walked on with the official while Jim, following, closed them down leaving the faulty one until last and undetected!

During the mid fifties many naturist groups were in the process of formation but were faced with the agonisingly difficult task of finding suitable land as well as raising the necessary funds for its acquisition. Many of these groups fell quickly by the wayside, others struggled on for years. Our club, sympathetic to their aims and hoping to assist in maintaining the initial enthusiasm invited two of these groups to visit us on specific occasions. This worthy intention largely misfired as it became evident that while the group leaders were fully dedicated many of these visitors were all too happy to settle for the ready made amenities of Heritage. Not the object of the exercise. As members of these groups started to arrive each weekend this arrangement was soon discontinued; it was never our policy to lure members from other clubs or groups.

The possibility of bringing electricity to the club had long been a topic of conversation on Saturday evenings as members sat round the fire beneath the adequate but scarcely brilliant Calor gas lamps. It was established that the cost could be around £100 and in order to fulfil this ambition the decision to ask for voluntary donations was made. In fact, although the list closed with the satisfactory sum of £127, £100 of this was donated by one member who wished to remain anonymous. So, in 1957, the pavilion was again ablaze but this time with the light which we could switch on and off and importantly we now had power which would be of everlasting benefit to the club.

The membership had by now grown considerably and this prompted discussion about the desirability of imposing a limited membership. The subject soon aroused considerable passion among many members and divided them into two camps of seemingly equal proportions. The protagonists on both sides were equally sincere with strong arguments to back their case. The main platform for a limit was not based on selfishness as some suggested but on the grounds that existing facilities, particularly toilets, would be inadequate to serve a further influx of members. It was also pointed out that the club officials were already under strain with increasing work, particularly paper work. A loss of club spirit (so vital to Heritage) was also envisaged, one or two of the larger clubs were cited as examples. Against this it was pointed out that to turn prospective naturists away because we had a "full-house" would be a shortsighted and misguided policy; many of them could well be lost to this movement forever and be deprived of the advantages enjoyed by us. It was also argued that the club could ill-afford to turn its back on the additional revenue that would accrue. The leading advocate of the no limit policy was Les B. (Les and Muriel). He was a compulsive and convincing speaker capable of firing a meeting with his unquenchable enthusiasm, nevertheless

a limit of 250 adult members was imposed in spite of his passionate pleas. The majority was indeed small and it was evident that the policy carried the support of little more than half of the membership. The matter was not allowed to rest for long and was raised at subsequent A.G.M.'s until in 1959 the rule was rescinded although once more the majority was slender. By this time however more areas of the club were being opened up and more facilities planned. Mention of Les B. recalls another subject on which he felt and spoke with equal passion. As mentioned earlier in this story, the B.S.B.A. had been formed in the forties with Heritage, thanks to Roy G. and John R.; playing a large part in its inception and organisation. The credibility of B.S.B.A. began to decline during the fifties, due in part to a clash of personalities such as a minority movement such as ours can ill-afford. Another factor leading to the loss of confidence concerned bad publicity which sadly had attracted the attention of the Sunday press and featured two major B.S.B.A. officials. The role of non-club naturists in the organisation was also a controversial issue. As one by one of the disillusioned clubs withdrew their support Heritage remained loyal for a while but as the situation worsened doubts increased. The question was hotly debated at an A.G.M. when to many of the rank and file members present the arguments may not have been too clear but the proposal to withdraw, fiercely spearheaded by Les carried the day. On this occasion he was opposed, bitterly, by John R. who had been so active on behalf of the B.S.B.A. The battle of words was conducted with passion and sincerity by both of these worthy members and it is perhaps sad to relate that after this meeting John R., dismayed by the result of this ballot left Heritage not to return until 20 years or so later. Not long before his death in fact.

The club kept aloof from naturist politics for a year or so but subsequently with Les again as spokesman, an A.G.M. voted to join a new body : The Federation of British Sun Clubs (F.B.S.C.). This membership continued until 1964 when it was merged with a depleted B.S.B.A. to form the Central Council of British Naturism (C.C.B.N.) our present national body. One of the signatories placing the seal on the new naturist body was that of Mary G. on behalf of Heritage. The new body included an individual supporter section and Les B. became a Southern representative, working wholeheartedly for it until his untimely death.

In 1957 the club was provided with an amenity which had never been seriously envisaged. The tennis court. This was the gift from a member who, captivated by Heritage, felt that as a man close to 80 years of age he was unable to contribute to the club as much as he wished. His answer was to offer the club a tennis court. The management committee at that time, must at first have been incredulous but they acted quickly in accepting. Teddy Brown, the donor, paid the bill of £548, rather higher than his original estimation but it was paid as his tribute to the club. The Heritage spirit indeed! In order to accommodate this new addition it was necessary to remove a large belt of trees and to have this work completed quickly the task, for once, was allocated to outside contractors at the cost of £57. *The court was officially* opened for play of Whitsun bank holiday when Wilf C. one of the earliest members and always a sports enthusiast, organised an informal tournament for the occasion. The court remained the premier games attraction for many years, it was the envy of other clubs, and in greater demand than the miniten courts. In fact, in order to control playing times, Jumper C. fixed up an alarm clock to ensure strict observance of half-hour playing periods. A more sophisticated hooter was installed nearly 20 years later to deal with the miniten demand. The club marked its appreciation of the gift by naming it "Teddy Brown's Court", there was originally a carved plaque to commemorate this but was unfortunately lost when the court was refurbished. Bill R. (Bill and Ivy) replaced it with one inscribed in metal.

Among the influx of members during the mid and late fifties were a number who could play a significant part in the clubs future. None more so than Reg P. whose meticulous research initiated this history. He, too, in his original account interpolated a personal reminiscence when recalling his first visit in 1957 with Betty and their children Alan and Pat. He recalls "We were met and shown round the club by our appointed hosts Gwen

and Bill and were captivated by it all from the start. There were clusters of tall trees which though excellent windbreaks, shielded much of the club from the sought after sun. The opening to the sun trap like a beckoning light at the end of a tunnel gave it an attractive beauty". He remembered standing in front of the pavilion gazing out across the pool and courts and thinking "all this for £3.10s a year catering for the families leisure time". He added " we were of course still as yet ignorant and unable to visualise the hard graft that had made all this possible". Reg and family had to leave early on that occasion to catch their train, they had an awkward journey to make. They were soon back impatient to know if they had been accepted, already it was the most important thing in their lives and was the incentive for Reg to invest in his own transport - a motorbike and sidecar, "bought for the princely sum of £187". Soon they had bought a tent and joined the campers and their enthusiasm for Heritage was to be long lasting.

Among others who joined toward the end of this decade and were also destined to play prominent parts in the clubs development were Mac and Iris, George and Yvonne C. and George and Margaret S.

1959 signified an important change to the subscription structure. The alternative subscription was finally abandoned and all members were required to pay £3.10 per couple or family. This was significant because it relieved the officials from the high impossible task of collecting every shilling due, it also ensured an increase in income. This was particularly important because with the limitation of membership to 250 imposed a few years earlier it illustrated what subsequent A.G.M.'s of the 70's were forced to recognise - with full membership maintenance and improvements can only be met by raising the subscription. It may be wondered why, at that time, the level was not raised in addition to the change but it must be remembered that inflation in 1959 could not be compared with that of 15 or so years later. Ironically after this alteration another A.G.M. removed the limit. In that same year there was another major change in club officials. After some 12 years of selfless and sterling service Bill He. vacated his office as Secretary/Treasurer. During his long stint he had witnessed remarkable changes in the club and with increasing membership, the proliferation of paperwork and additional accounting was rendering his job ever more burdensome. Indeed he had sought to relinquish it for several years but without a volunteer coming forward he had nobly, albeit reluctantly, carried on. His weekends were spent in the office whether it be sunny or not, conscientiously attending to club affairs often unable to find time for a game. Sadly, it seemed when at last he was relieved of these responsibilities, Bill, a single man, found the club and it's members had rather grown away from him. He was often to be seen sitting alone in front of the pavilion and within a few years had ceased to visit. Perhaps this is a lesson to us all not to expect or ask too much of those members who are willing to give so much of their time and abilities to running our club. All of them, past and present, are deserving of our consideration and heart felt thanks - none more so than Bill He.

It is not insignificant that he was succeeded by the husband and wife combination of George and Yvonne C. as treasurer and secretary respectively and this proved an excellent and very practical arrangement. They called upon their professional experience to organise the handling of club affairs and carried this out with the maximum of efficiency. It was helpful that they had the bonus of starting out with the universally applied subscription. One change which took place, mainly, I believe, at their behest was the introduction of a lock on the gate with all paid up members receiving a key. This aid to security, long overdue, did not meet with the approval of some older members but was quickly justified when several non-members and ex-members who had visited the club at will, found themselves locked out!

The year 1959 also witnessed the commencement of the erection of a complete new metal fence to replace the rapidly disintegrating original. This long and tedious job was mainly undertaken by Jumper C. His chief assistants were Harold G. and Jim G., although others gave a hand on occasions as this job necessitated the wearing of clothes when working

outside it was not the most popular of chores. The fencing of the whole perimeter cost £300 and was bought in three stages at £100 a year and erected accordingly. Mention of the fence recalls the occasion when on a lovely summer's day in mid week the old rotting metal sheeting on the southern boundary was, without warning ignominiously demolished and Heritage was invaded by the army! A famous, or rather infamous internee from nearby Broadmoor had escaped and as he was considered highly dangerous the army had been called upon to conduct a thorough search of the local woods. members rushed for towels and cover as the invaders marched in and unceremoniously but quite thoroughly went about their business. One anecdote often recounted after the event, told of how George C. our treasurer, marched naked and alone to meet the advancing "hordes" on confronting the officer in charge George showed him his badge of office! Fortunately their quarry was not lurking in Heritage or the surrounding woods; by then he had found refuge on the south coast. This incident however increased the urgency for replacing the fence. The painting of the new metal sheeting was also a necessary but unpopular task which Geoff E. undertook to organise. Although many took a hand (with brush) progress was slow. It was not until about half had been painted in this laborious fashion that Lionel P. borrowed a large sprayer and operating it himself quickly finished the job. After each session Lionel returned looking like a fugitive from the black and white minstrels, while Iris often recalled the day her line was full of black stippled washing.

Before leaving the fifties mention must be made of the yearly event which had become the biggest day in the club calendar. Rally Day. This event became pre-eminent in the southern naturist calendar - and justly so. In those earlier years the majority of naturist clubs held an annual rally day inviting members from other clubs within reasonable distance. The response was generally enthusiastic as this was normally the only occasion that one could enjoy visits to another club. In later years, inter-club visits particularly for sports events became more prevalent and so lessened the impact of the club rally day and interest waned. Heritage rallies reached their peak in the late fifties. They were tremendous occasions although entailing much hard work and preparation particularly on the catering side. Yes, on Rally days we catered for members and visitors alike, serving meat and salad lunches etc. The drill consisted of invitations being sent to a number of clubs who were then asked to return a list of those requiring meals. Similarly our own members were also required to book. Inevitably it was to be an abnormal occasion if there were not a number of starving naturists seeking lunches that had not been previously booked! When this occurred some Heritage members could be observed pooling their resources to rustle up a meal for a hungry visitor. Early morning rally day revealed a hive of activity with a convoy of cars making journeys to and from Camberley bringing in the food that Mary had started preparing at home. It must again be stressed there were no kitchen facilities at the club. John C. would soon have a big, open fire ablaze (outside) and a dustbin (clean) would be produced. A dustbin? you ask - well, what would you boil the potatoes in? - well, yes, unusual - but with the numbers being catered for, very effective - oh, and of course also it was another Heritage tradition. One problem that always confronted the ladies was the amount of salt necessary to add to such a large quantity of spuds. On one occasion when this thorny question was under discussion and no one was keen to take on the responsibility, Jess R., one of our most popular and lovable members grabbed a large packet of salt and emptying it into the bin with a great flourish said "Don't any of you dare tell who salted these b-----s". Sadly, only a few years later Jess was to die in the London 'flu epidemic. The charge for the meal was very moderate but as the number of visitors increased so the catering side became even more a headache and this was eventually discontinued, regretted chiefly I believe, by those who bore the main burden.

The childrens sports always provided the highlight of the afternoon although in those days the adults also took a big part in the fun and games. Many of these ingenious events were devised by Jim C. who presided over the proceedings with a benevolent gusto for many years. The bun eating contest was always most popular with the children and on one

occasion while taking part in this event Patsy, daughter of Reg and Betty P. suddenly rushed to them in horror - she was not choking as they feared but had espied her science master who was a visitor from another club! After the sports came the swimming events and in spite of the comparative small size of our pool often provided some fine races, particularly the inter-club relays. On one occasion a young swimmer of international pretensions competed and predictably swam everyone out of sight. There were generally several novelty events, these being devised by Wilf C. and quite often seemed virtually impossible to perform - except by the determination of Wilf himself. The days entertainment traditionally ended with the battles on the greasy pole, these providing plenty of amusement. Once, however, we were close to tragedy when a visitor who was sitting at the end of a pole as makeweight was pitched into the water with the contestants as the long-suffering pole snapped. Amidst the general hilarity it had not been realised that the man was a non-swimmer and already in some distress. Fortunately he was hauled out in time.

At different rallies various other events took place such as side-shows and stalls being introduced including the ever popular tombola stall. In the very early days a childrens "zoo" featuring various pets was an attraction. On one such occasion a horse, brought along by Jumpers family and obviously feeling out of place in a naturist club managed to make his escape. It was Alan W. (who dug holes and trenches at Heritage for relaxation and in the graveyard as an occupation) on his way to the club noticed a loose horse and casually mentioned the fact some time later. The horse was eventually recovered. On a latter occasion Denis and Eve P. brought along a pony and gave youngsters rides round the club. The introduction of the tennis court prompted Wilf to run a tournament on rally days but as visitors often needed to leave early it generally proved difficult to complete.

The occasion of the clubs 21st birthday was combined with a rally and the 21st visitor was presented with a very large key which he wore round his neck throughout the day. The recipient, a visitor from Western SunFolk recalled this some 14 years later at our 35th celebration. It was Gerry Rylands who by then had become president of C.C.B.N. At its peak rally day attracted a tremendous amount of visitors, being extremely popular but as at that time there was little open space car-parking was increasingly becoming a headache. It has been replaced in the club calendar by our sports day on August Bank holiday or thereabouts and confined to members and their children. Like the Christmas party the tradition and spirit remain.

As the fifties drew to a close Heritage could reflect with pride on a decade which had transformed it from an uncertain youngster struggling to find its way in life to a confident teenager on the brink of adulthood and a secure and contented future.

THE SPORTING SIXTIES.

By employing the above title I am no doubt influenced by a close association with sporting events at Heritage during the years when organised naturist sport really came to the fore. In earlier years there had been several efforts to organise contests between clubs in the south. Our own Wilf C. was among those who were keenly interested in the idea but club naturists at that time did not appear to welcome organisation of any sort. Gradually the climate changed and before the end of the decade we were much involved in national miniten tournaments, inter-club matches of volleyball as well as a southern region tournament which embraced a number of sports. This, naturally led to organising our own miniten tournaments and our summer calendar became full of these activities. We will return to this aspect later for of course other things were happening at the club although for a few years there was a rather relaxed atmosphere with no major project planned for the immediate future. The financial position seemed to be healthy with a membership around 300 and apart from the fencing no great expenditure was visualised.

One massive operation that did take place (in 1961) was the removal of the thick belt of trees alongside the tennis court. This clearance was mainly concentrated into two weekends and was rendered possible by 'Farmer' John B. who drove his tractor up from Winchester complete with the necessary winching gear. All able-bodied men were requested to come along to assist and as John's tractor trundled through the gates there were already a large number of aspiring lumberjacks awaiting him, the response from members was excellent. Some of us, felt not a little sadness at hearing the agonising sounds of wood being torn asunder, heralding the death of yet another of those immense and stately pines, such proud products of nature. As each tree fell - or rather was guided to earth it was pounced upon by men and associates wielding a variety of saws, machetes, etc., the trunks being quickly stripped before being towed away from the field of slaughter. The resultant open space was remarkably soon transformed into the attractive sun lawn which now borders the tennis court. The subsequent screening with rhododendrons and other shrubs was thoughtfully planned and the area is now one of our most popular sunbathing spots. This landscaping was mainly the work of Mac and it is now difficult to recall how pervading was the gloom of the miniature forest that once occupied the area. Some tent sites were removed from their positions adjacent to the sun trap which in turn was enlarged by adding the upper tier where the sundial stands. The clearing on the north-east side was made to accommodate the tents being moved and some of the space was allocated for the childrens play area.

Mention of Mac recalls that he was invited to move into the club with Iris and their young daughters Deirdre and Fiona to take on the duties of Club Warden. It became obvious that with the approach of old age it was unfair and unrealistic to expect Old Jack to carry on this duty alone. Mac and Iris former members of the Thames Club, moved their caravan into Heritage in 1960. Council permission was sought and obtained for the new permanent caravan site. Jack had been site warden and had lived alone at the club except for his faithful guard dog Laddie. At first he was none too happy about the new arrangement but in the latter years of his life he must have felt comforted to have had someone near him and on call. As a family unit Iris and Mac would not feel the same sense of loneliness during the winter months that surely must have affected Jack. In spite of rapidly failing eyesight Old Jack still enjoyed a game of miniten and he was on court only a few days before his death, when well into his eighties, in October 1965. Mac soon stamped his personality on many facets of club life. His artistic talents were soon being called upon on behalf of the club as indeed they have been for some thirty years. He assumed the vital responsibility for the upkeep of the swimming pool and his careful daily attention resulted in the clear, clean water for our swimmers and ensured that it conformed to the health standards we are required to meet. Certainly in former years there were difficulties with the pool when we were without adequate filtration and the various make-do systems which were tried all proved inefficient. The job of emptying, scrubbing and cleaning out the pool in mid-season was not one of the most desirable tasks. For many years, Iris assisted the treasurer being readily available to receive subscriptions, pay bills, etc., and was frequently praised for her valuable help. In 1980 she took over the onerous post of treasurer herself and for seven years did an excellent job. Mac served on the M Committee with just a minor break for some 26 years and their joint commitment to Heritage throughout the past 30 years has been of the greatest importance to the club and cannot be overstated. As well as acting as a safeguard to the club property, onerous enough in these days of vandalism, they have also contributed to the acceptance of Heritage by the local community in that we are indeed sensible and responsible people neither to be feared nor ridiculed.

One improvement that took place early in this decade was the concreting of the top miniten court. This was mainly the work of George C. and George S. with of course some labouring help. Soon, this court became more popular than the lower one. A few years later a second court of smaller dimensions was added alongside. This was intended for children but as such was none too successful, adults encroached when the other courts were

occupied while at the same time the children preferred to play on the larger courts. A few years later this was enlarged to the full size.

In 1965 there was an important change in club officers. Mary G. having served in the chair for some ten years decided to stand down from this office and she was succeeded by George S. The post of President had become vacant with the death of Stan B. whose importance to the clubs history has already been noted. Not surprisingly, Mary was everyone's choice for the vacant post of President and remained in that office until 1984 when she felt that after 43 years of being closely engaged in club affairs she had earned a break. George S. was already a member of the M. Committee and had become deeply immersed in the clubs affairs. His retirement from work virtually coincided with his election as chairman and this enabled him, with Margaret, to spend many hours at the club. He was involved in most of the projects at this time as planner or as leading labourer working weekdays as well as weekends. One of these projects was the instigation of the perimeter road which necessitated much more land clearing but with the steady increase of car ownership, extra parking space had become a major priority. George and Margaret were later accorded recognition of their efforts by being awarded honorary membership and this was also bestowed upon George and Yvonne C. after they had relinquished their posts of treasurer and secretary following six years of dedicated service. Like Bill He. before them they had frequently found themselves cooped up in the office. When "released" George would be eager to join his namesake in any outside project.

In the mid-sixties the constitution which had stood the test of time for some 20 years was reassessed in view of changing conditions since the forties. One alteration which had provoked much emotional argument was the banning of members dogs, except for a guard dog, from the club. This was the culmination of one of the most explosive and perennial disagreements to bedevil many of our A.G.Ms. There were many dog owners in the club who regularly brought their pets along - unfortunately if not predictably, these animals did not always mix with complete harmony. The ensuing fights though sometimes fierce were quite often overshadowed by the verbal battles between their owners. Given that these owners did their best to control the dogs there was alas too often evidence of their occupation deposited around the club, most unpleasant for the other members and their children. This was surely vindication enough of the decision taken in 1964 even though it caused hardship and inconvenience to some members. In fact, a few members left as a result.

The other continuing controversy, limitation of membership, was never far from the surface. One argument frequently pressed for restoring a limit was the inadequacy of our toilets. In 1966 the M. Committee discussed ways and means of improving the situation. An architectural plan was produced and displayed on the noticeboard. At this time serving on the committee was a master builder, Tom H. (Tom and Ruby) and thus, unlike their predecessors some 20 years earlier, the club officials were able to consider a difficult building undertaking with professional know how. Tom, from his time of joining had been anxious to put his abilities at the clubs disposal. The plan included an extension of the pavilion with three additional rooms for offices plus a shower block which was added to the original plan for ladies toilets and to this also was included central heating of the pavilion. Graham W. also a member of the committee though not a builder by trade had obtained valuable experience whilst working on a self-build scheme. Tom and Graham combined as the mainspring of this operation. The A.G.M. gave its approval of the project, planning permission was obtained for work to commence in the spring of 1967. It was stressed to members that this was the biggest undertaking for many years. George S., Tom and Graham made it clear that a tremendous amount of hard work would be necessary over a long term; it would not be just a one weekend operation. It was hoped that virtually all able-bodied male members would be prepared to give a significant amount of their spare time for the clubs eventual benefit. In retrospect it seems doubtful if all but a few thoroughly comprehended the immensity of the undertaking

ahead.

Yet again Heritage began to resemble a builders-yard with materials stacked and heaped around the pavilion and in the car park, the beloved concrete mixer back in the centre of the action while picks, spades and shovels were being wielded with varying degrees and technique of enthusiasm. Reg, in his original text, records, "Without any doubt no contribution was ever more exacting than that undertaken by Tom and his associate Graham. Without them it is unlikely that the job would ever have been embarked upon - let alone completed". On the labouring front the biggest requirement was for diggers (no, not Australians) - a trench of some 200 yards from 6 foot in depth and a huge pit were two of the major necessities. Barrowing the materials, cement mixing and so many other mundane tasks were in constant need of manpower. It must be admitted that there were times when this was not always willingly forthcoming in sufficient quantity. As Roy G. had discovered so many years earlier, the counter attractions (now considerably increased) of our sun club could prove too strong, particularly after the original novelty had worn off. There were many difficulties to overcome and some setbacks. The worst of these came when the main work was nearing completion, suddenly the wooden floor of the pavilion collapsed. It was a sickening blow but Tom and Graham soon set about this unexpected and unwarranted task. They immediately went ahead with constructing a tiled concrete floor. This not only added to the work load but also considerably to the cost. Tom and Graham with a few faithful assistants worked assiduously not only on weekends but often finding time in mid-week to put in a few hours.

At the 1968 A.G.M. George S. paid a well-earned tribute to their skills and dedication while Graham, in his report, specifically mentioned John B. (John and Sheila) and Gus. S. (Gus and Pat) for their work and attention to the all important plumbing installations and also thanked Maurice C. for his work on the electrical side. Maurice (Maurice and Val) was heavily involved in most of the clubs projects throughout this decade carrying out a large amount of work of all kinds. Despite some of the criticism levelled at times, it should be recorded that a large number of members did get involved in this construction. As in other major operations, I'm afraid these humble but vitally necessary labourers are too numerous to mention individually. The A.G.M. of 1968 recorded the success of the whole venture - the new ladies toilets had by then been in use for some months. This important added facility for the club, even though achieved entirely by club labour with materials at trade price was at a cost of £1900 and to help to meet this, a levy was imposed on all members, this realising £500 toward the total. The club balances were drastically reduced and the hitherto untouched reserve fund had to be used. Heritage, however could take pride in a major improvement.

Another significant change was the decision to allow members to have huts at the club for overnight stay. This possibility had been mooted for many years but had not been seriously considered as it was doubted if permission could be obtained from the local council. In 1966 however there was a strong move in favour of installing huts for members use culminating in a resolution at the A.G.M. This was presented by Geoff E. and strongly supported by George S., Reg P. and many others. There was some opposition, mainly based on the possibility that their introduction might well destroy the club community spirit and even as reported from other clubs with chalets, lead to a "keep up with the Jones" syndrome. Nevertheless the resolution was carried by a large majority. Permission was obtained, at first, for 15 huts and the cost to members was £50. It had been decided that the huts should be uniform and they were ordered by the club; members soon discovered that much additional work on them was necessary to ensure some comfort and render them completely weatherproof. Initially they were slow to be taken up but after two years it was necessary to apply for permission for a further fifteen. Later in 1970 another six were added. With additional tent sites we then had some 50 sites available.

With the membership still rising it was again felt necessary to apply a limit. A resolution to freeze the membership at 400 adults was proposed and again proved how

divided the club was on this issue. On this occasion Alan S. (Alan and Muriel) was the main spokesman for the no-limit supporters and although they failed, it was by but a small majority. With so many enquiries for membership and the knowledge of other groups within our catchment area vainly seeking to get started, the idea of a so-called satellite club, to be sponsored and aided by Heritage, was propounded. A number of visits to possible sites were made by our club officials but they all proved fruitless and the idea was eventually shelved.

Now let us turn to the social and sporting aspect of the sixties. With increasing membership during these years a demand for more social and sporting activities grew. Hitherto apart from the Christmas party and rally day there had been very little in the way of organised events - social or sports. This is not surprising considering the volume of work undertaken in the earlier years. In attempting to meet this need Yvonne C. in particular became a prominent figure, indeed she was the mainspring of the Heritage Drama Group which produced a number of entertaining performances. Her enthusiasm and ability inspired several members (likely and unlikely) to perform for us. Among these, one can recall performances by Bill Ho., Tom H., Beryl S. and comparative newcomers Kath and Ray F. At this point, it is, I feel, in order to mention that for over 25 years Ray has unstintingly put his professional musical talents and experience at the disposal of Heritage for socials, dances, parties, pantomimes and old time concerts. The enjoyment he has given to many members over many years is immeasurable. During this period he has been partnered by other Heritage musicians such as Huan B., David H., Gabriel I., Neville M., and Peter W. They too have put in many hours contributing to our pleasure. Ray's commitment to Heritage has of course gone far beyond entertaining, as will be mentioned later.

The annual dinner dance was born in the early sixties. It started life as an informal end of season get together by a few campers, sparked by Sally and John. The idea appealed to others and in 1964 a buffet dance was organised at the nearby Wellington club, (since demolished) it was an immediate success. The first event featured our very own guitar group of Kay and Ray D., Huan B., Colin and Peter W. In addition there was a home-grown cabaret, there are some photos of this event in the archives. We then graduated to a full scale dinner dance and our venue for several years was the Rainbow Rooms in Reading. Since then we have used a number of different venues, some closer to the club, in particular at Barkham and at Wokingham.

The sports scene was by now very active. In 1962 Haslemere S.C. presented a shield for a very informal club tournament encompassing a few sports. On this occasion the hosts were victorious and the idea of an annual event took shape. In 1964 Heritage was asked to host this tournament for the Southern Region clubs. We did this with some style, employing all our games facilities. Maybe we were showing off a little; it certainly did prove to be a hectic day for all concerned. A sub-committee to organise it had been formed (John C., Jim C., Bill I., Mac and Wilf C.) and the competitions consisted of billiards (yes, we had a table in those days) badminton, miniten, table-tennis, tennis, volleyball and of course a number of swimming events. All rather ambitious but not unsuccessful. At the end of the day however Heritage had triumphed, as we had enjoyed home advantage that might have been expected nevertheless we still felt quite proud. As a result of these activities, a suggestion that a sub-committee be formed to be responsible for the obvious social and sporting needs, was adopted and three members in each case were appointed. The first sports committee consisted of Geoff E., Bill I., and Albert S. The first social committee elected was formed with Jean F., Barbara McQ., and Jean S. During the next few years our major sports commitment was to the annual contest for the Southern Region Shield. This had sensibly been reduced to five events, swimming, volleyball, miniten, badminton, and surprisingly, boules. This annual competition at first entailed one club hosting one event but with five Sundays being taken up plus the amount of unwanted travelling this format was abandoned. The contest was then shared each year by two clubs chosen generally from Diogenes, South Hants and ourselves. Heritage in fact were

never to lose the shield. Unfortunately the competition faded out due to the apathy of the other clubs. With the incentive of playing for Heritage, miniten and volleyball in particular were being played at a high competitive level. Season long domestic miniten tournaments (not appreciated by the non-competitive players) were fiercely contested, while volleyball would often attract twenty or more players to the court, those not playing, impatiently waiting their turn. The game was being played far more seriously than the somewhat chaotic matches of earlier years. this sporting euphoria spawned a competition with Bristol Solarians (a club started by former Heritage members Buddy and Doreen) in which we did battle, an apt phrase, twice a year at miniten and volleyball.

We travelled to Bristol in early Summer and they played at Heritage in September. They always provided tough opposition at miniten although we were generally too strong for them at volleyball. The miniten matches provided close and frequently exciting if not always friendly contests. The high-light was the mens doubles which featured our top combination John B. and Albert S. against Buddy and Bill, this was invariably a show case for all the miniten skills imaginable complete with gamesmanship of an order that John McEnroe would have been proud of many years later.

This in turn recalls the formation of the National Miniten Association, this attempt to organise and formalise the rules of "the naturist game" seemed an excellent idea. At this time clubs had courts of varying sizes and played to varying rules, which caused much confusion when inter-club matches were played. It appeared that one of the aims of the proposed association was to promote the game outside the movement, to schools, colleges, etc., however the draft rules did not meet with the approval of the many clubs, including our own, subsequently after further meetings an association was formed with a set of rules and court dimensions that in general met with approval. The Association immediately instituted a National Miniten Championship. Heritage were soon to make an impact with our ladies duo of Iris Mc. and Mig F., who were unbeatable until confronted by a Nottingham couple who remained champions for several years. They were the only pair to beat Iris and Mig either at semi-final or final stage. Later Iris teamed with Jean S. but alas with the same result. In the mens event Albert S., and John B., our exciting and explosive partnership always threatened to win the Nationals and certainly looked good enough but generally foundered when confronted by the more patient and defensive players from East Midlands and other clubs in the North. Since these days Heritage has continued to make a strong challenge for this title. Barry O. was to team with Wayne H. and make several strong bids for National honours and then in later years he was joined by his son Kevin. Kevin with brother Clive having won the National Junior title also came close to winning the senior event. It is ironic that Kevin, having moved South and joined South Hants should, with a partner from his new club win that title in 1982.

Apart from organising and picking teams the first undertaking of the Sports committee was the provision of a badminton court. Geoff E. and a few helpers cleared and levelled the area south of the sun trap planting shrubs and conifers to hopefully serve as a windbreak. Some 15 years later it was given a tarmac surface. As you will have gathered Heritage had become particularly sports orientated during the sixties but it must be emphasised that this enthusiasm was not confined solely to the players. When our club was involved in a match or tournament at another club it was not unusual for the players to be accompanied by a large number of (often) vociferous supporters. As we moved into the next decade there was a distinct drop in the desire for competitive sport, too many matches with too much travelling added to the decreasing novelty of visiting other clubs, were all contributory factors - also, members were coming to the conclusion that Heritage was the best place to be at the Weekend.

Reverting to club management, the secretarial gap left by the resignation of Yvonne C. was filled by Jim Cr. (Jim and Monica) but a combination of business pressure and ill-health forced him to relinquish office in favour of Stan F. However he too resigned after two

years when with Jean he moved to Kent. The ever important office of treasurer, vacated by George C. was taken over by David H. (David and Jeanette) who for the next eight years was to render invaluable service to the club and like his predecessors thoroughly earned the expressions of gratitude accorded to him. For some of this period Jeanette had served on the sports committee.

Another change, in 1969 was the decision to split the secretarial duties. A General Secretary to take care of the normal week by week duties involved in running the club was appointed, Tony W. (Tony and Margaret) taking over this office. A new post, of Membership Secretary was created solely to deal with corresponding and meeting all prospective new members and to help ease their way into club life. Bill L. accepted this responsibility and was to render dedicated service for the next ten years. Bill and Phyll lived locally and this was an undoubted advantage to the club. Phyll was also a hardworking member of the social committee for a few years.

Regarding the social committee there have been many and frequent changes of personnel over the years. This is undoubtedly due to the strain of a year long commitment which is not always appreciated by members. Until the late eighties, with one exception (Ray F.) this committee had always been "manned" by ladies. This situation has lately changed with a number of our male members becoming involved. We have been fortunate in the way the various social committees have performed during the years providing us with a variety of events some indeed which have been quite ambitious. Speaking of our Heritage lady members recalls that they were very active in the formative years of the club and provided us with secretaries, Muriel C., Mary G., Yvonne C., and very recently Kate R., also two membership secretaries Zena W. and Mo H.

Mary G. for many years was club Chairman and later President and several ladies have served on the sports committee yet there have been very few who have served on the M. Committee. From 1950 to 1988, apart from Mary, three only had been elected to the M.C. Gwen I., Val C., and briefly Jean F. (all of whom incidentally had also served on social committees), and they had all served before the early seventies. It was a welcome sign therefore when Marilyn B. was elected in 1988.

During the so-called swinging sixties there had been a noticeably more tolerant attitude toward naturism in this country, while naturists themselves were beginning to seek the sun abroad, particularly at Montalivet. At Heritage our membership had grown considerably and our amenities vastly improved; our finances however were under great strain and were to be the major consideration of the M.C. as we greeted 1970.

THE INFLATIONARY SEVENTIES

I was tempted to entitle this chapter "The Sombre Seventies" yet, in spite of the financial pressures encountered both in and outside of the club this would have been wholly inappropriate - Heritage has never been sombre. With membership figures close to the stipulated 400 we could no longer rely upon a rising membership to cover the inflationary trend which hitherto had been of moderate proportions.

In 1969 the subscription had risen to £5 per couple, single lady £2.50, single man £3.50, but these increases were soon to prove inadequate. The pavilion improvement had eaten into our reserves, inflation was increasing rapidly and to add to these worries it was evident that some heavy maintenance bills lay ahead. Inflation bedevilled most of this decade and provided major headaches for our club officials.

A few figures may perhaps help in appreciating the situation. In 1951 our rate bill was £35 - in 1973/74 it was £295. Electricity in 1958 cost us £29, in 1966 £67 but by 1974/75 it was £111. Fuel in 1960 cost £6.50 in 1970 £44 but by 1975 it had virtually doubled. Stationery

and printing in 1953 was a mere £3.50 in 1960 £10 but by 1974 it was £87. In 1968 the cost to administer the club to all its obligations was £700 yet by 1976/77 it was around £1,800. Remembering that throughout the fifties there was virtually no increase in subscriptions and in fact little change until the late sixties the eventual big rise in fees, reluctantly enforced in 1974, was surely far from surprising, though maybe unpalatable to some members at the time.

In 1970 there was a request for touring caravans to be allowed in the club, this came in the form of a resolution from Graham W. at the A.G.M.

After discussion on size limitation it gained acceptance subject to planing permission being obtainable. The maximum length agreed upon was 15ft and permission was granted in 1971. The 1971 A.G.M. dealt with amendments to the constitution which were eventually approved subject to scrutiny by four non-committee members. Significant alterations to the constitution were made to ensure that the A.G.M. would effectively become the "Parliament of the Club". The A.G.M. would govern whilst the elected M.C. would manage affairs of the club between the yearly meetings. This change arose as a result of a resolution submitted by the M.C. There were however, two important features that the membership would still have to entrust to the M.C:

(1) The admission of new members and constitutionally providing powers and machinery for expulsion. (2) To regulate annual subscriptions and charges to members. This was considered logical when it is appreciated that the M.C. is required to run the club on a sound financial basis while implementing the policy decisions of the A.G.M.

A further change at this time concerned the Presidency. This now provided for the President to assume executive powers in the M.C. and in addition a new office of Vice-President was created. In both cases to serve for two year periods but to be elected alternately. Mary G. was the choice for President while John R. better known as Rennie became our first Vice-President. Rennie had originally come to Heritage during its earliest days but had lost touch for many years until with his wife Han chanced to visit Mary and as a result they joined us in the sixties. Rennie was soon taking a big part in club affairs and was elected to the M.C. As Vice-President he frequently chaired (at Mary's request) our A.G.M.'s always with authority and good humour. He rendered much valuable service to the club, remarkable when considering the long journey that he and Han undertook each week from Cambridge. In the mid eighties they moved to Holland but sadly after a short period back in her homeland, Han died. One of our miniten shields was presented by Rennie in her memory.

A further alteration to the executive structure concerned the position of club chairman, hitherto elected by the A.G.M. This post was abolished and the M.C. would now elect their own chairman. To members generally this change may not have seemed significant as our original historian Reg P., chairman at the time, was promptly voted back on the M.C. who immediately opted for his considerable experience as Chairman. This was a tribute to the ability of Reg whose sincerity and dedication to the cause of Heritage had been outstanding.

Around 1971 our rapidly deteriorating fencing along the Heath Ride boundary was replaced by a more elegant wooden fence while about the same time Alan S., a member of the M.C. who for some years had been very active around the club built the pair of wooden gates to replace the old sturdy, but so noisy metal ones erected by Lionel and his merry men some 30 years before.

Another attempt to remove or at least extend the membership limit was made in 1972 but again this was defeated. By 1973 our financial situation was causing real concern. It was evident that the greater part of the metal fencing was disintegrating - particularly that along the National Trust boundary. A resolution by Mac was accepted that we plant some 400 Leylandii Cypresses around our perimeter but this however was a long term measure for better screening. The immediate problem was solved by the erection of a concrete wall, more expensive of course than metal but obviously far more durable. The wall was not to everyone's aesthetic taste but it was agreed upon, bought and erected in three stretches, one per year as

money became available.

Yet another major improvement was taking place below the lower miniten court. This area which had become a rough patch of uneven, untidy scrub was cleared and grassed. As seed growth would have been problematical it was decided to use turves. To meet the cost a voluntary collection was made and Barrie and Barbara O., Alan S., and others did a magnificent job in transforming this part of the club. There was enough money left to extend this attractive sun lawn to the slope above the court. Further clearing took place beyond the volley ball court carried out mainly by Alan S., and Dennis P.

The tennis court so generously donated by Teddy Brown was breaking up rather badly, in dire need of resurfacing. Original estimates for this work were staggeringly high and there was a body of opinion urging that this space could be more usefully employed. Fortunately for the tennis players a reprieve was at hand. The M.C. anxious to ascertain members' views on a number of aspects appertaining to the club and its future, sent out a questionnaire to a cross section of 100 members with questions covering a wide variety of subjects. All but a few of these were returned and when the answers had been sifted they revealed that over 80% were in favour of retaining the tennis court. The court was duly renewed at a lower figure than the first estimate but the cost was still about £1000. The miniten courts were also resurfaced, the original concrete, now cracking, being overlaid with tarmac.

As the wall was being built on one side of the club so the metal fencing along the other boundary was constantly being repaired. The M.C. had investigated early club documents and as a result concluded that the original fencing had been erected somewhat haphazardly and indeed well inside our boundary. A party, mainly consisting of George S., Don G., and Rennie set about putting this right. It entailed a lot of clearing and tree-felling before this was achieved. During the late seventies this was disputed by the owner of the adjoining land but following some legal discussions (handled for us by Andrew B.) and a long delay (the original owner died in the interim) an amicable arrangement was reached whereby we paid over a token sum of money thus avoiding a lengthy and expensive legal wrangle. Don G. (Don and Peggy) mentioned above, served on the M.C. for several years as well as succeeding George C. as treasurer of the Southern Region C.C.B.N. while in the eighties he became Chairman of C.C.B.N. Peggy also has served the Southern Region as well as being on our social committee.

At this time a major part of our income was needed for our obligatory costs, what little remained being eked out over the necessary maintenance. In an attempt to stabilize the situation and budget more effectively for the future, the M.C. introduced a three tier method of accounting. It was proposed to set aside future money for depreciation and improvements separately; there had been occasions in the past when money had been spent on improvements only to discover later that this left a deficiency in funds for vital maintenance. three separate (notional) accounts were instituted. No 1. For the clubs necessary obligations. No 2. For necessary maintenance costs. No 3. For improvements and new facilities. At this time it was recognised that until our finances improved No 3. could not be initiated. In fact it only became fully operational at the beginning of the next decade.

After eight years of devoting much of his time and ability to the post of treasurer David H. stood down and was succeeded by Les G. David was then elected to the M.C. rendering further valuable service for a few more years. His successor Les G. however only filled the post for a short period. After his resignation there was some difficulty in finding a replacement and Peter C. a newly-elected member of the M.C. agreed to take over until a permanent treasurer could be appointed. Peter and Jean C. had come to the club in the early seventies having heard the sounds of laughter and bat on ball drifting over the fence when they were visiting Heath Pool. (Years before there had been a similar introduction for Dennis and Eve P.) Peter and Jean were immediately enchanted and within a short period of joining had become very much part of Heritage life. Peter, once he was released from his treasury

commitment went on to succeed Reg as Chairman of the M.C. continuing a line of dedicated members who have given so much to our club. Jean did a spell on our social committee a few years later.

The incidence of National inflation co-inciding with unprecedented heavy maintenance costs during this period produced a steep rise in membership fees. In 1971 they stood at £3.25 per adult, in 1974 it was £6 but by 1976 it had risen to £11. There were also signs of a fall off in membership but fortunately by the end of the decade this drift had been halted. During this account it has only been possible to mention the larger undertakings involving our members. Then as now, throughout each year, winter and summer, work is being carried out by many members on routine jobs, large and small and all on a voluntary basis frequently unnoticed and therefore unheralded and possibly often unthanked. Their contribution has been and still is, vital to Heritage; although in the next decade more jobs were to be given to outside contractors there is no way the club could get by without the significant work by its members. However there are always some who cannot escape a mention, one such is John S. John and Gwen S. and family came to us from South Hants and soon immersed themselves in Heritage affairs. Wherever there was work in progress John was at the hub, sometimes working alone in a variety of jobs; no matter what the nature or difficulty John was ready and willing and able to tackle it. Gwen too played her part serving conscientiously on both social and sports committee.

Two changes in our trustees occurred in 1975, Ernest C. and Bill He. resigned as they were no longer in touch with the club. These vacancies were filled by Andrew B. who thus joined his father Jack as a fellow trustee and so underlining the family nature of Heritage, so often emphasized. This also applies to the other newly appointed trustee Harry B. (Harry and Beryl) loyal members since joining in the mid-forties. Their son and daughter also continued as members until moving away from the area. Their son Eric in fact, married Lesley Ho. - a real Heritage romance. The remaining trustee was John C. who had been appointed in 1945. In 1975 Tony W. relinquished the general secretary's post and was replaced by a fairly new member Chris B. (Chris and Daphne).

As we approached 1976, Reg was working night and day on the club history, hoping to have it ready for our 35th Anniversary celebration. The magnitude of his task prevented him achieving his aim but other plans were afoot to make this an unforgettable occasion. It was indeed a happy coincidence that this should take place during the finest, warmest, sunniest summer since 1946. These celebrations were coupled with the 70th birthday of our much loved President, Mary G. It was indeed a great occasion. We welcomed C.C.B.N. officials who included the President Gerry Rylands and in addition we were honoured by a visit from the Chairman of the local council as well as a representative from the local Police force. There were a few formal speeches introduced by Rennie. Reg P. toasted the club and Mary, who received a presentation from Gerry of the C.C.B.N. certificate for services to Naturism was not unnaturally overwhelmed. She replied that she would accept this honour, not for just herself but also on behalf of Roy her late husband. The social committee gathered together many helpers and worked hard in providing a splendid buffet with home-made wine and two decorative cakes, one for the club and one for Mary. In the evening there was dancing to Ray F., Peter W., and David H. and most of the other guests stayed on to enjoy the atmosphere. A number of former members, some from far afield joined us for this celebration. It was generally agreed that this was one of the clubs happiest occasions. Reg, in his tribute to Mary wrote "Her qualities as a club member, her kindness, thoughtfulness and prevailing good humour have ensured her being held in the highest esteem by us all. Not least of her qualities is that of unselfishness, in spite of her phenomenally long association with the club and its management she has never permitted herself to become possessive toward Heritage and its members". The celebration certainly gave the club a significant boost and a rejuvenation of club spirit.

We were now able to go ahead with the second stage of erecting the wall, the third being completed in 1977. Tony W. (having given up as general secretary) was now a member of the M.C. and was mainly responsible, in co-ordination with the sports committee for organising the C.C.B.N. annual swimming gala which was held under the auspices of Heritage at Basingstoke Sports Centre where in fact we organised occasional sports evenings during the winter. In the following year Tony was again actively engaged in organising (with Chris B. and Andrew B.) for the C.C.B.N. A.G.M. which was held at Heritage. This was another big occasion with many delegates from clubs all over the country being in attendance. Two marquees were erected, a large one on loan from neighbouring club Berkshire S&L and a smaller one supplied by C.C.B.N. The social committee of that time and their helpers faced a tremendous task in providing meals for delegates as well as tea, coffee etc., throughout the day but they coped well.

The treasury vacancy was at last filled, Karl B. offering his services thus relieving Peter C. of his temporary appointment which he had filled with great efficiency. Now that the western boundary wall had been completed, the tennis court resurfaced with no other large expenditure envisaged in the near future, there were at last signs of a healthier bank balance in the offing.

Thoughts turned to the possibility of new amenities and many ideas were being canvassed, some which had been mooted in earlier years when in view of our parlous financial situation appeared to be completely unrealistic. An open forum was held in the sun trap in June 1978 to discuss such suggestions and this was a lively well attended meeting. Paramount among the more reasonable schemes were; to heat the swimming pool, provide a sauna or build a so-called solarium, this to be erected in front of and adjoining the pavilion out to the pool surround. This in fact gained most favour and became the subject of a resolution at the following A.G.M. This was carried and the M.C. were charged with costing and planning and to report back to the members. The M.C. engaged themselves with the problem of providing a solarium. It was only after much discussion, consultations, quotations etc. that they came to the conclusion that the original conception was not altogether a practical proposition. It was considered that the actual space available would be sufficient only for a small number of sunbathers. Also, although that area is the first to catch the morning sun it is the first to lose it in the evening. A further objection was that such a large area of glass could well prove to be hazardous. These conclusions were presented to the 1979 A.G.M. and accepted by a large majority so it was agreed to abandon this project. In the meantime the patio had been improved by slabs replacing the old original concrete which had become rough and well worn after 30 years of wear and tear. Some of us were a little sad at the disappearance of the prints made in the concrete by some of our early youngsters but this area was now enhanced and further improved by a low decorative wall replacing the original fence.

The post of General Secretary again changed hands, Chris B. handing over to Frank W. Frank and Zena lived locally and this appointment proved to be an excellent one, Frank was to perform this duty for several years, conscientiously, efficiently and with good-humoured forbearance. This job is time consuming and calls for much paperwork particularly when dealing with local authorities for planning renewal, fire regulations and similar necessities - he also has to deal with the committee! Zena also played a notable part when a few years later she took over from Bill L. as membership secretary. Together they made a fine team.

In general competitive sport in the seventies was on the decline. Our interchange matches with Bristol had ceased while the Southern Region tournament which we had won for so many years had petered out through the apathy of other clubs. Our domestic miniten tournaments tailed off but we were generally represented in the National Miniten Tournament thanks now to Barrie O. and his family, Joy G. and Wayne H. Volleyball enthusiasm had waned for a while but then revived when we were invited to play in the Aztec

tournament. This provided the necessary incentive and for a number of years we competed regularly, sometimes with two teams. Although we have been finalists and generally semifinalists we never managed to win. One innovation during the late seventies was the introduction of two miniten competitions for the juniors. These started as informal events but the presentation of a shield by Kath and Ray F. for the under 13 year olds singles proved a big success. This was followed by Jean and Peter C. donating a further shield for the under 16 doubles and this too provided keen competition. The August Bank Holiday Sports Day which replaced the old rally day event is run mostly for the youngsters. For many years the mantle of Jim C. was boisterously carried by Ray A. but in later years Keith B. became the "Uncle" who generally ended up being pushed into the pool. By the end of the decade adult miniten tournaments were being revived but as quite informal "fun" events. The shield made and presented by Mac for our competition with Bristol was taken out of moth balls and put up for an annual match between Diogenes and ourselves.

During the seventies, thanks mainly to the efforts of Ian B., Heritage naturist winter swimming sessions were held at an indoor pool in the area. They were successful but unfortunately due to outside influences apprehensive of naturists these had to be discontinued. Ian then obtained the use of the older baths at Reading and also booked us into Basingstoke Sports Centre. This led to us obtaining virtually the whole use of the centres facilities. These evenings proved very popular at first but later in the eighties we had to rely increasingly on the attendance of members from other clubs and with continually rising costs were eventually forced to discontinue these sessions.

Before ending this account of the seventies it would be less than honest if a brief mention was not made of a less pleasant piece of club history. This involved a member of longstanding who was then serving on the M.C. and who after due and serious deliberation by that committee was expelled from the club. No further comment is really necessary except to say that rarely in the clubs history has such an action been found necessary but it does underline the fact that the good name of naturism in general and certainly of Heritage in particular, must be protected at all times.

It has been indicated that this decade was not an easy one for Heritage, mainly because of the economic pressures but thanks in particular to the decisions taken by our executive and to the support of the membership our position had become much more stable and we were able to greet the eighties with renewed confidence.

THE SOPHISTICATED EIGHTIES

The advent of this decade heralded the rise of computordom, yuppiedom, and indeed, an era of previously undreamed of technical sophistication. At Heritage, even though naturally we still had our feet firmly on the ground we were not un-affected by the prevailing trend and these ten years witnessed many improvements and additions to the club facilities which would surely have surprised those intrepid pioneers of the forties. The membership was well above 300 and rising and thanks to wise and careful management our financial position was on a much sounder basis,

In 1980 we were again playing host, this time to an I.N.F. European meeting. Despite the international aspect this was smaller in numbers compared with the C.C.B.N. A.G.M. Initially there were some difficulties concerning the number of delegates and their particular requirements. These chiefly affected the catering and was the concern of our social committee at that time. When the day came Heritage seemed an alien place with the babble of several languages to be heard. It all passed off satisfactorily. The various European delegates expressing their appreciation and making presentations to the club to mark the occasion.

By 1980 there had been a growing movement by a number of members for the club to install its own sauna. Our neighbouring club had started sauna sessions at Bracknell

Sports Centre in the seventies which were also being attended by some of our members. As a result of this growing interest a resolution at the 1980 A.G.M. was passed, authorising the purchase of a sauna, cost not to exceed £2000 and to operate it, via a charge, to recover the original outlay within a five year period. It is interesting to note that many years before Jim C. and Lionel P. had attempted to construct a D.I.Y. sauna but this was abandoned. At this time we were much engaged in an operation to comply with the demands of the local authority needed to gain a renewal of our camping licence, which has to be re-applied for at regular intervals. These regulations mainly concern fire hazards, one in particular called for each hut to have a fire extinguisher of a requisite specification. To meet this demand a sufficient number of these were purchased by the club for the hut owners to buy and install. The other major requirement caused a greater upheaval; it was pointed out that some of the huts were less than the required 20ft apart. During the course of the year all the necessary moves were made. Naturally not all of the hut owners affected were overjoyed but in general co-operated well and the moves were made without mishap. It was a strange sight indeed to see some 30 men carrying a hut on poles across the club. A moving experience!

The sauna was duly purchased as an entity but much work was necessary to bring it into operation. Part of the wall of the shower block was knocked out to provide an entrance into the sauna. Vital electrical work was necessary, carried out by Ian H. and it was also deemed advisable to make it completely weatherproof by enclosing with a wall and roof. Graham W. took on this task assisted mainly by John S. Other necessary work was carried out by several members and our newest amenity was in operation by March 1981. The individual charge of 75p per session remained for the next nine years when it was increased to £1. The coming of the sauna prompted other improvements in the pavilion, bearing in mind the necessity for warmth and comfort when relaxing after a sauna, a sliding partition was made and installed by Tom G. (Tom and Beryl) while a carpet and some comfortable chairs were also purchased. About this time our kitchen was completely re-furnished and modernised with new units and cupboards. This was the work of one of our newer members Dave Pa. (Dave and Anne). Our garden seats had fallen into a sad state of disrepair but thanks to George P. (George and Mary) they were completely renovated and in fact since then he has maintained them each year. Further examples of how the Heritage spirit affects members, old and new. In late 1980 we learned of the sudden death of Martin H. who had edited Sundial since its inception around 1965. His commitment to our newsletter had been total, he had produced it regularly often under difficult circumstances. Bill I. agreed to fill his place.

In 1981, we had another self-congratulatory celebration, the 40th anniversary of Heritage. This was less formal than the 35th but none the less pleasurable. Once again Gerry Rylands was a welcome guest along with other C.C.B.N. officials paying their respects. A pleasing feature was the number of older and a few former members who were present to mix with some of our newer recruits. The celebration also linked up with the 40th wedding anniversary of our Vice-President Harry and Beryl B. In fact they generously made a contribution toward the cost to show their appreciation of the club which had meant so much to them. Mary G. was not forgotten either, it was her 75th birthday. Once again, it was voted a happy occasion.

Karl G., for occupational and family reasons had found it necessary to resign as Treasurer but this time the problem of finding a successor was solved when Iris Mc. having for so long assisted previous treasurers agreed to take on this onerous duty. She did a thorough and excellent job for the next seven years before standing down. At the 1981 A.G.M. a resolution calling for an investigation into the feasibility of heating the swimming pool was carried and the M.C. set about the task of finding the most practical and economical method available. From the earliest days, heating the pool had been the dream of many members but prohibitive running costs had rendered it impossible. By 1981 however great strides had been made in this sphere and from several methods available, for our requirements the heat pump

method was chosen as although initially expensive the running costs were considered negligible. Harry B. undertook the investigation and was ably assisted by Keith B. whose practical experience was incalculable. A special meeting in March 1982 unanimously gave its approval to the project and the pump was purchased and installed. Keith carried out the necessary plumbing and a pool cover (vital for retaining heat) was also purchased, by July it was operating successfully.

News of the death of Jack B. was not only a great blow to Margaret but also to the club who had benefited from his knowledge and advice on many occasions. He was a long serving trustee and this vacancy was filled by Graham W. a member with Joan and family since 1953 and fiercely dedicated to Heritage, he had to be a worthy choice. For much of that time he had been actively concerned with many of the clubs projects, undertaking every kind of work from bricklaying to masses of paper work. He served on the M.C. for many years and in 1988 was elected club President. This tribute is a reminder that while some of the members who have played leading roles were now perhaps taking life a little easier or had left the club, others were taking their place. Jack and Mo H. for instance, their popularity is surely matched by the hours of work they put in at Heritage. They have been responsible, winter and summer, for much of the clearing and tidying up that is done and of course Jack is often referred to unofficially, as the Clerk of the Works. Their reward is to see the club looking at its best and for the members (and visitors) appreciation of Heritage. Jack, in addition to being a valued member of the M.C. for some years also served on the sports committee for nearly 20 years. When Zena retired as our membership secretary, Mo took over at first sharing the post with John Cr., but when he left continued alone to do a fine job. Equally familiar to most members are Neville and Marian M. They joined, with their children in the seventies and although having a young family quickly became involved in club activities. Neville was elected to the M.C. in 1978 and has been a dedicated member of that body since, being particularly concerned with club maintenance and improvements, but has played an important part in most club affairs. Marian for her part has served on both the social and sports committees while on more than one occasion members have been thankful to call upon her nursing experience. Both have been deeply committed to Heritage. Having mentioned work around the grounds, this is of course an on-going chore, winter and summer, pruning, cutting back tidying, mowing etc., is constantly being carried out by many of our members. In particular during the eighties among those regularly engaged in this work were Ron and Ann W., Barrie and Barbara O., John and Sheila B., John and Dorothy T., Bill and Rose J., David and Elaine Pe. and Denis C.

By 1983 the subscription had risen to £19 per adult (remember £2.50 per couple in 1942?) and hut sites were priced at £25. The membership was close to the 400 mark and the funds were looking healthier. However we were only too aware that ahead lay some large maintenance bills. There was particular concern about our sewage and waste water disposal. Our system laid down in the sixties was now proving inefficient and unable to cope satisfactorily. It was discussed at length at the A.G.M. of 1983 when Julian S. reported on the necessity to install a new system. The cost of the operation, by outside contractors, was estimated at £14,500., a prohibitive sum which could not be found from our normal resources. A levy on members or obtaining a bank loan were among a number of suggestions for raising the money. Julian then suggested that some £5000 could be saved by hiring the necessary equipment, and doing it ourselves. There seemed to be no possibility of mains drainage coming within range of the club in the foreseeable future. In 1984 a decision was made to replace our old brick built septic tank by two 4,500 litre septic tanks plus two holding tanks and these with the necessary land drains and manholes were laid by contractors at a cost of £4,300. All was still not well however and we withheld some of the payment to the firm when it was found necessary for us to locate the original drains and re-lay them with further manholes. Graham W. and Keith B. spearheaded this operation. Throughout the following

years this system has been under constant surveillance and if not perfect has worked reasonably well. Keith B. is another member who, since being introduced to Heritage by his wife Mary, (Graham's daughter) has worked unstintingly for the club.

It was around this time that we became aware that Peter C., chairman of the M.C. who had been unwell for some time was in fact seriously ill. He resigned from the committee, Reg P. taking on his former role of chairman. It was with great sadness that we witnessed Peter's decline in health, he died after a long and devastating illness in 1985. His loss was deeply felt at Heritage where he and Jean had played a significant part from the time of their joining in club affairs. There was a large contingent of Heritage members at his funeral where Andrew B. spoke a moving tribute. Like Mary, in equally tragic circumstances thirty or so years before Jean bravely resumed her club membership and on a happier note, a few years later, was to marry Ken. S. also a club member.

Mary G. decided that after 43 years of dedication to Heritage affairs, as secretary, as committee member, as chairman and finally as president it was time to take a rest. Her record is unique and no praise can be too high. She was awarded the title of Honorary President.

The advisability of having additional wardens as a back-up to Mac and Iris had been under discussion for a while. Eventually an advertisement was placed in B.N. as well as at the club and after a number of applicants had been interviewed the choice fell on Marie and Ken B., who were members of the White Rose Club. A caravan was purchased and sited in the eastern corner of the club, a concrete standing (a necessity for a permanent dwelling) was laid down by Mick G. (Mick and Veronica) who was a very active member during the eighties. Marie and Ken took up residence as assistant wardens in Spring 1986. They at once integrated into Heritage life, Marie was soon involved in assisting at social events and later became a member of the social committee. Her memory for members names and all their children was amazing. Ken eventually took over the maintenance of the pool, a necessary ongoing task, so long carried out so efficiently by Mac.

Another celebration, in July 1986 was for our 45th anniversary. Again a happy occasion, which featured a buffet meal enjoyed by a large number of members. Harry B. toasted the club and there was the usual cake cutting ceremony for it was also Mary's 80th birthday. There was dancing to a disco with a break for a mini old time music hall (excerpts from previous shows) in the pavilion. Ray F. was in his usual good form as "chairman". This provides another lead to record the fact that in 1985 after a number of years valuable service on the M.C., Ray F. was elected its chairman. (Reg P. had now succeeded Harry B. as vice president.) Ray has continued chairing the M.C. and his commitment to Heritage has been total, like his predecessors in this post he has frequently been put under much pressure but like them his love of Heritage enabled him to cope. The value of the joint contribution made by Ray and Kath cannot be overstated, they have been at the forefront of club affairs for many years. Kath too playing her part on the social and sports committees.

Our membership during these years remained at a high level and certainly in the latter years our limit was reached and we had the luxury of a waiting list of applicants. Each year there is a small turnover of members and now filling their places was proving no problem. Apart from a general uplift in naturism, (the incidence of foreign holidays was a major factor in this) we were particularly affected by the unfortunate demise of our neighbouring club at Badgerwood, which had started life in the seventies. Even before it closed to naturists we were receiving applications from disenchanted members and following its closure we were inundated. It was not possible to accommodate them all, in fact our committee were loathe to accept too many at a time as it was felt that this might possibly lead to a division within our club. Additionally we did not wish to fill all the available places with former Berkshire members to the exclusion of new naturists who applied. However, each year we have accepted former members of Berkshire 'S & L' and by 1987 quite a large number were

happily integrating into our club life and affairs. At this time much work was carried out in clearing and tidying up further areas, in particular more space for car parking was needed. Much of this was done in the southern (far end) section, which had previously remained undeveloped. This was now cleared and grassed and had become a valuable area for camping as well as car parking. Much of this work was done in the winter months, for like the famous Windmill Theatre during the war, "we never close". Much of the credit for grassing this area belongs to a former member from Badgerwood, Wilf S.

Meanwhile in the pavilion our T.V. room had received a splendid refurbishment thanks to quite new members David and Elaine Pe. and John and Sheila M., a much appreciated improvement. In 1985, Zena W. who had been such an ideal membership secretary, thought it time to make way for someone else and her position was filled by the partnership of Mo H. and John Cr. Very soon, husband Frank followed her example and resigned as general secretary after a long spell. In both cases their contribution to the cause of Heritage has been invaluable. Frank was succeeded by Lawrence H. (Lawrence and Maureen) previously members of Diogenes. Lawrence at once made a significant change by putting our records on to computer. Yet another change concerned our President, Harry B., who having moved to Somerset felt obliged to resign his post, his successor was Graham W. to whom tribute has already been paid.

Mention has also been made of Mick G. who was at this time engaged in a number of jobs around the grounds, particularly so in 1985 when with valuable help from his sons he removed a number of huge pines, in fact virtually all that remained within the club. These had become immensely tall and many of them undoubtedly unsafe. It was a daunting and difficult undertaking and Mick did a wonderful job to fell these giants with only minimal damage to a single hut. Less than two years later we were to be thankful for his careful felling. The gales of October 1987 or indeed those of January 1990 would surely not have been so particular!

Among those members who had joined us from Berkshire 'S & L' were Ray and Barbara S. and they quickly became involved in club life. Ray was elected to the social committee and then when Iris, understandably felt that seven years as treasurer were quite enough, Ray took over this responsibility and at once proved to be exceedingly efficient. Ray and Barbara are both completely devoted to our club, to C.C.B.N. and to the naturist movement as a whole. Another former member from Berkshire, Denis A., served on the social committee and was later elected to the M. Committee.

Our central heating which had not been functioning properly for some time was overhauled by John B. and Keith B. and they installed new radiators. We had at this time one or two club electricians, in particular Chris S who put in much time trying to improve and patch up our elderly ailing system.

Roman Ride, the normal approach to the club does not provide the smoothest of rides and from time to time the club has attempted to fill in some of the worst holes that have appeared. In 1985 we joined financial forces with some of our neighbours to improve and level the surface. This made the drive a little more comfortable for a while at least. The introduction in 1990 of the "sleeping policemen" was not of our doing.

Throughout most of the eighties we were plagued by some indifferent summers which fortunately had little effect on our membership figures - even if it did restrict club attendance to the hardy, the committed and the eternal optimists. All of the same breed I suspect. 1987 is the year which will be remembered by most of us for the horrendous October gales in the south east which caused immeasurable damage and some loss of life. Fortunately Heritage escaped lightly with a few trees down, one of which fell across the top miniten court, flattening the surround netting. A few members were soon on the spot to clear the trees and make the necessary temporary repairs to the netting. In 1987 another change in the executive occurred when Vice-President Reg P. stood down. He had served the club nobly at

management level for most of his 30 years at the club. He was replaced by Bill I.

The 1987 A.G.M. was quite a stormy affair, some discontent was shown about the earlier purchase of the assistant wardens caravan which was now in need of repair, while the high cost of renewing the tennis court was also opposed by a few members. Another resolution calling for the enforcement of nudity at all times when practical also aroused considerable controversy. The 1988 meeting also produced some heated exchanges and a little bad feeling. Our meetings over the years have ranged from the very passionate and noisy to those like the 1989 edition; quiet, content, almost apathetic. The A.G.M. however is or should be the clubs most important occasion of the year. The reference to the tennis court is a reminder that the re-laying of this court was not only an expensive operation but a major headache for the M. Committee. The court, when finally completed was painted in two colours and lined for miniten as well as for tennis, it looked wonderful. However soon after being given the green light to use it we discovered that once the temperature warmed up, the surface became sticky and bubbled. There was a long saga of complaints to the contractor and various attempts made to cure the problem, all to no avail. After much pressure from us the contractor agreed to replace the surface completely with a new substance. We lost more than a season of play, the court being eventually playable in 1990. The miniten courts were also sorely in need of refurbishing and the same firm agreed to use similar material to cover the existing surface of the top courts - even this produced some early problems. After the courts had been renewed the surrounding wire netting and supports were completely replaced. Quite a number of members were engaged in this operation and at the same time they re-sited and renewed the floodlight supports ensuring their safety.

During our long history Heritage members have in general learned to become philosophical about the uninvited sight-seers who are almost a regular feature of a sunny Sunday. This natural curiosity is far less welcome when the outsiders attempt, and on occasions succeed, in gaining access to the club. Worse still, have been the small scale robberies from huts and some deliberate vandalism. This has normally occurred at night and generally during the winter months. One potentially nasty incident occurred in 1989 when a number of youths attempted to break in through the gates not only causing some damage but also threatening our wardens. The police were summoned and apprehended some of them. The completion of the wall was effected in 1988 and except for the frontage where a new wooden fence was erected, now encloses the club. The wall did not deter the "voyeurs" who leaned old tree branches against it to gain vantage points. In order to counteract that, anti-vandal paint was purchased and Denis C. Yes, Brown Denis himself (but after painting - Black Denis) volunteered for the unenviable job of coating the top of the wall with this obnoxious substance. In addition barbed wire strands were fixed. It had been a kind of Forth Bridge job for Denis but has proved a successful exercise. Peter B. also fitted barbed wire along the front fence.

A wide variety of social events have been organised by the social committees during this decade. Some being very well attended, others less so but all giving enjoyment to our members who perhaps are not always aware of the work that the social committees have put into them. The annual Christmas Party is always well attended while the Barn Dance and Barbecue evening has become an annual event and extremely popular. The annual Dinner Dance fell into decline for a while but in later years using more local venues at Barkham and at Wokingham has again been well supported. Being a member of the Social Committee is no sinecure as many have discovered, this commitment, like that to the M. Committee is continuous and often time consuming. As a result the personnel has been subject to frequent changes. In order to maintain some form of continuity there was an alteration to the rules regarding election to the social and sports committees, members now being elected for a two year period, two elected in alternate years. It is only fair to say that throughout the years we have been well served by our social committees. During the latter years of this decade, thanks originally to Mick G. (then a member of the social committee) the sale of ice cream was revived.

An experiment many years before had not been successful, now however, it has become for many the high spot of a Sunday afternoon - and it is also profitable.

On the sports front, miniten has kept its place as the most popular game played at the club and in the latter years we have seen a resurgence of the competitive spirit which had lapsed during the seventies. the internal "fun" tournaments were now very popular and attracting more competitors while following the sad death of Han R., Rennie donated a splendid shield in her memory, to be competed for as a ladies doubles trophy. Jean C. has also presented a similar trophy in memory of Peter, this being for mens doubles. A third trophy has since been presented by Rennie for a mixed doubles competition. The juniors already had their shield tournaments as mentioned earlier these proving very popular and an excellent incentive to the youngsters - many of whom have since become very fine players. Barrie O. added to these trophies when he presented a shield for the 16 to 18 group.

Mac's shield for competition between Diogenes and ourselves has been played for annually and we held this for a number of years until Diogenes surprised us in 1988. We managed to regain it two years later. We have also entered the new national miniten club tournament but failed at our first challenge, losing to S. Hants S.C. and two years later to N. Kent, again at the first hurdle. Volleyball once again suffered a decline in interest following our last appearance in the Aztec tournament in 1981 when we were beaten finalists. By 1989 however, with some newer members showing interest there were once again signs of a revival. Boules, too, has been rapidly gaining in popularity with many more members taking part. Tennis still retained its popularity but alas our players had an unhappy period for nearly two years when the court was out of action.

This did enable them to sunbathe however as 1989 was a summer to remember, a wonderful end to the eighties, for naturists if not for gardeners. In spite of limited miniten and no tennis there was still a wonderful spirit abroad at Heritage and we could scarcely wait for 1990. As we celebrated at an excellent dinner dance and the following day sat through an amicable and speedy A.G.M., we were contentedly unaware of the disaster and sadness with which we would shortly be confronted. Indeed, 1989 ended on a particularly sad note when Ted G. (Ted and Joy) a member of the M. Committee died after a year long illness. Heritage was well represented at the funeral of this popular member.; it is pleasing to note that Joy has since been able to seek solace amidst her friends at Heritage.

INTO THE NINETIES - AND OUR FIFTIETH

Although the lovely summer of 1989 had played its part in creating a wonderfully relaxed atmosphere at the club, much work had also been carried out particularly to the drainage system in the lower court area, with many members involved. The near perfect weather had also induced an increase in camping with casual tent and caravan sites often at a premium. This aspect of club management is often overlooked but can at times be a cause of many problems. The responsibility is mainly carried by a member or members of the M.C. in association with our wardens. For a few years Barry F. (Barry and Diane) a member for some ten years, has handled this important role assisted latterly by Neville M. Camping of course includes the huts, keeping an eye on their external condition, ensuring the waiting list is up to date and adhered to, while in particular dealing with the problems that occasionally arise over their sale and transference.

As we moved into 1990, the winter in these parts proved in many ways to be a misnomer, amazingly mild, snow virtually absent and a low rainfall, there was however to be a nasty sting in the tail. These unusual conditions did enable a good deal of work to be done around the grounds by our enthusiastic winter regulars. In January we received a return visit from the 1987 gales and this time they were less kindly disposed toward Heritage. Several trees on the National Trust property fell across our wall, one of which landed on the pavilion

roof punching holes through the ceiling of the T.V. room as well as breaking into the roof of the sauna plus other structural damage. Additionally, trees fell beside our Asst. Warden's caravan. While attempting to remove these, Marie suffered a head injury, necessitating hospital treatment. Worse was to follow!

Marie B. had been unwell for a few weeks and her doctor eventually sent her to hospital for an investigation. Tragically, within a few days she had died. In but a few years Marie and Ken had become a valued part of Heritage life. That Marie was much loved and respected by all members, was proved by the remarkable turn out of over 100 Heritage friends at her funeral. The service was conducted by Paul LS., a parson and a Heritage member for many years, who had in fact just moved to the South Coast.

For some time past it had become evident that all was not well with our electrical system. Several of our club electricians had warned that the system was inefficient, being overloaded and probably dangerous. The M.C. now decided that the costly exercise of changing single phase to a three phase supply and the necessary rewiring was now priority. A new permanent housing was required to contain the incoming mains box and meters, to be sited by the gate. Peter B. volunteered and built the excellent "sentry box" for this purpose. The rewiring was carried out by outside contractors and completed in the spring. Meanwhile after the insurers had assessed the gale damage the builders came in and made the necessary repairs. Our insurance claim was met and this included loss of sauna revenue.

After such a calamitous start to the year we could be forgiven for feeling somewhat apprehensive as to what the rest of the season had in store. Unbelievably it was another hot, dry summer, a naturist dream in fact, this particularly attracting large weekend attendances at the club. Once again our maximum membership was achieved and our plans for 1991 and the big celebration were well under way.

TO THE FUTURE

We move into 1991, regretfully with a sense of deja-vu as once again our country is involved in a war - the Gulf War. Fortunately, unlike the affair of fifty years before this one was brought to a speedy conclusion and now we could really feel justified in celebrating.

One other problem concerning the M.C. at this time is that of appointing new assistant wardens. Following the death of Marie, Ken having stoically carried on alone for about a year, understandably elected to move back to Yorkshire.

As we look around our glorious club, it is tempting to try and envisage Heritage in the future - say 25 or even 50 years hence. Will there be any significant physical differences to the grounds? - apart probably from the addition of extra buildings which are already under discussion including the proposed move of the provision of a men's new toilet block. There are of course a number of extraneous factors that could influence the club's future. For instance will naturism continue to thrive as a minority pursuit or conversely will it survive? Will it become universally accepted to such an effect that clubs like ours become obsolete or alternatively will the time come when naturism will be deemed illegal? The increasing threat from the large scale development which has proliferated in this area in recent years could also pose a problem in the future.

It seems inconceivable that after 50 years of magnificent endeavour, of heartbreak and happiness, of friendship and fun, of sun and serenity, yes, inconceivable that Heritage will not survive and indeed thrive for another 50 years. Surely if the members of the future are in any way the equal of those past and present who have founded and maintained this club and its traditions - then its future must be secure.

The lure of Heritage is evidenced by the number of members who have remained with the club for so many years. Mary G. of course is synonymous with Heritage, her

wonderful record of loyalty during her 50 year membership is unique, there are still many others with a continuous membership of over 40 years and still more with 25 years plus. There have also been quite a number of people who for various reasons have left us, only to return some years later - happy to be back home. There are former members who live at a distance but still keep in touch and are always avid for news of "their club".

In these pages there have been frequent references to the Heritage "spirit" and this is surely exemplified by Jack and Ellen J. Jack joined in the early forties as a single man and later introduced Ellen. Though always loyal members, like many others, a busy working life precluded them from taking full advantage of their membership but since his retirement and after over 40 years at Heritage, Jack has rendered invaluable service with work of all descriptions, his skills are in evidence everywhere. This is the spirit that has sustained the club since it's formation, they are in fact the embodiment of all the club stalwarts past and present, many of whom alas, have not gained a mention in these pages, yet whose contributions, large or small, have been vital in developing this naturist paradise throughout the past fifty years; turbulent, traumatic but at Heritage at least, happy years.

As we celebrate on June 29th 1991, I am sure we will all remember with gratitude those few founder members of long ago who envisaged a club owned by the members, run by the members for them and their children and their children's children. A club that Muriel C. inspirationally named HERITAGE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have to thank many members for their invaluable help.

Particularly to Reg P. who spent so many long hours researching and writing the original (some of which remains intact) and which made this all possible.

Thanks are due to several of our older members, in particular Mary G. and John C., on whose memories I was able to call upon.

My thanks and congratulations to Mac for his magnificent cover design.

Thanks also to Graham W. for his encouragement which ensured that once I had started I would indeed finish.

Last but certainly far from least, my grateful thanks to Gwen I., whose invaluable assistance has included many hours of typing, for the original editing, for 'Sundial' and for "The Story of Heritage".

Bill.