

# WETHERSFIELD NEWS

BLACKMORE END, BEAZLEY END

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 1992

## Bride awakens a Sleeping Beauty

WHEN Wethersfield bride Heather Bartels rode up to the parish church on the soft green leather seats of CN 6680, a 1935 Wolseley Hornet, it was rather like the princess awakening the Sleeping Beauty, in a new twist to the fairy tale.

For CN 6680 had spent 16 of its last 20 years rusting away in a chicken shed at Sible Hedingham. Its last journey had been when Wethersfield baker Albert Weavers had taken it on a jaunt to Clacton in the seventies.

Until five years ago no-one much had been to disturb its slumbers except one hopeful suitor who had bought it five brand new tyres but got no further than throwing them into the mouldering car, leaving it to dream on.

A Castle Hedingham garage owner hauled it out of the shed eventually and thought of doing it up. He thought again and CN 6680 passed to Gordon Barber of School Road, Blackmore End, director of Three Fields Mini-skips and a keen car restorer.

With the help of David Holmes and Stephen Tillbrook, now in business at Wethersfield High Street, he set about bringing the Hornet back to life. It took the team four years. The car was

stripped and completely rebuilt from the red-lead repainted chassis up. Nothing was stinted. The rear seats were missing but new ones were built using real leather for the upholstery.

"We had a lot of headaches," said Gordon. "The engine was the biggest problem - we had to have some gears and a camshaft made."

Stephen took up the tale. "We went to auto jumbles and hunted about for parts. We needed new pistons and had a stroke of luck when we found that Star Engineers of Chelmsford had some old stock. There on the shelf was a new set of Hornet pistons."



Heather Bartels arrives at St Mary's, 1935-style

Eventually, after some £10,000 of parts and endless hours of work, CN 6680 was complete and gleaming in her livery of black and British racing green. She came to stay at Stephen's garage with a price tag of around £15,000.

Then along came Heather, thinking of her wedding to Martin De'Ath on August 1st. She fell in love with CN and persuaded Stephen to chauffeur her to the church opposite.

"It was beautiful," she said afterwards. CN isn't saying anything, but perhaps he felt the rustle of Dupion silk on his leather seats and thought it a far cry from his days in the chicken house.

## Advice for the elderly

ELDERLY people will be able to tell Essex County Council the kind of services they would like to have in the parish.

Following an approach by parish councillors Bill Wright and Wreford Painter at an ECC open evening in July, a Mr Graham Field, senior manager with Mid Essex Group, ECC Social Services is being invited to an Council in November.

It will be a chance for older people, particularly, to have a say on such things as transport and help in the home.

## For a record

DIANE Baker who hosted an afternoon of cream teas and croquet at Little Codham Hall, on behalf of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies reports that over £150 was raised towards the cost of the church record of St Andrew's, Shalford.

# Sunday shops given support

SHOPPING on Sundays in Wethersfield has the support of the parish council - and a large proportion of the local residents, it would seem.

Braintree District Council which, through the local District Councillor asked the parish council for its views, will be told that being able to shop locally on a Sunday is an asset to the village.

Top Shop proprietor, Noël Choat, acknowledged the fact that many older residents preferred to be in a church rather than a shop on Sunday but said that others, particularly the younger people, found that having a local shop open then was a great help.

"They get unexpected company, particularly in the summer,

and pop out to get food," he said. "And as far as the small shopkeeper is concerned, with this Uniform Business Rate hitting us, we are glad of all the custom we can get."

Across the road, hardware shop owner Vic Law had found the same pattern. In his case, too, it was mainly younger people who came in on Sunday morning, when he is open from 10 am to 1pm but for a different reason.

"Many of them are only in the village at the week-end," he said "and they want bits and pieces of DIY material when they are working on their homes."

The Post Office stores is open briefly on Sundays for certain foods; at Tillbrook's garage it is mostly local people coming in for petrol on Sunday mornings before setting out for a trip, with a few passing tourists filling up.

## THEY'LL SING YOUR SONG

WOULD you like your favourite harvest song to be included in the Community Harvest Songs of Praise at Wethersfield United Reformed Church? The service on Sunday, September 27, at 6.30pm will be followed by refreshments. The evening collection and the produce will go to Chelmsford Hospice. Contact Doreen French on 850049 or at 74 Saffron Gardens by Sunday, September 20, to make your request.



## Flowers are an active art

WETHERSFIELD Floral Art Club has had a busy summer. Members have visited Braintree and Bocking Floral Art Club to watch Craig Bullock, the international demonstrator at work; they held a bring and buy sale at Dorothy Norman's garden, enjoyed cream, scones and coffee and they helped John Nottage arrange the Flower Festival at Finchingfield Church over Bank Holiday.

On September 30 at 8pm in the village hall "Yorkshire Memories" is the theme chosen by Mrs Osman for a demonstration and teach-ins by Mrs Connie Cleal are planned for the end of September. Everybody welcome.

And on October 28 they have a Christmas Special evening in the village hall with Mrs M Tolfree speaking.

Tickets are £3 and there will be refreshments, stalls and a raffle. Starts at 7.30pm Ring 850496 for information.

## Legion's men

WETHERSFIELD branch of the Royal British Legion has a new secretary, Jim Chapman of 12 Saffron Close (850837); Service secretary for welfare matters is Haydon Law (850983)



IN a remarkably high poll for a parish council election Blackmore End chose nurse Jillian Hammond (above) to represent it on Wethersfield Parish Council.

There was a 36 per cent turnout on August 6 and Jill of Frensham, School Road, gained 56 votes; she was closely followed by Debbie Quinn of Pouches Thatch with 51. Tony Roper of Fallowfield received 19 votes.

"Perhaps there was a general assumption that, because I am a nurse, I would be able to offer a good dollop of common sense," said Jill, who came to the parish four years ago from Shalford.

Apart from nursing and dispensing at Wethersfield surgery Jill is known as a member of the After Eight group; she is married to David, has three grown-up children and is devoted to an amiable collie called Ben.

All the candidates would like to thank voters for the support they received.

WEDNESDAY is the day chosen for a Tumble Tots preschool gym which is opening in Braintree so that children from surrounding villages can reach it by bus.

Classes are separated into walking-2 years, 2-3 years and 3-4 years.

Further details from Chris Maidman on 0371 850431.

## Women of straw

THE harvest is in but there are still people Working with Straw. On Thursday, September 10, Jean Peverett of West Drive, Wethersfield, will give a talk with just that title to the Local History Group.

Straw once formed the basis of a cottage industry in this area of Essex and Jean will talk about the old art of straw-plaiting and other uses of straw. She, herself, is an accomplished maker of corn dollies.

If you have any mementoes of the days of the straw-plaiting women, who would stroll down the road, talking to a friend and making the material for a straw hat at the same time, please go along to Wethersfield Village Hall at 8pm. 50p donation includes coffee.

Jean is on 851025 if you have any straw item you think she would be interested in seeing.

THE October meeting of the History Group is about

Finding Your Family. On October 8 members of two local families will be bringing back memories of relatives very well known in their time and there will be advice on how you can trace your ancestry, by post.

AT Wethersfield Garden Club's meeting on September 18 in the Village Hall Mr Gill will talk about Flowering Alpines. A 7.45 start and there is a raffle, plant stall and refreshments.

HIGHLIGHTS of the gardeners' summer were an evening spent in professional landscapist Ken Aker's garden at Great Saling and the club's garden party held on a balmy evening in Lynne and Bob Byatt's garden. Over 60 people sat out talking until the candles burned low around the lawn.

## No surgery

WETHERSFIELD surgery will in future not be open on Wednesdays from September 2nd. Previously there had been a morning only surgery in Wethersfield with morning and evening surgeries on Monday and Thursdays and mornings only on Tuesdays and Fridays. Saturday surgeries were available about once every six weeks.

"We are slowing down in preparation for the new year when the new health centre in Finchingfield opens," said Dr Ambross. "People requiring repeat prescriptions should arrange to collect them on other days."

ANGELA DOUSE of West Drive, Wethersfield, has been quietly writing poetry for some years, winning, among other things, book tokens, a Prayer Book and a romantic dinner for herself and her husband.

"I write about friends and things that happen," she said. The poem we publish here was inspired by Jack and Clara Metson of Hillfoot Cottage, Wethersfield, who had...

## ONE OF THOSE DAYS

Have you ever had "one of those days" when shopping  
Using a wire basket on wheels, that keeps stopping?  
Looking down, and wondering why  
The trolley's progress is all awry!  
Zig-zagging up and down the aisles  
Your face in a frown, other shoppers wear smiles.  
Well, Jack and Clara had "one of those days"  
While shopping at Tesco's in a pre-Christmas haze.  
Their trolley meandered all over the store,  
Jack tried hard to guide it across the floor.  
"If only I'd brought my old oil can with me  
I could squirt these wire wheels and thus set them free."  
These were the thoughts that occurred to our Jack  
As he struggled with Clara, to push the load back

From trapping a lady, dressed in a smart suit,  
Who was busily choosing an assortment of fruit.  
At last the trolley was loaded with shopping  
And they managed to steer it without too much stopping  
Up to the check-out, and out through the throng,  
When, suddenly, everything seemed to go wrong.  
The wheels locked again, and the trolley went over.  
Jack bashed his shins, 'tho he swore he was sober,  
And packets and bottles were strewn all around.  
There were tins, fruit and vegetables on the ground.  
"Thank goodness," said Clara, "we didn't buy eggs,  
Ugh - imagine the mess of the yolks down our legs!"  
As a young punk rocker strode quickly by  
He retrieved from a litter bin, Clara's pork pie.  
A crowd started to gather, and help was at hand,  
They brought order from chaos, a most friendly band.  
And an off-duty Bobby took charge of the trolley  
As Clara adjusted her hat, found her broolly,  
And dusted down Jack, who was covered with grime  
From the slippery gutter running with slime.  
Soon all was restored, and in their car packed  
The tins with the groceries, bottles, too, stacked  
So they headed for Wethersfield, homeward bound  
Where comfort and peace and a cuppa was found.  
And Clara exclaimed, with a most loving gaze,  
"Oh, never mind, Jack, it was one of those days."



WETHERSFIELD is just one field away from Paradise. I have it on the authority of Ian and Barbara Rumsey who live just over the border in Paradise itself, in fact at Morris Green.

Technically their 2½ acre small holding, Morris Green Farm, is in the parish of Sible Hedingham. But the listing, as much as listed, farmhouse leans physically towards the end of Wethersfield airbase runway and the Rumseys are regular exhibitors at Blackmore End Show, so no apologies for writing about their Good Life.

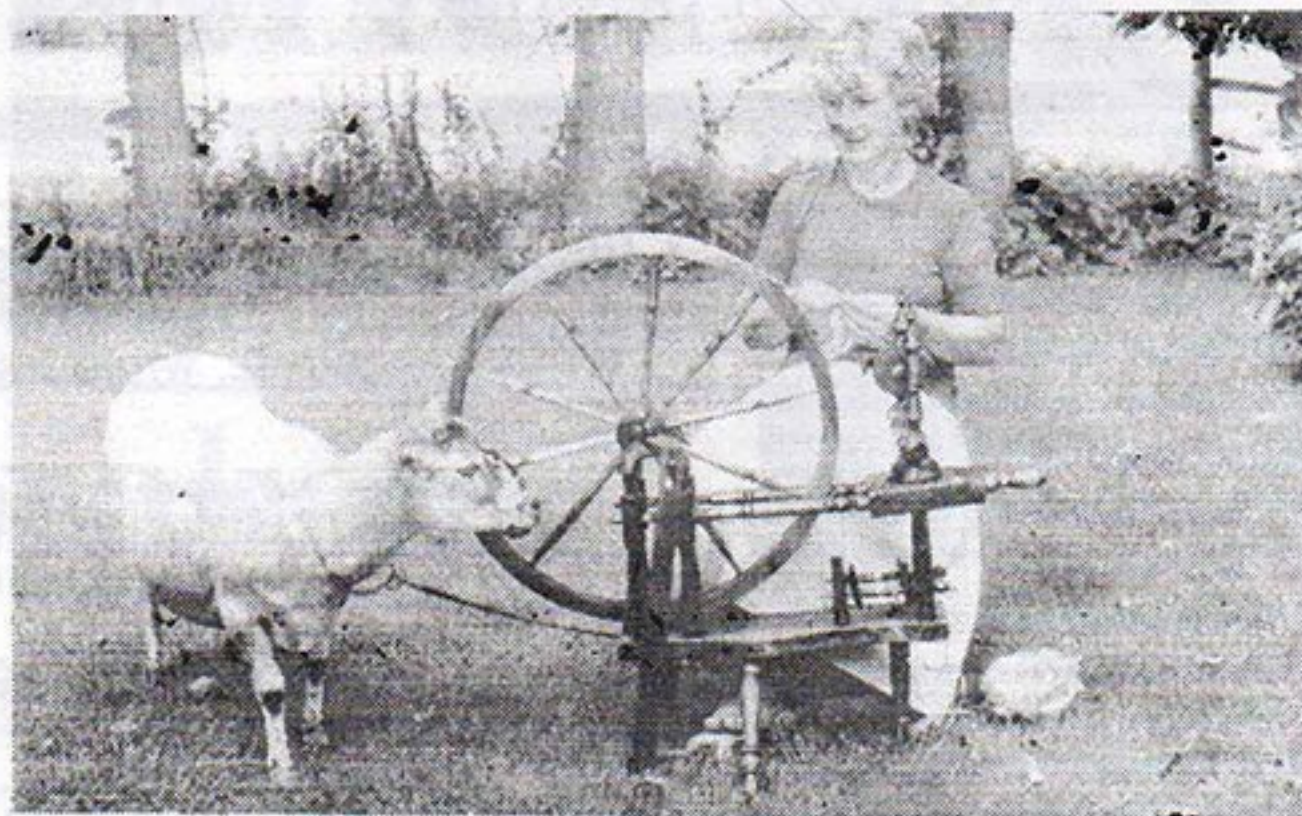
"With a name like Barbara you have to have a bit of TV's *Good Life* in you," she says. Ian adds: "And they say I look like Richard Briers!" ("You're getting to look older, like him," chips in his wife.)

I had found him closely inspecting clumps of black caterpillars on the nettles in the kitchen garden. The caterpillars had begun making jerky, defensive movements when he'd sneezed nearby and Ian is a man fascinated by the unusual. He went off to sneeze beside another group, so far dozing quietly on the weeds.

Fighting my way through a posse of four over-friendly Labradors I followed Barbara into the brick-floored kitchen to talk about sheep.

Barbara has built up her own small flock of 10 breeding ewes over the 12 years they have been at Morris Green. It began with a bottle-fed lamb, a "spare" from triplets, she brought home from Southey Green on her scooter, tucked inside her anorak.

Now she has two Romneys, two Jacob's, a Suffolk cross Romney and others, including Orphan Annie, a



Orphan Annie keeps a keen eye on Barbara's spinning

## Paradise is just one field away

Derbyshire Gritstone about whom more later. "I specialise in breeds which are nice for wool," says Barbara, who carries her interest through to spinning and weaving and dyeing. With a sideline in dyed-wool woven pictures.

On Sunday, September 6, the Mid-Essex Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers will be at the Rumsey's farm. If you want to see how it is all done just go along, take a packed lunch and spend the day there. Tea and coffee will be on tap.

You won't find a ram among Barbara's flock. Ever since a hefty pedigree Suffolk butted her into deep hole and penned her there helpless for half an hour until she grabbed his ears and made him so mad he pulled her out, the ladies have had to be content with six-week holiday visits from Tony, a borrowed

ram from up the road. Rams have a habit of chasing Barbara, who through arthritis is not so nimble these days, and when one didn't chase her she knew something must be wrong. It was; the ram had cataracts and couldn't see to chase the ewes either. He ended up paying his own vet's bill in mutton curry.

"It chokes me that I cannot do my own shearing now. I do all the feet trimming. I believe if you have animals you should be able to look after them," Barbara says.

Ian has a somewhat relaxed attitude to the sheep. Retired early he seems pretty relaxed about most things, in truth, though he did decide to have a go at shearing, having watched a TV soap opera and picked up some tips.

Barbara returned home to find the fleece, unusually, in two halves. Ian had let the

sheep walk about the garden half shorn while he had a cup of coffee. "We had 15 minutes break at half time," said Ian. "We both needed it. I almost cut its ear off by mistake."

Once off, to the sheep's great relief, the fleece is spun and woven with the grease still in it. Knitters would have to wash it first. Barbara works with vegetable dyes as befits a Good Life person.

Ian makes the buttons (and that's another story for telling another day.)

Outside in the little orchard Barbara set up her wheel and loom, closely attended by Orphan Annie. No use trying to keep her in the field, she idly jumps the 3ft 6in fence in the way Derbyshire Gritstones are used to leaping in their hilly habitat.

How a Derbyshire lamb arrived at Chelmsford market Barbara doesn't know. What she does recall is how the lamb, bought as a pet, was rescued from a non-farming family who had washed it in Daz, dressed it in a nappy and fed it on cow's milk from a baby's bottle.

Barbara brought the lamb home, rubbed oil into its fleece, inoculated it and put antibiotics on its eyes and reared it on goats' milk. Annie spent six months in the kitchen and the garden and survived, though her jumping habits have nearly been her downfall. Particularly when she started teaching the other sheep to jump the fence.

"I nearly put her in the freezer," said Barbara, tugging Annie away from the spinning wheel. "But she's nice, she will go anywhere on a lead."

Barbara went off to let the goats out as I left. Ian would probably make a few buttons or a corn-dolly or two. Or just sneeze at the caterpillars. DN

## Churchwarden thanked

ROY THREADGOLD has been presented with a framed photograph of Wethersfield parish church, where he has been churchwarden for over 14 years.

This period included two occasions when services and church events had to be arranged in the absence of an incumbent and the search for a new parish priest had to take place.

The vicar Rev John Shead, made the presentation.

ON September 12 cyclists can do their bit to raise money for the church or chapel of their choice on the Friends of Essex Churches Sponsored Bike Ride. Sponsorship forms are available

from Sarah Pilgrim (0371 850781).

THE Church is holding its Harvest Festival on Sunday October 4. There will be a family service at 11.15 am and at 5.30 pm Evensong will be followed by a pot-luck supper in the church. Take along a contribution of finger food to share.

THE previous day, Saturday October 3 is the annual Parish Church Gift Day when donations are invited towards the upkeep and running of the church.

Envelopes for donations will be delivered to houses in the village and are available from the church. The vicar will be outside the church to receive your gifts on the day itself which is a very

important one for the church, itself an anchor-point for life in the parish.

THE Parish Church Sunday School resumes after the summer holiday break on Sunday September 13 from 9.45 to 10.30 am., in the church. New members from 3 years through teenage are welcome. Contact Mrs Elaine Ambrose (850244 or Mrs Sarah Pilgrim (850781).

ACTIVITY Week at the church was held from July 27 to 31. This year it concentrated on the theme of safety and included visits to the fire station, talks on road and cycling safety.

Presentations were made to Mrs D Clayden (refreshments) and to Mrs S Bennett (organiser).

## DIG THIS!

NOW is the time to make the most of your Summer flower beds and tubs and keep the dead heads picked off.

Some people like to save seed from their plants so, as soon as it is ripe and dry, take the dried heads off and keep in a dry place.

This is the last month to take geranium and fuchsia cuttings to make sure of a good take of 80%. As the time goes on the less chance you have of rooting.

We are getting towards October and now is the time to plant out the wallflowers and bulbs for a show next Spring.

REG DEACON



# People

Ring 0371 850092 with news of people or events



**JEAN and Bob Lawrence** (above) of Brannis, 52 Saffron Gardens, celebrate their Ruby Wedding on September 20.

They will be having a party for family and friends in the village hall the evening before.

Before moving to Wethersfield, following their marriage at St Peter's Church, Braintree, Jean lived in Braintree and worked at Boots the Chemist. Bob lived at Blackmore End, where he was a keen footballer. After serving in the Desert Rats during the

second world war he became a carpenter.

The couple originally lived at No 36 Saffron Gardens but moved to Brannis about 20 years ago when Brian and Iris Daines emigrated to Australia.

They have two children: Anne, the eldest, who is married and lives at Sible Hedingham and Gary who has just completed an art scholarship at Southern Illinois University.

Jean and Bob, both retired, have a common interest in garden. Jean is also a keen member of the bowls, history and Tuesday clubs.

**JOHN SMITH** (pictured right) of Saffron Close, Wethersfield, who died in mid July, aged 92, wrote his own epitaph:

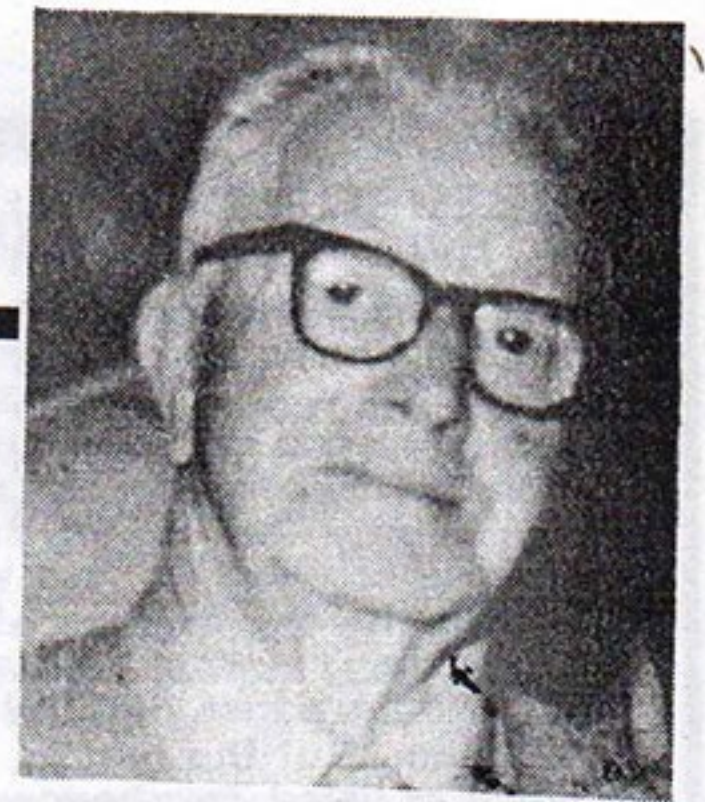
"As children, we were never allowed to find fault with each other. This has held good all through life."

Those were the final words of his memoirs, immaculately handwritten on 56 pages of an exercise book, and handed to Wethersfield Local History Group only three weeks before his death.

Without doubt John was one of the best-loved residents of the parish for he had worked tirelessly, through all his very long life, for the good and happiness of others.

For 25 years he was treasurer of Blackmore End Village Hall, retiring in 1977. His last day was spent at Blackmore End and Beazley End fete and flower show where he had so often come away with the top prizes, particularly for his vegetables. His other great love was competing the Whist Drives in Blackmore End village hall.

At Wethersfield he organised the annual outings of the Friendship Club and sadly died only a few days before this



year's outing. He was a worshipper at the United Reformed Church where his funeral was held.

John was one of 10 children, all born in Pear Tree cottage, Blackmore End. Later the family lived at Lower Green and at Mill House, Blackmore End. He moved to Wethersfield in 1982.

John started work the day he left school at the age of 13, carrying wood and cleaning shoes at Lealands farmhouse.

For 42 years he worked for the Essex County Council on the highways and his memoirs contain details of roads and bridges constructed over all these years.

He remembered the great snow of 1927 when the Wethersfield to Finchingfield road had drifts up to 20 feet deep which he and his men had to clear. Afterwards he walked back to Blackmore End with as much bread as he could for others in the village which

## clipboard

### A regular report of items discussed at meetings of Wethersfield Local Council

Clerk to Council: **ALLAN FROST, 0371 851146**

**ANOTHER** bottle and can bank is to be added to the present two in the parish. One bank is currently sited at Blackmore End, opposite the old Red Cow and the other at Wethersfield Playing Field.

It is proposed to place the third bank in a site off Saffron Gardens near the newly erected houses

*THE parish council agree to support Braintree District Council's application to receive the Charter Mark for its achievements in waste management, domestic refuse collection and re-cycling.*

**PARISH** councillor Bill Wright, and his wife Bunty, attended, on behalf of Wethersfield, a dinner at Causeway House, Braintree to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the arrival of the USAAF in the area. The US Ambassador, His Excellency R.G.H. Seitz, was among the guests of honour, together with the Leader of the House of Commons and local MP the Rt Hon. Tony Newton.

**PROVISION** of a pavement from Tillbrook's garage to The Dog is to be included in Essex County Council's 1993-4 estimates. At a meeting of the council, attended by PC Richard Buckland, the safety of people being forced to walk in the road by cars parked close to the houses was discussed.

*ALL documents and deeds relating to Wethersfield Village Hall have now been lodged with the council's solicitors; previously they were held in several locations.*

**NOTICE** of an application to transfer the licence of the Brewery Tavern, Wethersfield, from Jane Dobson to Ian Spencer Dalziel, a former licensee of The Dog, on October 27 at Braintree Court House at 2.15pm was received.

**A PLAN** to convert part of a barn at Readings, Blackmore End into living accommodation had been approved by the District Council it was reported.

**A PLAN** by Mr C Turner for a new entrance to Wethersfield Place, with ornamental gates and a new lobby, was considered and no objection raised.

**AS** Wethersfield's contribution to the European Unity Beacon to be lighted at Great Bardfield Mr. John Finbow had offered the use of his digger to assist in building the bonfire.

*THE parish council, on the recommendation of the chairman, Mr John Nottage, agreed to support the Mid Essex Community Health Service's application to become a National Health Service Trust.*

**IMPROVEMENTS** are to be made in Wethersfield to the pavement in Silver Street from Saddlers to the village school.

**NO objection** was raised to Mrs B. Bittle's plans for alterations to the interior of The Gables, Wethersfield.

*COUNCIL officers are to consider a request to repair a pump at Brick Kiln Green as a memorial to improvement to the local water supply which has gone from wells, to pumps to mains supply in a single lifetime.*

**THE** matter of a missing stile on the footpath from Valley Farm towards Danes Vale was in hand, the council was told by Essex County Council.