

# Couple Celebrate 60 Years Together

*LEARNING the art of give and take has helped keep long-term Johnsonville residents Isla and Eric Norris together for 60 years.*

The couple, who now live at Malvina Major Retirement Village, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 2, having lived in Johnsonville all their married lives.

The couple first met not long after Eric returned from World War II, where he served as a driver.

At that time Isla was working as a tram girl in Wellington. Eric's father, Fred, was her 'motorman'.

"He said to me one day, 'My son has just come back from the war and we're giving him a little evening;

would you like to come?'" Isla says.

"I said 'Of course I will', and we're still together."

That was September 1945 and although they didn't get married until a year-and-a-half later, the war had left some things in short supply - including wedding veils.

"You couldn't buy a veil in Wellington at that time but a friend of mine went home to Australia and found one there for me," Isla says. "She sent it back so I had a veil for our wedding." *Continued on pg 3*



**Johnsonville's Isla and Eric Norris recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They are pictured with their much-loved cat, Matilda Jane.**

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Once married, Eric and Isla had a house built for them in Prospect Terrace, at that time one of only two houses in the street.

They had hoped to use bricks in its construction but it was not to be.

"The government had commandeered all the bricks," Eric says. "So we changed to wood. You couldn't even buy one brick at the time."

They also had to clear their own section, which was home to four huge pine trees. Eric and Isla cut them down personally, using cross-cut handsaws.

Having lived in their house overlooking Johnsonville for 59 years, they have seen the suburb change markedly.

"We saw it grow," Eric says. "There used to be cattle on the main road."

Throughout their married life the couple has done a lot of dancing, whether it be old time dancing or Scottish country.

The later was something they did for more than 40 years. It took them all over the world, and is a source of many special memories.

"We've had a lot of common inter-

ests and we've enjoyed doing thin together," Isla says, adding that it could be why they've had such a successful marriage.

"We've also been lucky to have had good health.

"While life hasn't always been a bed of roses, it's treated us well."

They've only had one real sadness befall them - the death of their only daughter, Gaye, who succumbed to cancer when only in her 40s.

"We still ask ourselves why," Isla says.

Both Isla and Eric have received civic awards for their community work, which included Eric spending more than 50 years working on behalf of St John's Anglican Church in Johnsonville.

The couple also helped out with meals on wheels for more than 30 years, only calling it a day when they were both pushing 90.

So what's their advice to people considering marriage today?

To enjoy life and to remember that minor differences are just that - they can be solved and it's well worth doing so.