

Nancy Kingston, who will be 100 in October, and her husband Eric who is 98, celebrate their 80th wedding anniversary today, on 1 June. With 197



or thinking they'd pretty much seen it all, but this year's milestone with be celebrating in quite a different way.

Celebrating during the pandemic, they are joined by loved ones and neighbours (standing the required distance apart) in their front garden, with local community group, Blackford Singers, leading a musical tribute.

Revd Richard Neill, Vicar of The Benefice of The Isle of Wedmore, is among those cheering them on: "Eighty years of marriage, it's almost beyond our comprehension really, but their relationship is still so strong, the love and regard they have for each other, and the sense of humour they share is very evident when you meet them. It shows what unity and loyalty can achieve."

When Nancy and Eric first met in 1938, Neville Chamberlain was the Prime Minister and King George VI was King. They married two years later, had five children together and today have 11 grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren and 14 great, great grandchildren.

Central to Nancy and Eric's lives has been their faith. Eric says, it has provided them with great strength during difficult times in their lives: "We never missed a Sunday it was always very important to us that we went." His words were echoed by Nancy, who was a church caretaker for a time, a role she says she enjoyed as it was a "lovely church with lovely people." Eight decades on, Nancy says they are still as happy as they've always been: "We've had our ups and downs, but we do still love each other very much."

Oak, symbolic for strength and endurance, is the traditional gift for 80 years of marriage. To mark Eric and Nancy's milestone, an oak sapling is being planted in the village and the couple will receive an oak bench to put in their garden.



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