

## SUNBURY



Arnold and Dot Sharpe, pictured with son David, are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary.

Picture: BRENDAN FRANCIS

# Loving couple still in step after 60 years

Barry Kennedy

## PAIR CELEBRATE MILESTONE

DOT and Arnold Sharpe wasted no time embarking on a life of opportunity after meeting at a dance hall in London in the 1950s.

Within four months of their marriage, they had applied to come to Australia, where Dot had a sister in Niddrie.

A year into their matrimony, they were on a boat to Australia, celebrating their first anniversary at sea.

On Thursday, they will celebrate again, with their 60th anniversary marked by going along to *Fiddler on the Roof*, and staying the night at the Windsor.

Mrs Sharpe said coming to Australia was as different as they had imagined, but also exciting. "When we applied

for residency at Australia House in London, the man told me, you look good for breeding – I suppose he was right, as we had four children," Mrs Sharpe said.

While Niddrie and Airport West, where they bought their first home, were then full of paddocks, there was always a sense of opportunity in Australia.

"The Myers store was like something we'd never seen before," Mrs Sharpe said.

Mr Sharpe was in work within two days of arriving and was out of work for about a week during his whole working life here.

"They were waiting and signing you up for work as you got off the boat," Mr

Sharpe said. "I started on a postie (run), riding a push-bike, and never looked back."

A life-defining event for the couple and family of six happened when their son, David, was struck by a car while riding his bike in Airport West, aged nine, in 1974.

David was in hospital for seven months and unconscious for four and a half of those, emerging badly brain damaged.

The couple said the trauma was tough on the whole family, with not a lot of help.

But things got much better in 2002, when the three of them (David lived at home until four years ago) moved to Sunbury.



Arnold and Dot Sharpe on their wedding day.

"Straight away, we were included and through Sunbury Community Health and Distinctive Options, we got David into lots of things," Mrs Sharpe said.

"The whole community was marvellous, and we wish we'd come here earlier."

Mrs Sharpe said there was no real secret to a long marriage, and the odd disagreement was all part of it.