

**Russell** started dancing at age 10 when his parents took him to a dance class conducted by a Madam Black and her son. The instructors originated from England and started teaching in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

Russell was less than enthusiastic at the time, but his parents thought that it would be beneficial for their young son, but he soon stop dancing with Madam Black.



Russell and Lesley  
at the Melbourne Town Hall,  
competing at the  
Moomba Championships 1976

A few years later he decided to return to dancing and began dancing at the Arkana School of Dancing, a studio in Footscray. Here, Russell achieved medals to gold level, in what was then Old Time, Modern and Latin, eventually obtaining an Olympic Lady Award.

Russell danced with different partners and competed in dancing for the studio, achieving average results until he partnered up with Lesley in 1970, and entered competitive dancing together.

They soon became the lead competition dancers at the studio, gaining excellent results in all grades and levels, winning all three styles at the Australian Championships in the one year, and although tempted, they never turned professional.

Russell and Lesley married and started a family. At this time they decided to leave Ballroom Dancing to concentrate on raising their family. Many years later, as their children grew and started their own lives, Russell and Lesley

returned to social dancing, so they thought.

Since returning to dancing they have enjoyed the new challenges that were presented. Russell and Lesley have learned new techniques and for a brief time looked after a dance studio, in that time they instructed people for medals up to gold level.

Since moving to rural Victoria they have successfully conducted the Rutherglen Ballroom Dance Festival held during March (now in it's tenth year).

They also conducted a very successful Saturday dance in Howlong (NSW) until Covid struck



Lesley and Russell at the  
Geelong Ballroom 2022

Together, they continue to enjoy dancing, sharing their knowledge of dance and providing music at various venues and events, including the Geelong Ballroom Dance Club.

They organise an annual dance tour to New Zealand during October and also publish the dance newsletter "Stepp'n Out 'n' About" .

After much encouragement from other dancers they have recently scripted and introduced their own dance the 'Waltz of Angels'.