

VRRDA Hall of Fame 2014

HEATHER and JOHN JARMAN

As a child, Heather wanted to learn ballet, but her mother was uninterested, and they lived in the Adelaide Hills – a little remote from Ballet school. So the closest she got was to join a local marching group - "The Brigadoons". Growing up, she put dance on the back burner and concentrated on going to university to study medicine. She met John at Adelaide University and they got married while still students, graduated and then worked as GP's in the country in Northern NSW, which is where they first learnt to dance. Heather was 40 years old when she saw an ad in the paper to learn rock and roll in Lismore NSW. She attended the first 2 sets of basic lessons and fell in love with it and dragged John along to a promotional event for the classes. He wasn't interested at first and did not believe he could do it, but went along. **So they started their dancing together in 1993.**

Their classes were in Lismore and their first teachers were Jimmy Ray and his partner Jenny. Jimmy was a wild man of rock n roll and originally was a roadie with many of the bands of the 70's and 80's. They were great dancers. It was Jimmy's promotional abilities that helped the formation of **the Summerland Rockers in 1994 – Heather and John's first club.**

During 1993-94 they learnt from Jimmy and Jenny and then later from his mentor and teacher Fred Robertson. Heather and John **attended their first Wintersun festival in 1994 and watched the dance competition.**

Their teacher Jimmy thought they were good enough dancers to assist him holding lessons in 1994 in Casino, NSW where they lived, and it was there that they "learned" the art of teaching a social form of rock n roll.

John and Heather first started "teaching" in Sale in mid 1995. There was no large RSL in Sale with a dance floor, and no regular dances or even rock n roll bands. It was the combination of being medical practitioners and teaching rock n roll that created so much interest. They became teachers for The Lakeside Rockers for the next few years. Believing that they needed proper "credentials", they **started to enter dance competitions.** They began **competing at Wintersun in 1995** – and soon learnt what they needed to do. Hours and hours of practice were to come. **They travelled to Wintersun and the dance competition each year from 1995 until 2002.**

Heather and John were entranced by Fourmost at this time – Kevin and Carol and Barry and Nikki –and wished they could be like them. They plucked up enough courage to ask Carol and Kevin if they could teach them and then started to have private lessons with them.

John and Heather **first entered the VRRDA competitions in 1998. They also entered other competitions in Queensland - “the Worlds”, The Masters Games comps on the Gold Coast and Adelaide, Ararat and ARRDC events.**

In 1999, they “discovered” their heroes of dance – Marcus Koch and Barbl Kaufer - Three times World Boogie Woogie Champions and also Lindy Hop/Swing Champions. Heather and John attended their workshops in Brisbane and Sydney in 2000, and again in 2001 when they held workshops in Sale and Melbourne. **They had the very great pleasure of having Marcus and Barbl stay with them twice.** They received private lessons, in exchange for free room and board!

In 2000, John became VRRDA President and in the same year, **Heather was asked to Judge.** Later she was made Head Judge. **After a break of a couple of years she remained a Judge until October 2009.** **After completing his term as VRRDA President, John started Judging in 2005, and still continues today.**

Some of Heather and John’s greatest achievements:

1. Winning the VRRDA State Title in 2000.
2. Placing Second to Barry and Nikki at Wintersun in the Traditional Open Final in 1999.
3. Getting so many people in the Gippsland Region, over the years to try dancing and achieve personal goals.
4. Opening and running a successful rock n roll enterprise – Bond St Boogie for 3 years.
5. Attending Frankie Manning’s first Australian Lindy Hop workshop in Brisbane in 1997 and again when he came to Melbourne in 2002.

Ladies and gentlemen, the VRRDA is honoured to induct Heather Jarman and John Jarman into the 2014 Hall of Fame...

Annette Niven
VRRDA Committee