

**Tommy Moss F.A.D.A.**

**LIFE STORY**

SOME OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUR TEACHER  
TOM MOSS FELLOW, AND EXAMINER OF THE ALLIED  
DANCE ASSOCIATION



**TOMMY MOSS**



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

1st April, 1986.

*Dear Mr Moss.*

Thank you for your letter of 26th March enclosing a copy of your life story. Her Majesty was delighted to accept this and was equally pleased to hear about the dance you invented on her visit to Wigan. It was very kind of you indeed to send a description of the dance and Her Majesty was most interested to hear of its success.

*Yours sincerely  
Robert Fellowes*

(ROBERT FELLOWES)

T. Moss, Esq.

TOMMY AND HILDA MOSS



## Wigan dance pair in TV North team

**T**AKING part in the North v South Latin American dance team match to be televised from Hammer-smith Palais on April 9th will be Wigan dancers Tom Moss and Prudence Ravelle, North of England professional champions.

The North's line-up will be: Hulley and Edwards (Halifax), North-East champions; Moss and Ravelle; and Hancox and Green (Manchester). They will oppose Laird and Lorraine, British professional champions; Patrick and Keyes, world champions; and Hulbert and Duerof, Grand Prix cham-

### **In and Around Wigan**

plions; all of London. The South of England in this match are fielding the strongest Latin American professional team "ever to take a dance floor."



Tom Moss and Prudence Ravelle.



Tom is congratulated on his achievement by one of his pupils Sydney Lord.

## Tommy's teaching traps trophy

Twinkle toed Tommy Moss has added another trophy to his cabinet.

Ballroom dancer extraordinaire Tommy, a former professional world champion who still holds the record for winning the North of England championship six years on the trot, is obviously passing on his fleet footed secrets to pupils at his dancing school.

It's just awarded the runners-up shield in the Allied Dancing Association's Teaching Medal Awards.

Explains Mr. Moss, who lives in Standish and is a regular face instructing and organising dances for the Metro's Leisure Department: "We won the award for the number of medal winning people we have put through and their quality.

### Father

Tommy, whose father Tommy senior was head professional at Hammersmoth Palais, has had a love affair with dancing virtually all his life.

He won his first title in 1933 and won the World pairs with his sister Hilda in 1954.

He retired from competitions in 1954 but made a comeback in 1961 when he went on to establish the North of England record which has never been beaten to date.

# BRITISH PAIR TRIUMPH IN WORLD'S (OFFICIAL) TITLES



**TOMMY & Hilda Moss** (above) went to Paris. They flew from Manchester, and on the Thursday they demonstrated at Le Palais de la Mutualite banquet, on Friday afternoon were entertained by the deputy Lord Mayor at l'hotel de Ville, relaxed in the evening at the Moulin Rouge, and on Saturday came in second in the World's Professional Ballroom Dancing Championship and first in the World's Professional Dancing Exhibition Championship held at the Olympia Ballroom, Boulevard Consupine.

"We had a wonderful time," Tommy told "Dance News." "Never in all our years in the dancing world have we been received so hospitably and treated so well. Even when we went to relax at the Moulin Rouge we were invited to put on a show, but I regret I had to refuse as we were not dressed for the occasion."

"Camille de Rhynal, president of the F.I.D., and organiser of the championships, who invited us, is a most charming personality and he afterwards told us that the French people were of the opinion that we were a credit to England. Certainly the enthusiasm of the French was something to be seen."

Tommy and Hilda had praise, too, for the French musicians. Quintin Verdu et son orchestre de tango and Paul Pattyne et sa grande formation, who jointly provided the beat for the seven dance championship—the English four with the rumba, samba and pasa doble.

"Those boys certainly knew what was wanted, especially so when our exhibition came up," said Tommy.

The adjudication panel was composed of eight judges, seven foreign and our own Stella Cook of Weymouth, who originally came from Manchester. First place in the championship was taken by France, second by England, third by Belgium, fourth by England (Frank Tyrell) and fifth by Italy.

## WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE

"It was all a wonderful experience," Hilda told "Dance News." "Camille de Rhynal's organisation and hospitality were marvellous and I felt that it all helped us to give our best. What gives me great happiness is the sure knowledge that we didn't let England down. From the moment Tommy replied in French to the toast to the English group I felt that we were in for a wonderful time. And so it proved to be."

"I would like to say a word, too, for Stella Cook. I was much impressed with her lectures which she gave so efficiently and confidently."

"And I shall never forget the manager of the Olympia, Monsieur Carlos. He gave us a fine time and we did a dem for him at his night club."

After the ball was over, Tommy and Hilda attended a cultural exhibition on Sunday given by the Carlos Capel pupils which included a display of Spanish dancing and ballet.

Tommy didn't come away empty handed. Besides his titles he brought with him a gift from Monsieur Carlos—two souvenir recordings of Jean Brittoniere singing "J'aurai bien pu."

And Hilda gave Tommy a gift, a present that surprised Tommy no end—a copy of the current issue of "Dance News" which she found on sale in Paris—on the Thursday!



Wigan dance teacher Tommy Moss and his pretty dancing partner, Prudence Ravelle, have danced to third place in the Butlin Latin American Open Professional Championship. The couple's success came on the last night of the 13th Annual

Butlin Dancing Festival held at Filey Holiday Camp. Tommy and Prudence, who are the North of England professional Latin American champions, received their prize of £15 from Lt.-Col. Basil Brown, TD, Director of Butlin Entertainments.

ACT 1963

LANCASHIRE POST.





TOMMY & HYLDA MOSS  
VICE CAPTAINS OF THE  
ENGLISH INTERNATIONAL  
TEAM V HOLLAND HELD  
AT THE RITZ MANCHESTER.



Proudly posing with their mother for our cameraman are Tomny and Hylda Moss, of Wigan, who won the International Dancing Federation World Championship for exhibition dancing and were runners-up for the ballroom title in Paris.



TOMMY MOSS AND  
PRUDENCE RAVELLE  
CAPTAIN THE NORTH  
AGAINST THE SOUTH  
ON TELEVISION FROM  
HAMMERSMITH PALAIS  
LONDON.

## VERSATILITY PLUS



TAKE a good look at this picture, it's World Champions Tommy and Hilda Moss. You've seen pictures of them before, but this is a picture with a difference. Just in case you haven't noticed Tommy is wearing a BLAZER with white tie and evening dress trousers. As you might have guessed, Tommy likes to be different. And it pays! It makes people remember him and it makes people remember dancing.

Also included among Tommy's publicity box of tricks are book-matches and pencils, cigarette-card size photographs, weekly programme leaflets, a student's notebook etc., etc., etc., all bearing the Moss slogans and encouraging people to dance.

Getting back to the blazer, the badge is really a wonderful gimmick. Suggested by one of Tommy's sixteen-year-old pupils it depicts Tommy and Hilda picked out in bright colours and bears the inscription "Tommy and Hilda Moss. Wigan School of Dancing. World Championships, Paris."

Tommy and Hilda really are wonderful teachers and dancers, and Tommy has overcome a tremendous disability to reach the top; he is minus an arm.

Such courage and tenacity are always to be applauded and we advise all dance teachers to "blow their own" trumpet. Remember, publicity pays.

Cutting from May 28th 1956

DANCE NEWS



For the second year in succession - a notable feat - Wigan dance instructor Mr. Tom Moss, has won the Dennis Hayley Trophy for Latin American dancing. He won it at the annual conference of the Empire Society of Teachers of Dancing

FROM THE LANCASHIRE POST YEAR 1960.  
THE LADY ON THE PHOTOGRAPH IS MADAME MOSS  
TOMMY'S MOTHER WHO WAS HERSELF A WONDERFUL DANCER  
AND FAMOUS TEACHER.



TOMMY MOSS AND PRUDENCE RAVELLE  
DEMONSTRATING AT THE FAMOUS  
SYD PERKINS SCHOOL OF DANCING.

# Wigan Dancers' Triumph



Tommy Moss, the Wigan professional ballroom dancer, scored a new triumph in Liverpool this week with his young partner, Prudence Ravelle, of Jubilee Avenue, Orrell.

They are pictured here after winning the Imperial Society's Latin - American Professional Championship (N.W. Area) at the Grafton Ballroom. In the centre is Miss Margaret Kilshaw, of the Imperial Society, who presented the prizes at this annual event.

Tommy Moss has figured prominently in ballroom dancing circles for many years and has recently come to the forefront in the Latin-American rhythms and is in great demand for his lively exhibition routines.

## HIGH PRAISE

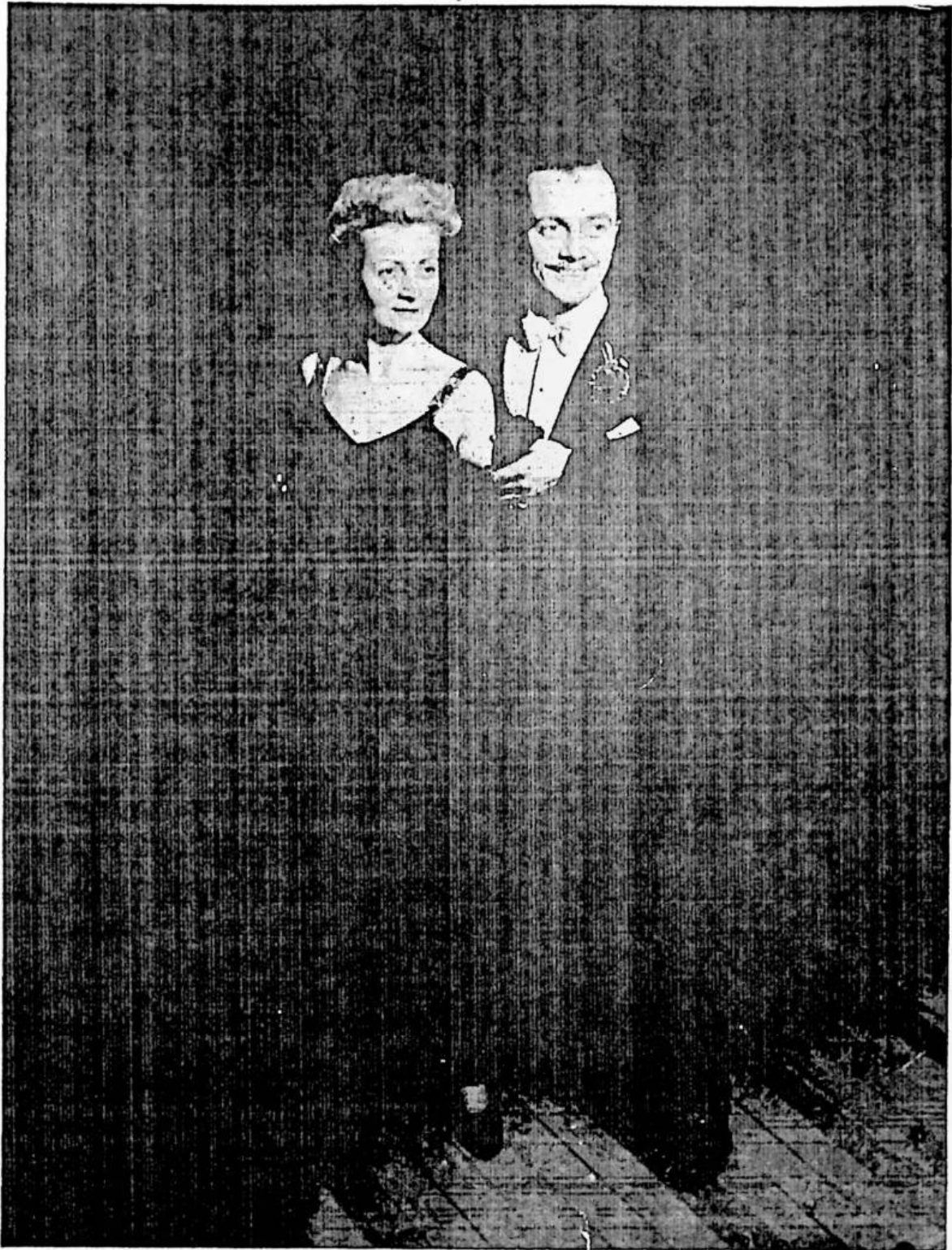
He has overcome the disability of losing a hand and few who see him in action realise that he controls his partner in the many intricate arm movements which are called for in ballroom demonstrations with an artificial hand.

Miss Ravelle, a former amateur pupil, has improved considerably since taking up dancing as a profession and has earned high praise from some of the leading dance adjudicators at various dance festivals.



TOMMY MOSS AND PRUDENCE RAVELLE  
AT THE FAMOUS SYD PERKINS SCHOOL  
STOKE'





TOMMY AND HYLDA MOSS  
PRACTISING FOR THE WORLD PROFESSIONAL BALLROOM CHAMPIONSHIPS  
L'OLYMPIA, PARIS  
THEY WERE PLACED SECOND TO THE FRENCH CHAMPION MONSIEUR DEVOSSE  
ONLY ONE POINT IN DIFFERENCE



Pat Wilcock and Tom Moss

## Opportunity knocks . . . to

**PRETTY** Pat Wilcock works as a sewing machinist in a factory. But when work is over she does a quick change and enters "a new world." Or, to be more precise, the world of Latin American rhythms.

For Pat—17 last Thursday—is a professional dancer and as such the old maxim of practice making perfect would seem to play an important part in her dance routines.

And although she turned professional only about four months ago, Pat, who lives in Anderson-street, Higher Ince, near Wigan, has fulfilled a number of engagements at big Lancashire sporting functions with her partner, Tom Moss—a well known figure in dancing circles.

By  
**PHIL KELLY**

She has appeared at a celebration dinner for Matt Busby, the Manchester United manager, and also performed at the recent Lancashire County Cricket Club dance at Old Trafford.

### BIGGEST BREAK

But in the next few days Pat will be putting in "extra training sessions." For she has just heard of her biggest "break" to date—an appearance on the television programme "Opportunity Knocks."

On December 3rd and 4th, Pat (who discards her Wilcock surname for Dea May when she dances professionally) and partner Tom, will be travelling to the A.B.C. Studios, in Manchester, for rehearsals. Later on the Saturday night they will be facing the camera for the actual show.

## an L.A. rhythm.. for Pat

For their 31-minute spot, the couple have decided on their favourite Latin-American dance—the Paso Doble—which is reckoned by many to be the most difficult of the "L.A." dances to perform.

The act will be introduced by Tom's wife, Bridget.

Said Tom: "Really it's a stroke of luck for Pat. Originally when I was put in touch with the TV people, I did an audition with another partner, who later left to get married.

### UNUSUAL ACT

"Since then I have had letters from the TV company, culminating in the rehearsal. I have been told that our act is unusual, and we are hoping to do well. Pat is thrilled about the whole thing."

Tom, of Chorley-road, Standish, who now holds dancing classes at the Golden Ball Hotel, Irton, added: "If we are successful on the programme it might lead to larger and better engagements, which is what we are really after."

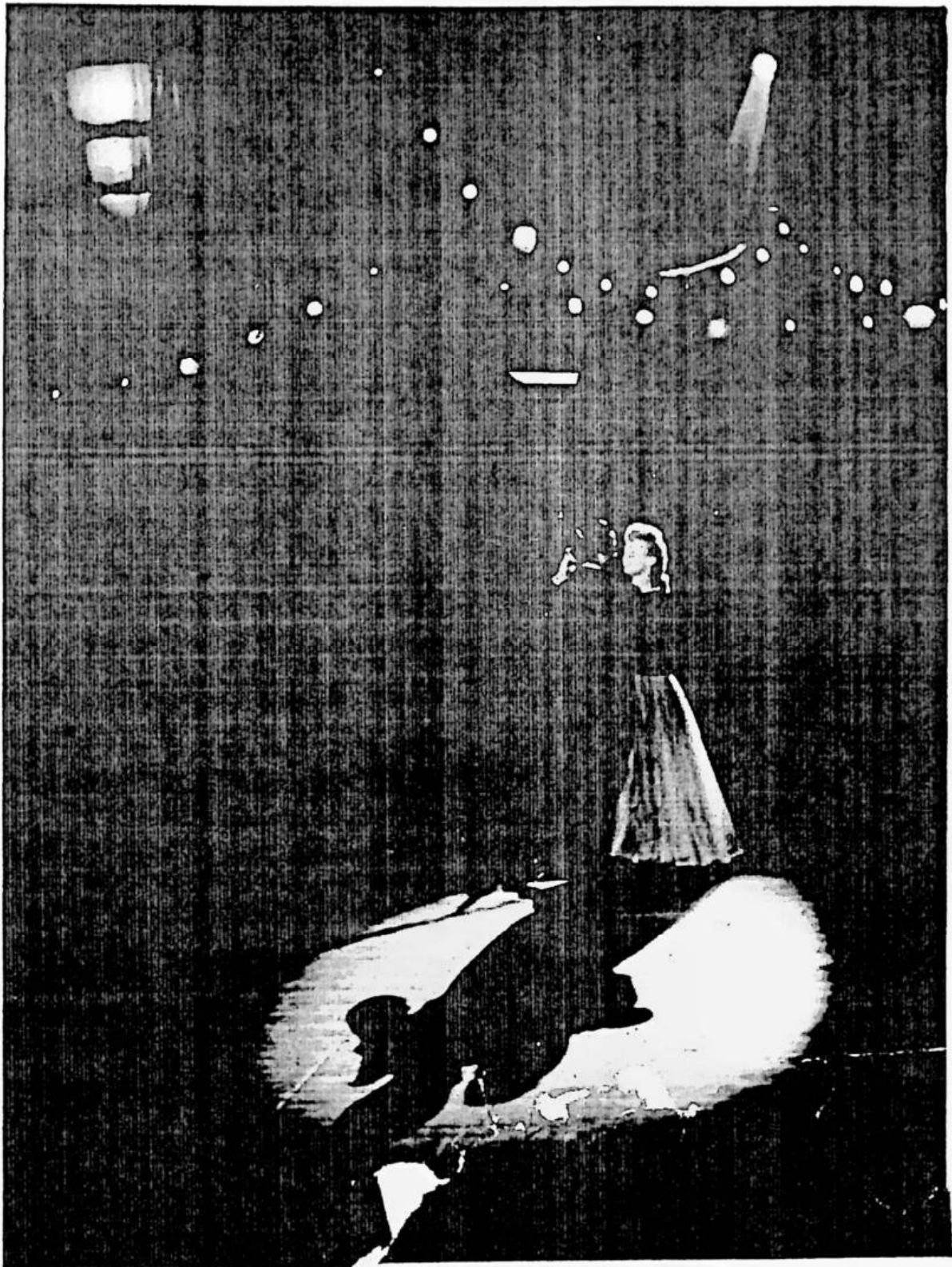
FROM THE LANCASHIRE POST  
DECEMBER 1965



TOMMY MOSS & HILDA MOSS WITH THE TWO TROPHIES  
THEY WON. THE 'MIDLANDS' EXHIBITION CHAMPIONSHIP,  
THE 'MIDLANDS' QUICKSTEP CHAMPIONSHIP



TOMMY'S WIFE BIRDIE TALKING TO HUGHIE GREEN  
ON THE 'OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS' PROGRAMME



TOMMY AND HYLDA DEMONSTRATE IN BLACKBURN



● Wigan dancer Tom Moss, ex-world ballroom champion, and partner Prudence Winstanley, who won the North-West professional audition for Latin American dancing, Cha-Cha, Paso Doble and Samba. They appear in "Come Dancing" on B.B.C. TV on October 3.

FROM THE LANCASHIRE POST

MARCH 1976

## The Paso Doble—From Wigan



Tommy Moss, the popular Wigan ballroom dancer, with his new partner, Prudence Rayelle, in a striking movement during a demonstration of the Paso Doble at a Liverpool dancing display.



TOM AND BRIDIE MOSS  
WINNERS OF THE ALLIED DANCE ASSOCIATION SEQUENCE DANCE TROPHY 1988

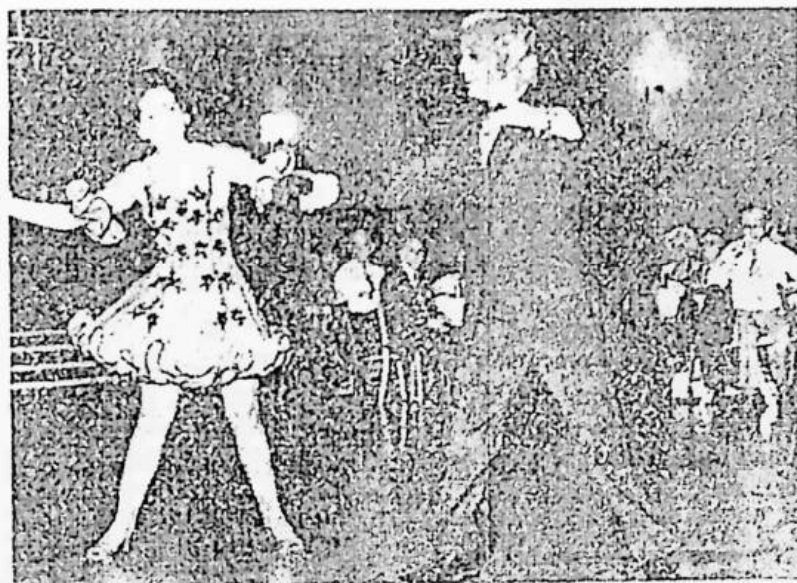


TOMMY AND HYLDA PRACTISING THEIR JIVE ROUTINE FOR THE  
WORLD PROFESSIONAL EXHIBITION DANCING CHAMPIONSHIP  
L'OLYMPIA, PARIS  
THEY TOOK FIRST PLACE



© ILLUSTRATION: A scene from Tommy Moss and Susan Matthews.

Dancing  
the  
night  
away



© ILLUSTRATION: A section of the crowd at the Women's Circle dance.



Yes, it was a night to remember at the annual Women's Circle dance at the Monaco, Hindley.

And with a charge of just 50p for Circle members and 75p for other readers, everyone agreed that it was a top value-for-money event.

Apart from dancing to the ever-popular big band sounds of Jess Greenough, there was a double top canaret till.

Singer Vickie Bennett contributed a touch of glamour and polish then there was the style and panache of Wigan's own world exhibition dance champion Tommy Moss with his partner Susan Matthews.

Mr Moss, of Chorley Road, Standish, who has a dance academy at Bryn, and Susan, won tremendous applause - especially for their Zorba's Dance number and the finale with Susan's dress a mass of twinkling lights.

"The Post and Chronicle" brings you the world beaters", said Women's Circle organiser, Shellah Baron. And everyone agreed.

To mark Shellah's recent appointment as chairman, proceeds from a competition will go to the League of Friends at Wrightington Hospital.

Chief guest at the function was Kathleen Taylor, wife of the Editor.

Full marks to Wigan Leisure Department for a beautiful floral display.



**Women's  
Circle**

**Token**

*Wigan's Tom Moss tells of the glamour — and the grit — in competitive dancing, and of the injury which probably helped him to reach the pinnacle of success — a world title*

# He danced to the top of the world



Wigan's World Champion dancer, Tom Moss, with the World Championship Trophy.

By Geoffrey Shryhane

The multi-coloured embroidered badge on Tom Moss's neat blue blazer often causes people to give him sideways glances as he walks through Wigan, or stands at the bus-stop.

The badge is a real eye-catcher. And it is testimony to the day in the 1950's when he danced his way to the top of the world.

Wigan's Tom Moss — some insist on "Tommy" but he prefers Tom — has been steeped in the sometimes make-believe world of dancing since he was a child.

He spent four decades in competition dancing — and literally thousands of folks in Wigan today are competent to "take their partners" because of his tuition. And as a dancing teacher, he's in great demand.

## BORN

But let's look at Tom Moss's early life and to the days when his mother and dad gave dancing lessons in the front room of the house where he was born at 58 Warrington Lane.

Later, they hired a room at the Total Abstinence Hall down by the Waterside and later still the Central Chambers on the Market Square.

But at first, the young Tom Moss was disinterested in dancing. After all, the other lads thought it class.

The dancing day came when he was 11. He called in at Dad's dancing class and before he knew it, he'd been

swept off his feet by a woman taking lessons. Soon after, Tom and his older sister Hylda became dancing partners.

## TEACHING

Tom — who lives at Standish — was still at Wigan Tech. when he was 19, and even then he knew that he wanted to do just one thing in life ... dance.

After the Tech, he started teaching ballroom dancing and soon discovered that the crazes of the day were the waltz, slow foxtrot, tango and quick step.

Said Tom: "Latin American dancing has always featured prominently in my life. I knew it was the type of dancing for me immediately I saw it."

The big day came in 1954 when Tom and Hylda were invited to dance in the world championships in Paris. The event was at the Olympia — the home of the great Edith Piaf — and the French Government footed all the bills.

They were second in the nine-dance event and were the last of 18 couples in the exhibition section.

## ROCK

Said Tom: "It was a great advantage being last — it would mean our performance would be the freshest in the judges' minds. We really gave them a run for their money with a rock and roll number called 'The Cement Mixer'.

"What a feeling when we got first prize. I'll remember it all my life."

Tom Moss has taught dancing for 25 years and believes its popularity has always been assured.

People who can't dance say it doesn't worry them, but quite a lot have confided that their years as dance hall 'wallflower' were quite miserable."

Tom's latest dancing partner is Susan Matthews from Standish, and in years gone by the girls in Tom's dancing life have been Hylda, of course, Prudence Ravele, Pat Del-Mar, and Anita Valdez.

## GRIT

He gave up competition dancing in 1970 to concentrate full time on his classes and these he holds in a room above the Red Lion at Bryn.

It is doubtful if Tom would have been at the top of the tree today but for his grit and utter determination. And part of that determination story involves a car accident in which he lost one of his arms many years ago.

"I aimed for the top and I'm convinced the handicap of my arm actually helped me get there."

The greatest shop window he ever had was as Captain of the North West team on one of television's most popular programmes, Come Dancing.

For any dancer an understanding wife is a great advantage. And that's what Tom Moss has in his wife Bridie. The couple have four children.

When Tom talks of dancing, he talks of "two different worlds," and says: "Obviously, there's a great deal of glamour about competition dancing. It's like ..."

**A STROLL ON THE PIER**



# Take your partners ... for a Pier stroll

The all  
in one  
store  
PAGE 17

Wigan's  
new  
dance  
PAGE 7

My hands were shaking and my knees were weak.

But this week I had to pluck up courage to be in with the "in crowd" and learn a new dance invented right here in Wigan and destined to sweep the country.

Is it a new dance, I hear you good readers asking. A new version of the frug perhaps. Or a new variation of the Birdie dance. Well not quite.

The dance about to take England by storm is ... The Wigan Pier Stroll.

**Twirl**

The stroll dance has been with us for decades, but local dancing teacher Tom Moss decided that as Boston has the two-stop, Lambeth has the walk, it was time Wigan made its mark on the dance scene.

So he took the traditional, gently-paced stroll and gave it the Wigan treatment ... the result The Wigan Pier Stroll.

Already the dance is proving popular with Tom's many dancing pupils. The former world champion dancer said: "I'm very pleased with the way the dance has turned out."

The Wigan Pier Stroll is

set to music by the Houghton Weavers.

I went along to give the dance a twirl ... but in the middle of my first attempt, the fire alarm went and dashed my chance to become the town's answer to John Travolta.

Dancers Marion and Sydney Lord of Standish Lower Ground voted the Wigan Stroll a hit.

Said Sydney: "The dance is better than the Lambeth Walk ... and it's another feather in Wigan's cap."



The Wigan Pier Stroll demonstrated on sight with guidance from Tom Moss.



TOMMY MOSS TEACHES HIS DANCE  
"THE WIGAN PIER STROLL"  
ON THE PIER ITSELF



## PROFESSIONALS HONOUR TOMMY'S DEDICATION TO THE PROFESSION

Wigan's dance supremo Tommy Moss has been presented with one of the country's most prestigious trophies for his dedication to the profession.

A teacher of ballroom, Latin and disco in the town for almost 60 years, Tommy is only the fifth recipient of the award, handed

over by the president of the Allied Dance Association, Mr. Sydney Parry at a ceremony in Southport.

He rocketed to the top in 1954, when with his sister Hilda, he won the World Professional Championship, in Paris. And six times he carried off the North of England title, an all-time record.

A fellow and Examiner for the ADA, Tommy has in recent years been working for Wigan Metro and has chalked up a string of successes with beginners and experienced dancers alike. He is particularly pleased about the increasing popularity of the afternoon tea dances he introduced at Wigan Pier on Monday afternoons.