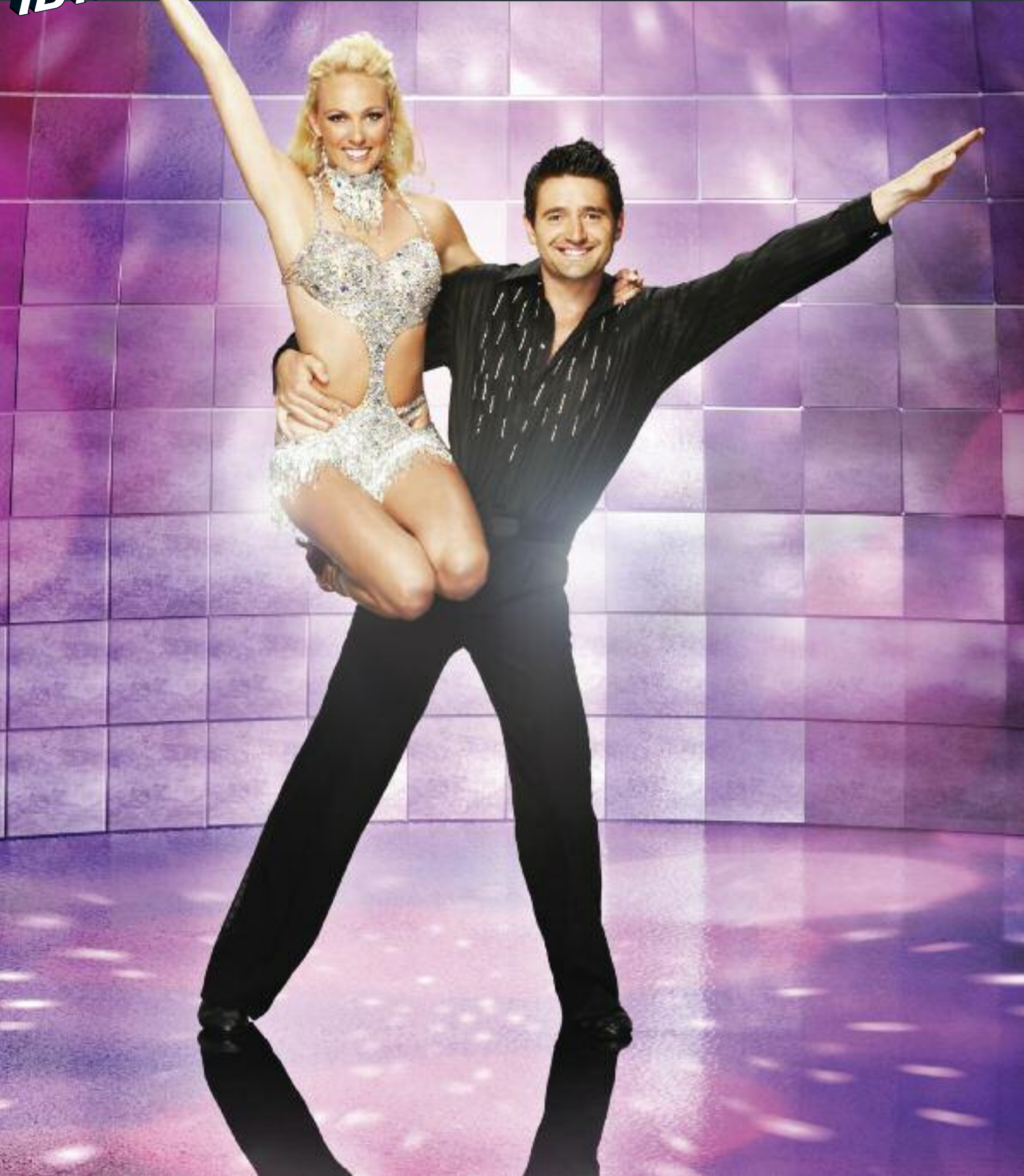


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Strictly Come Dancing

sixth series

by Keith Holmes

I am sure all members of IDTA would want to congratulate the BBC on the sixth series of Strictly Come Dancing. It was superb, the best ever. Congratulations to the winners IDTA member Camilla Dallerup and Tom Chambers and all the celebrities and professional dancers who took part.

Camilla Dallerup talked to Claire Saul about winning **Strictly Come Dancing** and her plans to realise more of her dreams after the UK tour of the show. We are delighted to be able to print the article below and thank Dance Expression and Claire Saul for their permission.

"Thank you so much!" says Camilla Dallerup on being congratulated for winning series six of *Strictly Come Dancing* with actor Tom Chambers. "It still hasn't really sunk in yet. When people say 'well done' to me or when I've been doing a show with my professional partner Ian and I have been announced as *Strictly* Champion, I honestly still feel surprised. I think it will take me another year to get used to it. When I look at the glitter ball at home it just makes me smile because it was all such a great experience. Tom summed it up when he said that during the show you are working towards each Saturday night, following on with the quarter finals, the semis and then the final itself and winning the show. Having won it your memories are all about the total experience and what you have done since you started all those months ago? We had such an enjoyable journey together and I loved watching the way in which Tom grew and improved through it."

As for the show dance . . . "and oh, the show dance! It was the highlight of my six years on *Strictly Come Dancing*. It was just totally magic. The choreography had been taking shape in my mind for weeks because when I first met Tom, I understood he was an actor who wanted to dance. He dreamt of dancing while I was a dancer who always dreamt of acting and so for us it became part of a shared dream to do that sort of dance. We kept saying 'if we were lucky to get to do a show dance we could live out this dream together with some acting elements and lots of Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly moves', so to be able to put it together with Tom's input was perfect teamwork. We went out there knowing what we had to do but not even daring to hope we would win. Performing it was a moment in my life I will never, ever forget."

Strictly means so much to so many people in many different ways. On the message board post included by the editor on page four of this month's issue Camilla says, "Wasn't that lovely? Tom has a similar story - the husband of someone he knows had suffered a stroke and hadn't really talked for about a year. When Tom and I won, his wife got Tom on the phone and the husband managed to say 'well done' to him. It brought so much happiness. It is just so amazing what dance can do. I just love hearing about this type of story."

Of course, the New Year brought Camilla's shock announcement that she had decided not to dance in series seven of the show which is planned for the autumn. "It is time for me to say thank you and move on and try something else. I have been with *Strictly* ever since the first series in 2004 and have some other dreams I'd now like to pursue. I have done some radio and television presenting over the last few years too and have really, really enjoyed that challenge so it is something I'd like to build on. I feel I am an entertainer and performer first and a dancer second. I love that connection with an audience, I have a curious personality and I'm interested in talking to people. I'd like to use the experience of everything I

have learned on *Strictly* about cameras, interview techniques and so on and see where it leads before I settle down and have a family. I will miss so many people on the show though, both colleagues and from the production side. The *Strictly* team is like family to me and it is probably the hardest thing about moving on from the show. If I was invited, I would absolutely love to come back to join the judging panel. That would be so amazing. I know exactly what goes on in the training. I know what the celebrities go through, their ups and downs and how much they have to pick up in a week so I would be able to understand it all from the professional and celebrity points of view."

Camilla's *Strictly* duties are not over just yet, as she and Tom are currently taking part in the 33 dates 45 shows *Strictly Come Dance 2009* tour. "It's like a Saturday night every night for over 40 days in a row! Performing is a completely different experience to dancing in a television studio or ballroom. There, you have a small audience and although you get some understanding of how people are enjoying your performance you don't get to meet the fans and the people who supported you but when you walk down the stairs in a big arena you hear all the cheering and clapping and you can see people's faces. You never know exactly what to expect with the audience but it makes the experience different every night. The audience is there as fans of the show and happy to take

away a little piece of *Strictly* that night. It is totally magic. I have already told Tom it is going to be overwhelming. Unless you perform in a rock band, whenever else are you going to feel that feeling? It's a once in a lifetime experience and I am very chuffed to be sharing that with Tom, I have to say.

"My *Strictly* partner from series five, Gethin Jones, is taking part too. He is dancing with Flavia Cacace. It will be fun; I'm sure there will be some friendly banter between Tom and Gethin! I'm ever so proud of Gethin when I see him dance; it is brilliant knowing I taught him that. We have only danced together a couple of times for functions over the past year but he looks like he has never left it really."

With so much going on, it is hard to believe Camilla also managed to launch her own fitness DVD *Dance Off the Inches* at the end of last year. She is also planning a summer theatre tour with professional partner Ian Waite called *Dance Fusion*, which promises a combination of street and ballet with their more familiar ballroom and Latin routines. The urban dance group Flava, who appeared on last year's *Britain's Got Talent* television show will also be taking part and to cap it all, Camilla also has a new dance recruit in the form of her partner, actor Kevin Sacre. "He really wants to learn to dance. Every time he saw a new dance during the last series of *Strictly* he'd say, 'I'd like to learn that one too.' As he's an actor, maybe we can swap lessons!"



Back row L to R: Austin Healey, Tom Chambers, John Sergeant, Gillian Taylforth. Third row L to R: Gary Rhodes, Christine Bleakley, Jodie Kidd, Don Warrington. Second row L to R: Cherie Lunghi, Heather Small, Phil Daniels, Mark Foster. Front row L to R: Andrew Castle, Lisa Snowden, Jessie Wallace, Rachel Stevens

