

South



When Pam Pelsler asked Alan and Fiona Haywood to come to her class, they were thrilled! And as Pam lives in George, South Africa, it turned out to be the Line dance trip of a lifetime. We follow their journey...



From Fiona

We met Pam two years ago and have remained friends ever since, so to be able to have a holiday, teach Alan's latest dances, do some workshops and see a new country were just fantastic opportunities we could not miss out.

Our first glimpse of South Africa was amazing, from seeing our first shanty town to spending the night at a Warm Water Spa where you could relax in really hot mountain water in pools and private baths. All very welcome after a 12 hour flight.

We also visited a Wildlife Ranch with Crocodiles, Meerkats, and big cats too as well as the wonderful Congo caves.

Pam and her husband Martin live on a farm and it is a most beautiful area. On a Tuesday, Pam has a five hour class where people come in and out and the later it gets the higher the levels are!

Alan taught some dances at this class and everyone seemed to enjoy the experience. South Africa is a land where people learn to live together and there was a great sense of community at the farm. Pam and Martin know a family of eight who live in a shack and who walk for miles to get water.

So often Pam and Martin will share some

of their fresh fruit and vegetables with them. Coming from a country where often neighbours don't know one another. This was a humbling and uplifting experience.

I loved visiting the Kynsna Elephants Park, a sanctuary for those gorgeous animals. This was my highlight. Cynthia (originally from Blackpool and who has lived in South Africa for 23 years) hosted our first workshop in George. 60 people attended and we enjoyed the whole day.

On our second week, we stayed in Paarl (100km from Cape Town) and it was a lovely and quiet place we enjoyed very much. With an all day workshop on Saturday, Alan and the dancers had a well filled day with social dancing in between teaches.

We found that Cape Town in particular was a good reflection of the dances we like in the UK. There were some interesting differences with for example Amame Un Poquito, a great beginner dance to Amame and E Z Tango, a beginner dance to Tango Cha. And let us not forget some great dances to Africaans music!

Over that second week, we visited many other great places, wine and cheese farms, Table Mountain, Waterfront and of course some shopping!

South Africa is an amazing place, full of culture and incredible people. We had the most wonderful experience and we hope people enjoyed dancing with us as much as we did. Distance to a South African dancer means very little.

For example, Karin and her dancers are planning to go on an 18 hour drive to see Maggie G as apparently she will be in Johannesburg in 2010...

We can't wait to go back one day and I promise we will make it as soon as we can.



Africa Magic



From Pam Pelsler

I came over to the UK in 2007 and attended a dance class with Alan Haywood. Both he and Fiona were wonderful. I had just left the instructor that I danced with back home and they both said "Go and teach".

So I plucked up the courage and taught. I then did my CWDA instructors exam. And I can honestly say, it is the best thing I have ever done. I cannot tell you how much I love what I am doing.

A couple of years later and Alan and Fi made plans and came up to see us. Here are some of the things we did.

My hubby and I drove to Cape Town (480 km) to fetch them and some of my students drove 200 km to surprise welcome them at a hot water spa.

We also travelled to the Cave, the Cheetah park and the Garden Route (near George) where our farm is.

They also enjoyed a tour of Sedgfield a town overlooking the sea. This is such a secluded area that when we had a walk on the beach, ours were the only footprints.

I found the Haywoods were an absolute delight to be with. For a start, they eat anything, and thank goodness as I am not the greatest cook! The only regret I have is how time flew. For me being with Alan and Fi was just the best thing. If it wasn't for them, my life would be very different today. I wouldn't be dancing for starters, let alone teaching and I will always be grateful to them both.

