



# newsletter

no. 12 july 2005

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**CLOUD NINE ONLINE!!**

[www.cloudninetheatre.co.uk](http://www.cloudninetheatre.co.uk)

**NEW WEBSITE GOES LIVE**

**JULY 1ST** (see p. 2 for more)



## CAST, AWAY! SHIPS THAT PASS LAUNCHED...

What better way to celebrate the River Festival and the return of the Tall Ships to the Tyne, than to embark on a unique project: a play performed on the Tyne ferry! Alex Ferguson, (*above centre*), has written *Ships that Pass* especially for Cloud Nine's groundbreaking (or water-breaking? maybe not...) new venture. Commuters each weekday morning will see a five-minute episode of the twenty-five minute play, while a weekend omnibus edition will be performed on the Nexus river trips up and down the river. Director Jackie Fielding has pressganged her cast, Norman McFadyen, Jill Dellow, Harry Gallagher, and Jacqueline Phillips (*left to right above at the ferry landing*), and producer is Linda MacFadyen. The fast-paced, comic play focuses on two local couples who meet up on the Monday ferry crossing, and how their lives change day by day. South Shields writer Alex is renowned for his *My Uncle Freddie* stories, broadcast on Radio 4 for six years and now published by Iron Press in *The Pineapple King of Jarrow*.

IT'S ALL HAPPENING ANY DAY NOW, SEE RIGHT FOR DETAILS!

### THREE'S A CROWD -

**PLEASER?** Also coming soon, *Threesome*, Cloud Nine's bonny bouncing triplets. Three plays by local writers, edgy, funny, moving, will be performed on both sides of the river. Director Neil Armstrong is auditioning this month on 23rd, for performances: 20-24th September - Customs House, South Shields  
29th Sept - Saville Exchange  
30th September - White Swan Centre, Killingworth.

See page two for more details.

### WELCOME ABOARD

**CATCH A FERRY & A  
PLAY, MON-FRI 4-9 JULY,  
BETWEEN 8.15 & 9.15**

two performances in each direction of the day's five minute episode. Play included in Nexus ferry fare.

**SAT 9TH & SUN 10TH**

11.15 & 2.15 river cruises from South Shields landing omnibus version performed.

(North Tynesiders can catch 11.00 or 2.00 ferries to join the cruises.) Play included in £2.95 cruise ticket.

*Any news, info, ideas for newsletter? Contact editor, Valerie Laws, on 01912521816/valaws@yahoo.co.uk.*

*For bookings, auditions or to be put on our mailing list, contact Peter Mortimer at CLOUD NINE, 5 Marden Tce, Cullercoats, North Shields NE30 4PD or phone on 0191 2531901/email seaboy@freenetname.co.uk.*

## THREESOME SWINGS BOTH WAYS

Neil Armstrong, director, is holding auditions on July 23rd to cast the three short plays which make up *Threesome*. Neil originally directed the extracts from *Spent*, by Sarah Millican, *Influence* by Paul Buie, and *Ambulance Chaser* by Simon Moore in our first Playday at Customs House South Shields. Now they're lined up for full production, not only in the writers' own stomping ground of South Shields, but north of the Tyne as well, this September. (*Dates on page 1.*) It'll be a great night - visit [www.customshouse.co.uk](http://www.customshouse.co.uk) for how to get tickets or contact Cloud Nine (*bottom of front page*). Some of the funding for *Threesome* is being generously donated by Kitty Fitzgerald, who is giving her *Double Act* fee to put the production on a more professional footing.



Neil Armstrong (above right, with Bill E Meeks) directs *Influence*, by Paul Buie, at our first Playday.

## DOUBLE ACT UPDATE

Kitty Fitzgerald's play *Men, Women, Inspectors and Dogs* will be performed with Joanna Piesse's *The Steal* at York Theatre Royal under the direction of Damien Cruden as *Double Act*.

On Wednesday 20th July, Damien and the actors will be starting things off with a rehearsed reading of the plays after workshopping the scripts.

## IT'S IN THE NET!

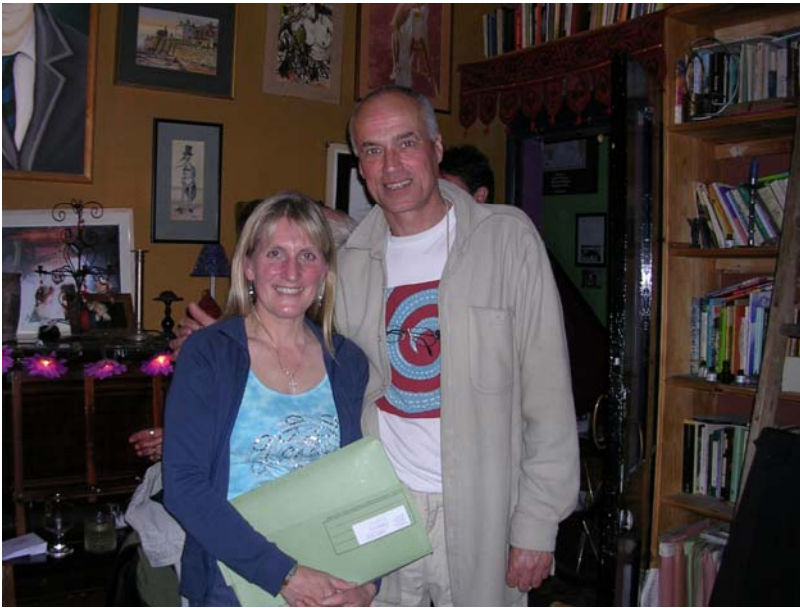
Yes, it's true. Cloud Nine has joined the twenty-first century. At last the word 'website' no longer refers to the dust/spider interface that is 5, Marden Terrace. Thanks to the generosity of our newsletter sponsor and Cloud Nine supporter Colette Stroud, we are going online as [www.cloudninetheatre.co.uk](http://www.cloudninetheatre.co.uk). The site should be up and running by the time you get this, so get clicking that mouse and pay us a visit. The site was designed by Glen Cranston, who has over ten years experience in creating punchy marketing materials in any area of graphic design such as publicity brochures, packaging etc. In fact he's also designed a new letterhead and stationery for Cloud Nine, so our letters to you will be even more exciting in future. Look out for a new banner heading on the newsletter soon too. Glen ([glen.cranston@virgin.net](mailto:glen.cranston@virgin.net)) has designed a vibrant, colourful website reflecting the company's personality. This newsletter will also be on there, so if you use this one to line the litter tray, you can still look up those play dates on your pc. Glen is ably assisted by Alex Moore of Kungfuyou media ([www.kungfuyou.com](http://www.kungfuyou.com)) (sounds like a Comedy Bites sketch!) who handled the technical twiddly bits. So you'll be able to keep up to date with Cloud Nine's activities between newsletters from now on. (see also page 1)

## TOM HADAWAY RE-RUN PLANNED

Cloud Nine have been invited to put in an application for a Programme Development Grant by North Tyneside Arts. This followed discussion with Arts Officer Mike Campbell for a re-run of the late Tom Hadaway's *Billy Wilson*. Tom wrote the play for Cloud Nine, and it would be especially fitting to produce the play next March to mark the first anniversary of Tom's death. It would complement a planned exhibition of paintings based on Tom's plays by artist June Leader, at North Shields Library. Watch this space for more details.... Also

## GOLD STAR FOR 'HADAWAY'

Respected film & TV producer and director Jack Gold, who directed the film of Tom Hadaway's *God Bless Thee, Jacky Maddison*, has generously offered to contribute £500 of his own money towards funding a re-run of Valerie Laws' *Hadaway—the Making of a Writer*. We are still hoping one day to find the rest of the funding required to do this.



Above, Noreen Rees with her mentor Mike Wilcox at the read-through of the latest draft of her play at Cloud Nine HQ.

## AGM...AGM...AGM...

You are invited to Cloud Nine's next AGM in the scenic surrounds of St Paul's Church, Whitley Bay  
On 3rd OCTOBER 2005  
At 7.30.

A chance to join, vote, have your say, followed by WINE and entertainment!

Bung it in your diary now, we want to see more of you!

RSVP to Meriel@mljohnston.freeserve.co.uk

### **MENTORING VENTURE COMES TO HAPPY END**

Since March 2004, in a scheme set up and funded by Cloud Nine, experienced playwright Mike Wilcox has been mentoring Noreen Rees as she has worked on a new play. Over a series of meetings, Mike has given Noreen feedback and valuable lessons in stage-craft and constructive criticism. The end result, *Refugees In Our Own Land*, was given the traditional read-through on June 10th, by actors David Courtnadge, Carole Courtnadge, Dylan Mortimer, Norman McFadyen, Jane Cowgill and Harry Gallagher. Also present were mentor and mentee, Artistic Director Peter Mortimer, and your editor in roving reporter capacity.

The play, dealing with racial strife on a Greek holiday island, together with more domestic warfare between tourists, was well received. It was felt that the play had enough potential for a future draft to be considered for full production, should funding be available, and we look forward to the finished product now Noreen is flying solo. Speaking of which... see below.

### **JOLLY BOATING WEATHER, WE HOPE**

This month also sees the production of Noreen's play for Tynemouth Pageant, *Shipwreck - Beware the Black Middens!* Her colourful historical community play will take place in the open air in the breezy precincts of Tynemouth Castle and Priory, July 19-23. Advance tickets can be obtained from Whitley Bay Playhouse, or on the door. We wish her a fair wind.

### **ANOTHER DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: PLAYDAY THREE!**

An encouraging flood of scripts has inundated Cloud Nine after our call for new plays in the last issue. From these, three will emerge triumphant to be workshopped by actors and a professional director on our next **Playday** which is on **OCTOBER 16TH** AT CUSTOMS HOUSE, SOUTH SHIELDS.

In the evening, condensed versions of the plays will be performed script-in-hand in front of an audience. Our previous Playdays led to scripts going to full production, so here's your chance to be in at the genesis of new talent. Watch this space for future Playday opportunities for writers.

### **HAVING HER CAKE...**

Jackie Fielding is directing *Waiting for Gateaux* at Customs House; due to demand, new dates have been added, in August. Sounds delicious.

Completing the nine-mile sponsored walk on Hadrian's Wall: below, Dave and Carole Courtnadge with Max make light of their aching feet.



**WE WALKED THE WALK, NOW WE TALK THE TALK...** CLOUD NINE STEERING GROUP held an away-day at your editor's abode for deep discussion of Cloud Nine's future development. Decisions have to be made about funding professional productions, but keeping our community roots. We are in the process of formulating a three-year plan as a result.

### THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Harry Gallagher and Dylan Mortimer have been asked by Tedco to lead workshops with students from Brinkburn & King George schools, which are merging. They are working on a revue show to be performed at the end of July. This follows a similar project they undertook in a Cloud Nine/Tedco partnership with young people at Cleadon Park Attendance Centre, which ended in the resulting drama, *Three Daft Lasses at a Bus Stop*, being filmed.

## GRAND 'DAY FOR DAVE' RAISES OVER A GRAND!

Our fundraising day in memory of Cloud Nine actor Dave Hollingworth, who died last December while touring with Comedy Bites 4, took place on Saturday May 14th. During the day, 28 hardy souls (& soles) tackled a nine-mile sponsored walk, from Gilsland to Twice Brewed on Hadrian's Wall, in recognition of Dave's part as a troubadour in *Off The Wall* last summer. The day was warm and sunny, the path was steep and stony, but the participants enjoyed themselves. First by a hefty margin was Lydia Laws-Wall, then prominent Cloud Niners, including those pictured plus Off-the-Wall actors Alex Kinsey and Dylan Mortimer, together with Dave's sister and ex-partner, hit the Twice Brewed Inn in search of cold drinks.

After some pub grub, more folk arrived for the evening do. Dave's Ceilidh band, Dog Leap Stars played and many danced, despite aching feet. While the food and drink kept coming, Chris Bostock told tall tales and finally the video of *Off The Wall* was shown, with a montage of stills reflecting Dave's contribution to Cloud Nine ably put together by Steve Chettle of Arts UK. It was poignant to see Dave happily singing and dancing on stage when so soon after he was to die so tragically, and feelings were mixed among those who had worked with him the most. However, from sponsorship money, gift aid & evening ticket sales, the event raised £1,176 for Dave's favourite charity ActionAid, and those of us who stayed the night in the peace of Northumberland's beautiful scenery agreed that happiness predominated over sadness. A fitting tribute to Dave Hollingworth.

Thanks to all who took part or contributed time or money, and especially to Universal AV Services Ltd for support and the loan of equipment which enabled the evening to go ahead.

### DOUBLE ACT II?

This year's Edinburgh Book Festival sees a twin triumph for Cloud Nine writers. On August 25th, Kitty Fitzgerald's novel *Pigtopia* (Faber & Faber) will be launched, as will Peter Mortimer's book *Cool for Qat, A Yemeni Journey* published by Mainstream. Those unable to make it over the border, look out for their joint north-east launch on 29th September, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle.

### FANG-TASTIC

Cloud Nine actor Bill E Meeks received rave reviews for his part in *Dracula*, at Sunderland Royalty in June. Marge Barton of the Sunderland Echo said, 'Star of the show was Bill E Meeks, who cast aside his comic persona to give a taut rendering of the madman Renfield.' No flies on Bill...