

Writer heads to film festival in pursuit of leading man

YES, WE CANNES

By RUTH MEECH

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A WEYMOUTH writer is on her way to the Cannes Film Festival for a date with destiny and – hopefully – George Clooney.

Claire Fordham, a former columnist with the Echo who now lives in Los Angeles, will be at the festival on Sunday, May 17, for the launch screening of her 'mockumentary' *The Making Of Plus One With Kate, Cate and George, The Story Of A Hollywood Nobody*.

The short film follows the trials and tribulations suffered as she struggles to get her book *Plus One – A Year In The Life Of A Hollywood Nobody* made into a feature-length movie, ideally starring George Clooney with Cate Blanchett and Kate Winslet as Claire and her musician sister Julia.

"Just to be a part of that world is so exciting," said Claire, who was born and brought up in Weymouth and wrote the Echo's Cross Talk column in the late 1980s.

'Being part of this world is so exciting'

Claire Fordham

"It has been a big, exciting adventure and as far as I'm concerned, for me, personally, life is all about having as much fun as you can, being creative and having an adventure."

The Cannes Film Festival is arguably the biggest, most glittering celebrity event of its kind. It is where the next big films are previewed and fight it out in a prestigious competition to win the Palme d'Or 'best of festival' award.

This year's competitors include Quentin Tarantino, Ken Loach, Ang Lee and Jane Campion.

She added: "I haven't been to the Cannes Film Festival before, but I hear it is a complete zoo. I shall be wearing red velvet – vintage Banana Republic – and comfortable shoes, taking my high heels in a bag for the main event."

Claire will be travelling to Cannes with her Bridport-based friend Diane Aldred. Her sister Julia is unable to go with her as she will be undertaking a week-long tour of Japan, following two sell-out concerts at the Newbury Theatre and Piggalle Club in London.

The Making Of Plus One With Kate, Cate and George,



SISTERS ACT: Claire Fordham, left, with her singing sister Julia and, inset, her theoretical co-star George Clooney

The Story Of A Hollywood Nobody stars respected Hollywood actors Oscar nominated Jennifer Tilly, Amanda Plummer, Geraldine Chaplin and John Sessions.

Claire said: "Julia and I had an absolute blast filming our parts. It is a very funny film but has a lot of truth in it."

"The vast majority of books that are optioned for films never get made, largely because it is so hard to get the money together."

"For every JK Rowling or

Da Vinci Code, there are thousands that never see the light of day. Even if you get the actors you want to star in your film, there are so many things that can go wrong."

"Living in LA, you hear these terrible stories of people who have started filming but have run out of money. There are people there who have mortgaged their home to make a film and then lost their house or are up to their eyeballs in debt."

Claire has written a sequel to *Plus One* called *The One* and is hoping that Cannes will be the key to the continued success of her first novel.

■ *Plus One – A Year In The Life Of A Hollywood Nobody* is available from Amazon. Find out more about Claire's latest adventures at clairefordham.com, while Julia's website is juli-afordham.com

To see the trailer for *Plus One*, go to youtube.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sudan cycle for students

WEYMOUTH: Students from Weymouth College will run and cycle the distance from Land's End to John O'Groats in 24 hours to help build a school in Sudan.

The youngsters will take on the challenge in the college gym to raise funds for the Grace Secondary School Appeal.

They will start peddling and pounding the treadmill at 5pm on Saturday and finish at 5pm the following day.

Barclays Bank has also agreed to match fund all the sponsorship raised by the students.

The Grace Secondary School Appeal was set up by Dorchester couple Claire and Richard Budd last August and has since raised over £40,000 to help build a new secondary school in the deprived area of the Nuba Mountains in Sudan.

Yacht alert

WEYMOUTH: The passenger ferry *Barfleur* alerted Portland Coastguard after it had received an emergency call from a yacht in trouble.

The *Palamedes* radioed for help after getting into difficulties off Anvil Point. Swanage lifeboat was launched and the crew managed to free the stricken vessel's snagged rudder.

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