

Playgoers get inside the head of Basil Fawlty

DON'T mention the war, but it promises to be the funniest show at Workington's Theatre Royal for years.

Get ready for Fawlty Towers, based on the TV comedy classic of the 1970s.

The tale of life in a seaside hotel is the winter production of The Playgoers Club of Workington.

It opens for a six-night run this Monday.

The play was originally scheduled to open last month but was cancelled because of the floods of November 19.

Director Geoff Hool and actress Jenni Rushton were evacuated from their sepa-

rate homes in Cockermouth and are still in temporary accommodation, but have struggled to get over the trauma to ensure that the show goes on.

The TV series was the brainchild of John Cleese, who played the role of Basil Fawlty whose mission seemed to be the emotional destruction of his guests and the physical destruction of his Spanish head waiter Manuel, immortalised by Andrew Sachs.

Playgoers have come up with perhaps the perfect duo to play Basil and Manuel in the shape of Ben Brincombe

as Basil and Ian Mitchell, an impish thespian who can slip into strained subservience at the sound of a rustling script, as Manuel.

Ian is well-known to Workington audiences, but for Ben this is his comeback after an absence of eight years.

"I don't mind admitting that I begged and cajoled Geoff Hool for this part," said Ben.

"The television series was well before my time but I have watched every episode on DVD and even researched the story of how John Cleese got his inspiration from a real hotel in Torquay.

"For me the trick is not to do an impression of Cleese but to work hard to get inside the head of Basil Fawlty."

Sarah Delorme plays Basil's wife Sybil. Polly the chambermaid is played by Anne Bowmer.

The role of Major Gowe is in the safe hands of a master of eccentric characterisation in Derek Thompson.

Jenni Rushton is also set to deliver something special as the deaf guest Mrs Richards.

Fawlty Towers runs for six nights from Monday.

For tickets, contact the box office on 01900 602122.