

IT MAY HAVE been doing the rounds in various media for nearly 50 years, but Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca" still has a charismatic effect on audiences in the hands of the right players.

And the "right" players just now are the excellent cast members of Workington Playgoers Club who, under Dudley Evans' direction, have put together a very watchable version in which the right theatrical atmosphere is created from the off and never distilled by mediocrity.

TRANSFORMED

The stage of the Theatre Royal is brilliantly transformed into a Cornish country house of the 1930's.

There is real attention to detail, down as far as genuine antiques and chintzy furniture. The aura is maintained by the costumes, music and expert use of lighting — but I couldn't figure out why the cry of a seagull was not once heard through those open French windows.

There are very few walk on parts in this three-act work and as a vehicle to demonstrate the real acting strength in depth of the company, it could hardly have been a better choice. There wasn't a weak link among the 17 players but the star notice probably has to be reserved for Pauline Harkness who got to grips so comfortably with the role of the sinister and malevolently scheming Mrs Danvers.

The central characters of Maxim de Winter and his new bride produce solidly effective performances from Ian Mitchell and Jane Hool but the former does not reach the heights he scaled in "Educating Rita" a few weeks before.

The indefatigable veteran

By PHILIP CRAM

Tony Murray slots like a hand into a glove for the role of Frith the butler, a part of significance in terms of continuity and counterpoint.

There are accomplished performances, too, from Barbara Singleton (as Beatrice Lacy), Geoff Hall (as her husband), Jim Howson (as Frank Crawley), Ron Dickens (as the evil Jack Favell) and Bob Banks as (Col. Julyan).

The play runs until Tuesday.