



Stoke on Trent Repertory Players £1



**29th &
30th April
and
1st to 3rd
May 2014
at 7.30pm**

**Matinee:
Sat. 3rd May
at 2.30pm**

Fawlty Towers

**BY JOHN CLEESE
AND
CONNIE BOOTH**

An amateur production by
arrangement with
Samuel French Ltd

Bradwell Lodge Community Centre



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Communication Problems

Basil Fawly: Howard Goodall
Sybil Fawly: Beverley Marshall
Polly: Catherine O'Reilly
Manuel: Lee Birkin
Mr Yardley: Ian Birkin
Mr Thurston: James King
Mrs Richards: Ann McArdle
Mr Firkins: James Lawton
Major Gowan: Brian Rawlins
Miss Tibbs: Gill Plant
Miss Gatsby: Amanda Bosson
Terry: John Wicks
Mr Mackintosh: Alan Clarke
Mr Kerr/Taxi Driver: Steven Beattie
Guest One: Sarah Stockdale
Guest Two: Kate Lindsay

Waldorf Salad

Sybil Fawly: Beverley Marshall
Mr Libson: James King
Basil Fawly: Howard Goodall
Mrs Johnstone: Sarah Stockdale
Mr Johnstone: Ian Birkin
Miss Hare: Ann McArdle
Miss Gurke: Caroline West
Mr Arrad: Steven Beattie
Mrs Arrad: Kate Lindsay
Manuel: Lee Birkin
Polly: Catherine O'Reilly
Mrs Hamilton: Sue Thompson
Mr Hamilton: James Lawton
Major Gowan: Brian Rawlins
Miss Tibbs: Gill Plant
Miss Gatsby: Amanda Bosson
Terry: John Wicks

The Anniversary

Polly: Catherine O'Reilly
 Terry: John Wicks
 Manuel: Lee Birkin
 Sybil Fawlt: Beverley Marshall
 Basil Fawlt: Howard Goodall
 Roger: Ian Birkin
 Alice: Sue Thompson
 Virginia: Kate Lindsay
 Arthur: James Lawton
 Reg: Steven Beattie
 Kitty: Sarah Stockdale
 Major Gowan: Brian Rawlins
 Audrey: Ann McArdle
 Miss Tibbs: Gill Plant
 Miss Gatsby: Amanda Bosson

**There will be a twenty minute interval between
 Waldorf Salad and The Anniversary**

Thank You

I would like to say a personal **BIG** thank you to all the volunteers who help out at the Rep including all the crew, cast, bar, box office and front of house staff.

Thank you to Tina Campbell for her wonderful set design. If it wasn't for all these hard working people we wouldn't have a show.

A special thank you to Derek Yeomans
 for his cameo audience appearance/entertainment.

Caroline Keen

**We are indebted to the St John Ambulance Brigade
 whose members attend all our performances.**

The Crew

Director: Caroline Keen
 Assistant Director: Ann McArdle
 Stage Director: Richard Masters
 Set Designer: Tina Campbell
 Stage Manager: Terry Wright
 Scenic Artists: John Beeston, Peter Burrows
 Set construction: Richard Masters, Mike Adams
 Elliot Allcock, Aaron Bagnell,
 John Beeston, Stuart Campbell
 Bill Hancock, Peter Logan
 Lighting Design & Operation: Malcolm Rushton
 Sound Design & Operation: Mike Adams
 Flyman: Peter Logan
 Props and Set Dressing: Julie Marsh, Alison Moran,
 Gill and Lauren Tipping
 Wigs: John Cumberlidge
 Wardrobe: Sylvia Wright
 Dresser: Joy Rawlins
 Programme design: Janet Smith
 Company Photographer: Peter Croft

We hope you enjoy this play, and perhaps fancy "having a go" yourself. However, we welcome new members into all posts/jobs in the theatre. Perhaps you are not aware of all the things that are needed to support the play on the stage.

Apart from acting, members are working behind the scenes as stage manager, prompting, providing the lighting and sound effects, building the sets, providing furniture and props, organising costumes running the bar and coffee bar, running the booking office, selling programmes and being "front of the house" to welcome the audience.

If any of these appeal to you, you can chat to members and find out more.

Each Wednesday of the Rep Players productions I will be in the bar, and can direct you to the knowledgeable, relevant person.

Judy Adams (Chair for the Players)

Director's Notes

It has been a fabulous endeavour to put *Fawlty Towers* on the stage. Nearly forty years since it was first broadcast in the UK, *Fawlty Towers* remains acclaimed as among the most loved and enduring of British TV sitcoms. Its success was international and all twelve episodes are still broadcast in order, twice weekly, in the United States.

For some of the actors who played the leading characters it largely defined their careers. Andrew Sachs, for instance: sixty years in show-business, but best known for three months work creating the character, Manuel. Connie Booth is instantly recognisable as Polly but unknown for her other TV and film work.

All of which brings huge expectations to anyone trying to recreate the brilliance of *Fawlty Towers* to a live theatre audience. The challenges have included how to put a hotel on the stage. In a TV studio, it is straightforward to cut from an office to a reception, kitchen, dining room, bar, lobby or bedroom – even to an outside scene. On the stage, all these areas need to be represented in a way

which is familiar to fans of the TV show but which work dramatically.

Then there are the characters. John Cleese is Basil; Andrew Sachs is Manuel. We have brought together a cast who have the physical essence of these characters and have worked hard to reproduce their spirit and energy.

The huge advantage we have is outstanding material. The three episodes you will see tonight are completely true to the original TV scripts, each one worked on for six weeks by the writers, John Cleese and Connie Booth. The result is comedy gold, with no lines wasted or redundant and plots which thunder along with laughter all the way.

I hope you enjoy tonight's performance as much as I have enjoyed working with the cast in the rehearsal room. We

have laughed a great deal, even from the very first reading. If you are already a *Fawlty Towers* fan, we hope we reward your trust to treat the material with the respect and attention to detail it deserves. If you are new to *Fawlty Towers*, you are in for a treat as we introduce you to Basil, the hotelier from hell, and the other bizarre characters who inhabit his world!

Caroline Keen, Director



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© Emily Williams

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Saturday matinee: £7.50

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Stoke on Trent
Repertory Players

**17th to
21st June
2014
at
7.30pm**

**Matinee:
Sat.
21st June
at 2.30pm**

An amateur production by
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John Cleese

John Marwood Cleese was born on the 27th October 1939 in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, and was the only child of Reginald Francis Cleese, an insurance salesman, and his wife, Muriel.

He was educated at St Peter's Preparatory School until the age of 13 when he was awarded an exhibition at Clifton College, a public school in Bristol. He was already more than 6 feet tall and showing the early signs of a quirky sense of humour - he allegedly defaced the school grounds, as a prank, by painting footprints to suggest that the statue of Field Marshal Earl Haig had got down from his plinth and gone to the toilet!

Having done well academically, passing 8 O-Levels and 3 A-Levels in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, he was offered a place at Cambridge University which he was unable to take up immediately, as the end of National Service conscription in the UK meant there were twice the usual number of applicants. Whilst he waited for a place to become available he returned to his prep school to teach science, English, geography, history and Latin, (an experience he drew on later for a scene in *Life of Brian*, in which he corrects Brian's badly written Latin graffiti.)

After two years teaching he took up the place he had won at Downing College, Cambridge to read Law. On arrival, he went to the Cambridge Guildhall, where each university society had a stall, and went up to the Footlights stall where he was asked if he could sing or dance. He replied "no" as he was not *allowed* to sing at his school because he was so bad, and if there was anything worse than his singing it was his dancing. He was then

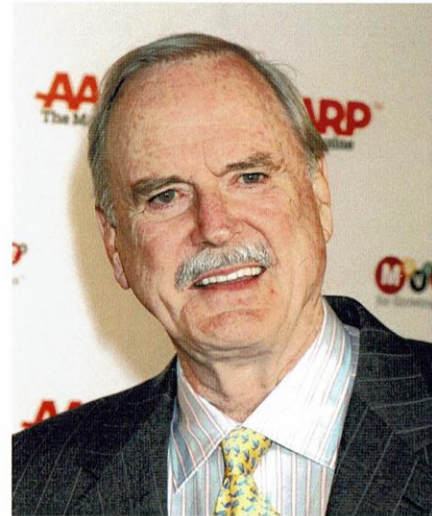
asked "Well, what do you do?" to which he replied, "I make people laugh".

At the Footlights theatrical club he spent a lot of time with Tim Brooke-Taylor and Bill Oddie and met his future writing partner Graham Chapman. Cleese wrote extra material for the 1961 Footlights Revue *I Thought I Saw It Move*, and was Registrar for the Footlights Club during 1962. He was also in the cast for both the 1962 Footlights Revue *Double Take!*, and the 1963 Footlights Revue *A Clump of Plinths*, which was so successful at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe that it was renamed Cambridge Circus and taken to the West End in London and then on a tour of New Zealand and Broadway.

Cleese briefly stayed on in America, performing on and Off-Broadway and it was while performing in the musical *Half a Sixpence*, he met future Python Terry Gilliam, as well as American actress Connie Booth, whom he married on 20 February 1968.

The success of the Footlights Revue led to the recording of a short series of half-hour radio programmes, called *I'm Sorry, I'll Read That Again*, which were so popular that the BBC commissioned a regular series with the same title that ran from 1965 to 1974. Cleese returned to Britain and joined the cast. In many episodes, he is credited as "John Otto Cleese" (possibly due to embarrassment about his actual middle name - Marwood.)

Also in 1965, Cleese and Chapman began writing on *The Frost Report*. The writing staff chosen for the programme consisted of many writers and performers who would go on to make names for themselves in comedy, including Bill Oddie, Tim Brooke-Taylor, Frank Muir, Barry Cryer, Marty



Feldman, Ronnie Barker, Ronnie Corbett, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin. While working on *The Frost Report*, the future Pythons developed the writing styles which would make *Monty Python's Flying Circus* one of the major series of its day. Cleese's work with Chapman, in which the humour often centred around ordinary people in ordinary situations behaving absurdly for no obvious reason, provided Python with some of its darkest and angriest moments; many of the characters displaying the seething suppressed rage that later characterised his portrayal of Basil Fawlty. *Python* ran for four seasons from 1969 to 1974 on BBC TV, although Cleese quit the show after the third series, feeling that the scripts had declined in quality.

Many years on from his youthful successes in *The Frost Report* etc., Cleese achieved international fame as the neurotic hotel manager Basil Fawlty in *Fawlty Towers*, which he co-wrote with his wife Connie Booth. The series won three BAFTA awards, and in 2000 it topped the British Film Institute's list of the 100 Greatest British Television Programmes.

Cleese based Fawlty on a real person, Donald Sinclair, whom he had encountered in 1970 while the Python team were staying at a hotel in Torquay. Reportedly, Cleese was inspired by Sinclair's mantra, "I could run this hotel just fine, if it weren't for the guests." He later described Sinclair as "the most wonderfully rude man I have ever met," although Sinclair's widow has said her husband was totally misrepresented in the series. The first series, screened in 1975 on BBC 2, received poor reviews, but gained in popularity when it was repeated on BBC 1 the following year. The second series did not air until 1979, by which time Cleese's marriage to Booth had ended, but they revived their collaboration for the second series. In total *Fawlty Towers* consisted of only twelve episodes, Cleese and Booth both maintaining that this was to avoid compromising the quality.

Following his divorce from Booth, Cleese married actress Barbara Trentham in 1981: they subsequently divorced in 1990. Two years later he married psychotherapist Alyce Faye Eichelberger: they divorced in 2008. The divorce settlement left Eichelberger with £12 million in finance and assets, including £600,000 a year for seven years. Unsurprisingly, despite being in his mid-seventies, Cleese continues to work and tour with his show entitled the *Alimony Tour!*

Politically, Cleese's affiliations have been equally changeable. Currently a member of the Lib Dems (having previously being a Labour and then SDP party voter), in 2011, Cleese revealed that he had declined a life peerage in 1999 for political services. Outgoing leader of the Liberal Democrats, Paddy Ashdown, had put suggested shortly before he stepped down, that Cleese would take the party whip and sit as a working peer, but the actor quipped that he "realised this involved being in England in the winter and I thought that was too much of a price to pay."