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## Another Triumph for The Wychwood Players

### An Inspector Calls

Above all it was ambitious. Staging a play as well known and well loved as *An Inspector Calls* invites comparison to the last professional production at the National Theatre in 1992. Such a choice calls for the finest focus the actors, crew and director can give; they gave it - in spades!



John Drew deserves special plaudits for his role as Arthur Birling. His beautifully executed accent reminded us that we were in the industrial north. There wasn't a pause or stumble on Saturday night, even when a member of the audience was taken ill and the play briefly suspended. Action resumed seamlessly.

#### Close Encounters

Philip Brown had a tiger by the tail and he knew it. He could cast the production with no problem and his choices proved his judgement but how to stage it given the way J.B. Priestley juggles time frames? Brown and company decided on the 'box' solution - concealing the considerably smaller stage within the beautifully designed, constructed and painted house used in the opening and closing WWII scenes. This meant that the stage was seriously reduced in size. The cast handled this well but when five or six actors appeared at one time, the Birling drawing room was very crowded.

Inspector Goole did his best to conserve space by nose-to-nose confrontation with each of his 'suspects'. This infringement of personal space made the audience rather uncomfortable and would not have been tolerated in any drawing room of the time. I also have a quibble with his interpretation of the role. I should have liked to see him humble the Birling family and Gerald Croft with riveting eye contact and without raising his voice.

#### We Cared Enough to Give the Best

The cast was superlative, playing their roles like a second skin. I wonder how well they reverted to being John Drew, Mark Jessey, Claire Himmens, Rose Hartley, Nick Anscombe, Kate Young and David Staines after the show? Additional Cast Members said not a word and did so with memorable dignity and power, particularly John Trevers' serious army officer who merely took off his cap, put it under his arm and walked away. At their Saturday night cast party the Players honoured Pat Bannister for costumes and set painting and Kate Pollard for props. Both are so able that there will be no rest for them! David Trollope's set design and construction is equally indispensable. Philip Brown and John Trevers were lauded for their director/producer roles.

We will see you all at the **Supper Evening on 17th, 18th and 19th May**, when the Players present a selection of plays from *Visiting Hours*. It will be another triumph, no doubt. We only produce triumphs these days!

**Trudy Yates**