

Barton Players

The Importance of being Earnest

Directed by Keith Badham

Barton Village Hall October 27th 2010

Barton Players successfully captured the wit and style of Oscar Wilde's play in a most entertaining and effective production. The play makes high demands, it contains scenes of classic farce, it has a precise construction, the words must be beautifully spoken and it should be played with a deadly seriousness yet inner sense of fun. Director Keith Badham clearly understood and met these challenges. Three sets are needed for this play and Keith achieved this in an imaginative, practical manner. This is a witty, wordy play; Keith ensured that line delivery was very good. So much depends on the cast and here Keith used talented actors who performed to a high standard.

Jason Wolfe was an excellent Jack, his earnestness was apparent in a confident relaxed performance which became appropriately more assertive in Act Three. Tom George well demonstrated the languid idle Algernon and was a good foil to Jason. Kirsty Badham was every inch the formidable Lady Bracknell. Dressed superbly, moving elegantly, delivering lines to great effect, this was an outstanding performance. Mimi Greenfield-Ginger too was an exceptional Gwendolen. In looks, deportment, diction, she was thoroughly believable; we saw flashes of independence yet realized that she was her mother's daughter – excessively polite with a steely determination. Mimi was very effectively paired opposite Chloe Badham as Cecily. Here was another talented actress giving a first rate performance as the demure, didactic Cecily. Chloe brought out the innocence and resolve of Cecily. These two terrific actresses conducted their elegant quarrel with the highest good breeding, the air fairly crackled with polite venom.

Harold Liberty made Dr Chasuble an eccentric country rector. This was a delightful performance, comic and touching, which never descended into caricature. Debbie Radcliffe's Miss Prism hinted at an unconventional past. Both butlers, in their own way, added other elements of comedy. Doug Geairns' Lane mirrored his master and

Raymond Dalgarno reflected the less formal environment of the country.

Keith had obviously rehearsed his cast well but the hand of the director was not apparent, I say this as a compliment to Keith. The play moved at a good pace, with much energy and some exemplary performances.

Enid Cooper

NODA Representative.

District 2

Eastern Region.