

## Join Us

If you enjoy theatre, why not join us and benefit from membership:

- ✓ Half price personal tickets for Questors productions\*
- ✓ Discounted Guest tickets when you bring friends to Questors productions\*
- ✓ Children's FREE tickets†
- ✓ Opportunities to be actively involved in our productions
- ✓ Opportunity to audition to join our company of actors
- ✓ Exclusive or discounted training courses
- ✓ Access to *IQ* – the members-only website: [members.questors.org.uk](http://members.questors.org.uk)
- ✓ Access to exclusive news on *IQ* and email newsletter
- ✓ Receive the regular programme leaflet
- ✓ Membership of The Grapevine Club
- ✓ Special invitations, events and offers not available to the public
- ✓ Ticket reservation facility (conditions apply)
- ✓ Voting rights in the company

*\*Reduced prices exclude certain events. †Under 18, excludes certain events, maximum four per event. Must be collected at the performance and accompanied by the member.*

## Getting the most from your membership

We have a wide range of opportunities for you to become actively involved front-of-house or backstage. Volunteer help is always needed for 'selling' programmes or stewarding, and training is provided if you'd like to work in Box Office with our computerised system. To meet members in a social setting, volunteer to help behind the Grapevine bar. Backstage staff including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, sound and lighting designers and operators, painters, wardrobe and costume and set designers are always welcomed; whatever your skills, we'll find a place for you. We also have courses for those wishing to direct.

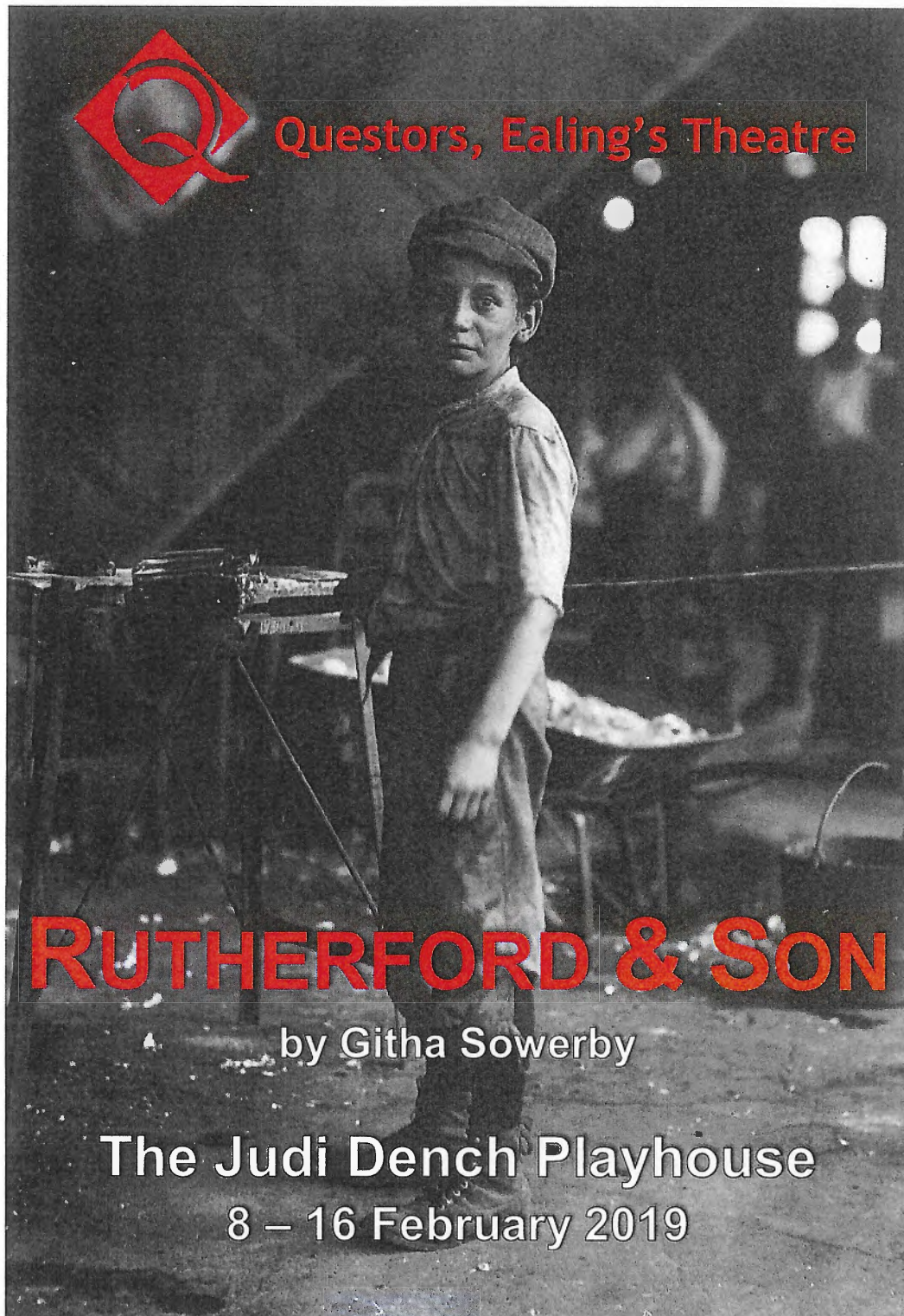
The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.


## The Questors Youth Theatre – QYT

Our Youth Theatre, QYT, runs weekly drama classes for all ages from 6 to 18. Younger groups meet on Saturday mornings and older ages at weekday teatime. There's often a waiting list for membership, so put your name down now! Details are online at [questors.org.uk/qyt](http://questors.org.uk/qyt).

The Questors Theatre  
12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ  
Registered Charity No. 207516

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Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011  
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 **Questors, Ealing's Theatre**

**RUTHERFORD & SON**

by Githa Sowerby

**The Judi Dench Playhouse**

**8 – 16 February 2019**



## Fields at The Questors

Fields at The Questors serves Italian coffee, fine teas, hearty meals and handmade cakes, and is the perfect spot for a pre-theatre meal or intermission ice-cream.

Order interval drinks before the show to beat the crowds.

Regular opening hours:  
Monday to Saturday,  
9:00 am to 7:30 pm

Also open before and during the interval of all Judi Dench Playhouse evening and matinee performances.

Find **Fields** on **Facebook**.



## The Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to Members and Friends of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as audience members on show nights.

The club is open seven nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes, and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers.

We are the proud holders of a Cask Marque award for the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2019 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are **CAMRA West Middlesex Club of the Year**. A choice of at least three real ales is usually available, including Fuller's London Pride. We also provide a range of draught lagers and ciders, as well as wines and spirits – all at very reasonable prices.

Opening Hours:

7:00 pm – 10:30 pm (Sunday – Wednesday)

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (Thursday – Saturday)

Sunday lunchtime: midday – 2:30 pm

See [questors.org.uk/grapevine](http://questors.org.uk/grapevine) for more details.

**Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.**

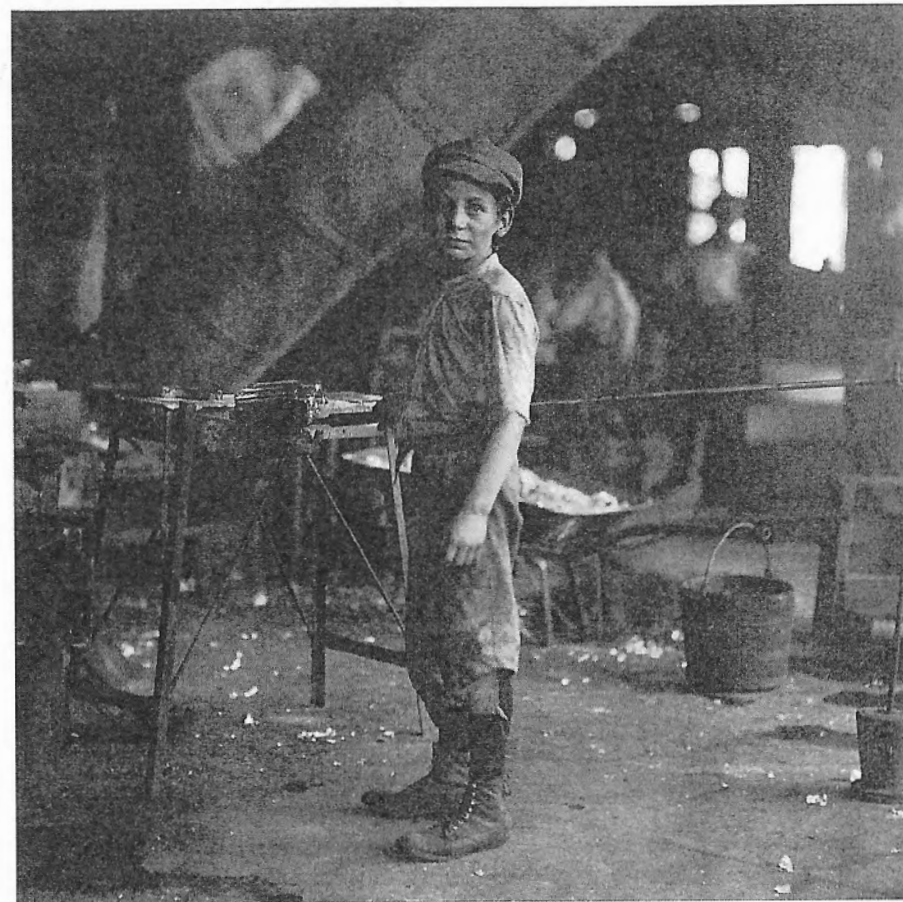


image: Lewis Hine

## RUTHERFORD & SON

by Githa Sowerby

**The Judi Dench Playhouse**

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# RUTHERFORD & SON

*How did I write 'Rutherford'? Oh, by fits and starts. I was busy with other work at the time – principally books for children – and rarely had the opportunity to work on it continuously for any length of time. I finished it last June in a boat on the river. The story, of course, is imaginary. But I knew the life of hard-working Northerners, and I like writing about things I know. As for technique, well, it's rather alarming, isn't it? I imagine the Rutherfords in a room, not on the stage, by the way. Originally, I called the play 'The Master', but found at the last moment that the title had already been used. So I settled on one of the oldest and best known names in the North – Rutherford. [...] No – I don't mean to 'teach' anything. My play is a story, nothing more.' (Githa Sowerby, interviewed in 'The Queen', 1912).*

2019 seems to be the year for productions of Githa Sowerby's best-known work. Sheffield Crucible Theatre are running a production concurrently with ours and, from May, the National Theatre are staging a production of the play that it made a discovery of 25 years ago and considers one of the greatest of the twentieth century. It's certainly a piece that audiences can engage with on any number of levels: as a play that deals with class-consciousness (or perhaps self-consciousness about class); as a feminist critique of the prevailing patriarchy; a Marxist attack on the insidious power of money and on power itself; and, in a more visceral sense, it's a play about unhappy families. However you choose to respond to it, *Rutherford & Son* is a play of both intellect and emotion, but which ends – without too much of a spoiler – with the head ruling the heart.

*Rutherford* received its first public outing at the Court Theatre in Sloane Square (now, of course, the Royal Court) in 1912 and was part of the so-called New Drama: plays wearing a social conscience on their sleeve and featuring confident female characters in the vein of Shaw's Vivie Warren or Ibsen's Hedda Gabler and Nora Helmer. Prior to Sowerby, the Court had enjoyed hits from female playwrights such as Elizabeth Robins with *Votes for Women* (1907); Cicely Hamilton's *Diana of Dobson's* (1908); and *Chains* by Elizabeth Baker (1909). *Rutherford & Son* has proved the most durable of this quartet. Massively successful critically – 'remarkable'; 'the most virile work we have seen for some years'; 'a marvel' – it transferred to the West End and then to New York. More recent productions, the NT's 1994 revival aside, have included those at the Orange Tree, the Mint Theater, New York and Northern Broadways' touring production directed by Jonathan Miller. But why is *Rutherford & Son*, this unsentimental, semi-autobiographical almost-melodrama set in the industrialised North of England by an apparently demure, retiring young children's author, now considered a classic of twentieth-century theatre?

One answer may lie in the fact that its characters are not purely ciphers for their creator's ideas – unlike Shaw – but recognisable warts-and-all people who scrape the top off burnt pies and smoke against their doctor's advice. Yes, the old order in the person of Rutherford is losing its established grip on the helm and the young in the person of his daughter-in-law Mary are proving themselves far more coolly adept, but this is no *Master Builder*. Rutherford isn't a Solness bedevilled by inner trolls, building castles in the air; he believes that life's about 'keeping your head up and your heels down [...], begetting children, rearing them up to work when you're gone'. Nor is Mary a bewitching Hilde figure, but simply a hard-headed mother who loves her child and wants a future for him. There are no heroes and no villains in *Rutherford*; no polemics or pamphleteering. Just people with all the usual flaws, imperfections, wants and desires.

A further clue may lie in its universal themes of family, love, loss and work. Another in its depiction of men who are apparently strong, but scratch them a little and they're suddenly quite vulnerable; of women who are quietly stronger, but push them and they'll speak up proudly. However, for me, Sowerby's apparently ingenuous remarks made during her interview for the high society magazine *The Queen* (quoted above) hold the real key as to why the play works so well and continues to do so. In writing the play, she imagined the Rutherfords in a room, rather than on a stage; her intention was to tell a story, rather than to convey a message. With the result that what we are in plain sight of is not so much a group of characters on a stage-set educating us about ourselves, as a family in their living quarters revealing themselves to us. Not, I hasten to add, in a dull, reality-show way, but more in the vein of a North Country soap opera. The messages – if any there are – are subliminal; not ones to beat the audience about the head with, but expressed in a non-stylised idiom by people whose relationship with each other and with ourselves is both complex and felt. *Rutherford & Son* is, of course, fiction but a believable one that plays out in a space that we can see ourselves occupying too. Harold Pinter, who knew a thing or two about rooms, could never have imagined a room as suffocating or as stuffy as this one. And yet it's a stuffiness enlivened by bolshie Mrs Henderson; railed against by Rutherford's put-upon daughter Janet; cleansed by Mary. Even Ann, Rutherford's ever-complaining sister who seems at one with it, emerges from this sunless parlour with a kind of dignity, albeit a pinched, even comic one. Through the gloom of a man's world, Sowerby seems to be saying, the women are finally coming into view, sharply outlined and with voices as distinctive as the playwright's own.

**Simon Roberts, Director**

# RUTHERFORD & SON

by Githa Sowerby

*First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 8 February 2019*

## CAST

in order of speaking

Janet, Rutherford's daughter	<b>Dani Beckett</b>
Ann, Rutherford's sister	<b>Despina Sellar</b>
Mary, John's wife	<b>Evelina Plonyte</b>
John, Rutherford's son	<b>Kai Gene Hogenacker</b>
Dick, Rutherford's other son	<b>William Newsome</b>
Rutherford, owner of Rutherford & Son glassworks	<b>David Sellar</b>
Martin, Rutherford's foreman	<b>Julian Casey</b>
Mrs Henderson, a local woman	<b>Alex McDevitt</b>

The play is set in a living room in Rutherford's house

**Act One:** An evening in December

INTERVAL

**Act Two:** Two days later; nine o'clock in the evening

**Act Three:** The following morning; about eleven o'clock

The performance will last approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes,  
including a 15-minute interval.

## PRODUCTION

Director	<b>Simon Roberts</b>
Assistant Director	<b>Jananne Rahman</b>
Set Designer	<b>Bron Blake</b>
Costume Designer	<b>Nichola Thomas</b>
Lighting Designer/Operator	<b>Chris Newall</b>
Sound Designer/Operator	<b>Paul Wilson</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Sarah Vass</b>
Deputy Stage Managers	<b>Russell Fleet, Paula Robinson</b>
Assistant Stage Managers	<b>Calum Brown, Shane Joseph</b>
Properties	<b>Sally Darwin</b>
Prompter	<b>Debbie Abel</b>
Set Realisation	<b>Doug King, Rob Willin, Bron Blake</b>
Set Realisation Assistants	<b>Adina Elmasry, Simon Higginson, Geoff Moore, Valerie Newall, Jenny Richardson, Sylvia Wall,</b>
Get-In Assistance	<b>Jeff Benny, Henry Broom, Sally Darwin, Laurie Swan</b>
Photographer	<b>Robert Vass</b>
Videographer	<b>Peter Gould, Gavin Jones</b>
Thanks to	<b>Harriet Parsonage, Kall Kwik Chiswick</b>

Music from *The Golden Road Suite* and *12 Seconds of Light*  
by the Modulus Quartet

Please turn off all mobile phones and similar electronic devices. The use of  
cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.  
Thank you.

# Biographies

## **Dani Beckett – Janet Rutherford**

This is Dani's second full-length production with The Questors, having appeared in *Eventide* last year, along with the Overnight Plays and Dark Monday/QEvent readings. Dani has previously played roles including Catherine Winslow in *The Winslow Boy*, Leila Arden in *Rope* and Shakespeare's Joan la Pucelle, Beatrice and Celia which she performed in Stratford as part of the RSC's Open Stages Programme.

## **Bron Blake – Set Designer**

An active member since the 1970s, Bron has been doing set design and scenic art since 2004. Productions include *Vincent in Brixton*, *The Seagull*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Broken Glass*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Voyager & Lovers*, *The School of Night*, *Betrayal*, *Be My Baby*, *Rope*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Master Builder*, *The Village Bike*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Sweet Charity*, *Larkin with Women*, *Endgame* and *The Heiress*.

## **Julian Casey – Martin**

Julian joined The Questors in 2006 and has since appeared in several productions including *Comedians*, *Two* and *The Winterling*. He was in the cast of *She Stoops to Conquer* in 2015, which also toured to Minack in Cornwall, and played Gregory Smirnov in the 2018 production of *The Bear*, which toured to Lithuania last July.

## **Kai Gene Hogenacker – John Rutherford Jnr**

Kai has a background in professional radio drama. He has most recently participated in scratch nights and was assistant producer on *Becoming Berenice* at the Voilà International Theatre Festival. After *Human Error* in October 2018, this is his second, but first 'official', Questors production.

## **Alex McDevitt – Mrs Henderson**

Alex has played a variety of roles at The Questors, and has been lucky enough to explore many different styles of theatre, such as The Sphinx in Berkoff's *Greek*, Clara in Durrenmatt's *The Visit* and Ruth in Pinter's *The Homecoming*. Her most recent roles were as Mrs Clare, Mrs d'Urberville and part of the ensemble in the well-received *Tess* production.

## **Chris Newall – Sound Designer and Operator**

Chris has designed the lighting for more than 50 Questors productions, half a dozen Musical Theatre Summer Schools and a couple of RSC Showcases. Most recently he lit Questival 2018 and *For Services Rendered* in the Judi Dench Playhouse, and *Endgame* and *Peer Gynt* in the Studio.

## **William Newsome – Dick Rutherford**

Will has been a member of The Questors since 2017, having appeared in *Pygmalion* that same year. He previously acted with the Children's Shakespeare Company before moving through the secondary and sixth form courses at the Arts Educational Schools London. Will has a degree in Animation Production and is a keen film-maker and writer.

## **Evelina Plonyte – Mary Rutherford**

Having taken a leap of faith and moved to London in 2013 with nothing more than a rucksack, Evelina has been trying to find her way in the London theatre scene ever since. Her last appearances at The Questors were Imogen Parrott in *Trelawny of the Wells* and Emmi Straube in *Taking Sides* last season.

## **Jananne Rahman – Assistant Director**

Jananne has been a Questors actor since 2003, appearing in 18 productions including *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Company*, *Festen*, *The Seagull*, *Abigail's Party*, *ENRON* and *Betrayal*. Jananne organises the Questors Christmas ghost story readings and is head of the New Writing team which promotes the staging of original drama. This is Jananne's first production as Assistant Director.

## **Simon Roberts – Director**

For The Questors, Simon has directed *Endgame*, *Rope*, *Betrayal*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Abigail's Party* and Jim Cartwright's *Two*. As an actor, he was last seen as Halvard Solness in *The Master Builder*. He teaches at the LSE and is also a writer.

## **David Sellar – John Rutherford Snr**

David's first appearance at The Questors was a year ago in Peter Whelan's *Sleepers in the Field*. Roles with previous companies include Rance in *What the Butler Saw*, Goldberg in *The Birthday Party* and Mel in *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*. Roles in musicals include Billy Flynn in *Chicago*, Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls* and Fredrick in *A Little Night Music*.

## **Despina Sellar – Ann Rutherford**

Despina's first appearance at The Questors was last year, in Peter Whelan's *Sleepers in the Field*. Roles in previous companies include Mrs Manningham in *Gaslight*, Maggie in *Outside Edge*, Amanda in *Private Lives* and Beatrice in *A View from the Bridge*. Directing credits include *Shirley Valentine*, *Stones in His Pockets*, *Moonlight and Magnolias* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

## **Nichola Thomas – Costume Designer**

Nichola has been the Costume Designer on over 20 shows in the last 15 years, including more recently *Shadowlands*, *The Last of the Haussmans*, *Endgame* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Although she works on various shows, she particularly enjoys costume designing shows set in the 1920s-1950s.

## **Paul Wilson – Sound Designer and Operator**

Paul has been involved in many productions in the past. This is his first contribution this season.



# METAL AND GLASS

Githa Sowerby's family-owned glassworks factory was located on Ellison Street in Gateshead. It produced decorative coloured pieces for domestic use, such as vases and tableware. The references to 'metals' in *Rutherford & Son* strongly suggest that the fictional factory produces the same kind of items.

The main components that go into glass are silica, alkali and lime. The introduction of metal oxides improved the clarity of the glass while also making it much easier to melt and shape. Young John Rutherford's 'invention' probably refers to a new use of one such metal oxide, which might improve the factory's yield and so drive down manufacturing costs.

Metal compounds were also used to produce different coloured glass. For example, iron oxide in one form will give a bluish-green tint to glass and in another form a yellowish-green tint, while cobalt and selenium oxide were added to mask colours (decolourising).

It is likely that the main technique used in Rutherford's factory was 'annealing', a process of slowly cooling hot glass objects to relieve internal stresses that might result in cracking. To prevent this, objects were cooled gradually in a temperature-controlled kiln called a 'lehr'; in the play, Rutherford enquires of his foreman Martin, 'How's the new lehr man getting on?'



Githa Sowerby (on extreme left as a young girl)



Githa Sowerby at about the time *Rutherford & Son* was first produced



The Rutherford family (The Questors Theatre production 8-16 February 2019, photographed by Robert Vass

# The Questors – The Future

Help to make The Questors an even better place! Donations and bequests are continuing to contribute to the life of this unique theatre. For instance, a generous donation made possible a recent training programme for young ESOL students (English for Speakers of Other Languages), and ambitious work on the fabric of the site is ongoing. This is your theatre and the theatre of future generations of playgoers and participants. Donate now or in your will, anonymously if you prefer. Andrea Bath, our Executive Director (020 8567 0011), will answer any enquiries in confidence. Or go to [questors.org.uk/giving](http://questors.org.uk/giving) to see ways in which you can support The Questors.

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# Next at The Questors

## ROSMERSHOLM

by Henrik Ibsen,  
version by Paul Collins

22 February – 2 March 2019

The Studio

Johannes Rosmer's thoughts are dominated by the suicide of his wife, Beata. Rebecca, Beata's young companion, holds sway over Rosmersholm, but brother Magnus begins to unravel layers of secrets with explosive results. And the question remains; just why did Beata throw herself off the bridge?

## BUGSY MALONE

by Alan Parker

2 – 9 March 2019

The Judi Dench Playhouse

The classic gangster spoof has mobster rivals Fat Sam and Dandy Dan battling for power. Dan's 'splurge guns' wreak havoc as he shoots up Fat Sam's Grand Slam. Fat Sam escapes with the help of Bugsy Malone, but between the conflicts, Bugsy is busy sweet-talking would-be singer, Blousey Brown, and vows to run away with her. Will Bugsy stay out of trouble long enough to see his dreams come true?