

The Green Room Gawsworth Celebration Evening 15 September 2018

The Wilmslow Green Room Society celebrated 44 years of performances at Gawsworth Hall in Cheshire on Saturday 15th September. The Hall, home to the Richards family, hosted Green Room productions in the garden as part of their summer season of events between 1972 and 2016.

Elizabeth Richards, with her sons Jonathan and Rupert, joined current Green Room members, former members and friends to share fond memories and renew friendships. As with all outdoor productions, the weather featured greatly in the discussions.

Until 2010 all the productions were Shakespeare plays. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' featured on 6 occasions, so it was fitting that David Reynolds and Val Watkinson recreated their scene as Oberon and Titania, using a little poetic licence to suit the occasion, from the 1994 production which was set in the 1920s. David sashayed onto the stage wearing an immaculate tail suit, shimmering gauze wings and sequined make up, followed by Val in a sparkling black evening dress, purple feather boas, and a gold headdress at least 2 feet high. Their performance brought the house down!

Green Room President Ronnie Dykstra and Jeremy Cleverley explained how the theatre began its long association with Gawsworth Hall. Chris McClory described how the music for some of the productions had been composed especially to set the mood, and Sue Offer shared some of the escapades and narrow escapes that happened backstage or with the props, many ingeniously made by her and her husband Alan, that the cast had known nothing about!

Rupert Richards described the experience from the point of view of his family, particularly himself and Jonathan growing up at the Hall. Rupert was 7 years old when he made an appearance on the lawn as a page boy in 'Romeo and Juliet' in 1981. In keeping with the title, 'The Tempest' ran during a week of relentless rain in 1997. Elizabeth Richards took the children playing the Fairies into her kitchen every evening to dry them and warmed them up with mugs of hot chocolate. Her kindness often resulted in her kitchen being draped with damp costumes overnight! Her husband Tim sadly passed away in 2016, but was the father figure at the Hall throughout the Green Room's time there.

After the more formal part of the evening everyone gathered around displays of photos, programmes, costumes and lists of cast and crew, watched videos of some of the productions and shared memories. The evening had a relaxed family atmosphere. Many people may have complained about the weather at the time, but in reality no one from the Green Room who took part in plays on those summer evenings on the lawn at Gawsworth Hall would have missed it for the world!

Photos of the evening: [Gawsworth Celebration photos](#)

Di James