

When Toad Came Home

A Musical Play by David Barrett

Lyrics by Kenneth Graham, John Davies
and David Barrett

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Dramatis Personae

Toad

Badger

Rat

Mole

Watkins, the Butler (a shrew)

Otter

Hedgehog

Rabbit

The Weasels:

Chief Weasel

Hannibal

Horace

Hubert

Henry

Herbert

Percy

The Field Mice:

Freddy

Fergus

Bert

Harry

Frankie

Chorus of weasels, field mice and other animals

WHEN TOAD CAME HOME

Prologue: SONG 1 The Greatest Hero (Lyrics by Kenneth Graham)

(In front of curtain. Actions mimed by animals)

1 The world has held great heroes as hist'ry books have showed,
But never a name to go down in fame compared with that of Toad.

Repeat verse 1

2 The clever men at Oxford know all there is to be knowed,
But none of them know one half as much as intelligent Mister Toad.
As intelligent Mister Toad.

3 The animals sat in the ark and cried, their tears in torrents flowed.
Who was it said, "There's land ahead"? Encouraging Mister Toad.

4 The army all saluted as they marched along the road.
Was it the king or Kitchener? No, it was Mister Toad.

5 The queen and her ladies in waiting sat at the window and sewed.
She cried, "Look, who's that handsome man?"
They answered Mister Toad. (Second time repeat this line)

Repeat verses 4 and 5.

6 The world has held great heroes as hist'ry books have showed,
But never a name to go down in fame compared with that of Toad.

Scene 1: The Parlour at Toad Hall

REPRISE OF SONG 1 *(optional)*

TOAD *(Looks in mirror)* Oh, what a handsome fellow I am. Wouldn't my
ancestors be so proud if they could see me now. *(looks at portraits)*
Horatio Toad, now he was a fine fellow. Battle of Trafalgar,
Waterloo, where would we be now if it weren't for poor old Horatio?

(looks at watch) Golly gosh it's past time for afternoon tea. What on earth has happened to Watkins? *(calls)* Watkins I don't know, I just can't seem to get the staff nowadays. Wouldn't you have thought they would be queuing up for a position in my household. Watkins is not such a bad chap. He tries hard but who ever heard of a butler who was hard of hearing. He is always mixing up the orders. I asked him to get cook to do me a roast lamb last night and what did she do me? You've guessed it - toast and jam. *(straightens a picture)* Ah, Laurence Toad of Arabia, another fine fellow. *(doors open)* Ah, Watkins, do come in, I see you have brought my tea.

WATKINS Uh, no sir. I have just brought your tea.

TOAD I beg your Oh, never mind Watkins.

WAT Yes sir I am very behind. That incompetent footman. He asked me if he should polish the door of my pantry. Of course I agreed. No harm in that, keep the rascal out of trouble and the door did need a polish. So what did he do? Polished the **floor** so I could not prepare your tea until it was dry. Typical of these squirrels, can't follow a simple instruction. I always say they can't be trained. Will there be anything else, sir?

TOAD Well yes, actually Watkins there is just one other thing.

WAT Very good sir. Then I'll be off.

(exits muttering to himself leaving TOAD exasperated)

TOAD *(Approaches a broken painting)* Poor old Sir Francis Toad. He has never been the same since those creatures, I can hardly bring myself to say Weasels took up residence. Here in my ancestral home. They are such nasty creatures - always cooking up some wicked scheme. Heaven only knows where they are now. If I had my way it would be 'pop goes the weasel'.

(The doorbell rings then WATKINS appears at the door)

WAT Sir, Mr Pratt and Mr Bowles. *(enter RAT and MOLE)*

TOAD Oh Watkins, you mean Rat and Mole.

TOAD Come in my friends, it's been such a long time. *(exits WATKINS)*

MOLE Oh Toad we have rather missed your eccentric company, we felt we had to come and see if you are alright, didn't we Ratty?

RAT Of course Toad. Life has seemed rather dull since we taught those little rascals the weasels where they belong. *(TOAD offers tea)*

 Thank you Toad. I must say your staff did a splendid job in clearing up the mess.

MOLE But Toad, you do seem rather down in the dumps. There was no permanent damage done, was there?

TOAD My dear friend, the damage cannot be counted in pounds and pennies. It is my pride that's hurt seriously hurt.

RAT Well I know just the thing to cheer you up and help you to forget your troubles. We'll go on a picnic. Just like old times.

SONG 2 In Those Not Too Distant Days

- 1 In those not too distant days when we were young,
 And life upon the riverbank was wreathed in fun,
 We remember how carefree and jolly days could be,
 When Rat and Mole went out with Toad to take high tea.
- 2 In those not too distant days when we were young,
 And ev'ry dawn that broke it promised endless sun.
 We remember those happy and lively days we spent,
 When Rat and Mole went out with Toad on pleasure bent.
- 3 In those not too distant days when we were young,
 And splendid deeds awaited us just to be done.
 We remember how we felt our lives were all in tune,
 When Rat and Mole went out with Toad one afternoon.
- 4 In those not too distant days when we were young,
 Adventure lay in wait for us, yes, ev'ry one.
 We remember what a joy it was to picnic on the grass,
 As Rat and Mole and their friend Toad relive their past.

5 In those not too distant days when we were young,
 And life upon the riverbank was wreathed in fun,
 We remember how carefree and jolly days could be,
 When Rat and Mole went out with Toad to take high tea.

Coda: In those not too distant days when we were young.
 In those not too distant days when we - were - young.

MOLE Until tomorrow then. Three o'clock by the great oak on the bend in
 the river.

RAT And Toaddo please try to stay out of trouble until then.

TOAD Gentlemen, I bid you good-day. *(bows)*

(RAT and MOLE exit)

*(TOAD draws back a curtain to reveal a computer. He rubs his
hands in glee and proceeds to work on the keyboard)*

TOAD If only I had discovered computers earlier. What countless years of my
 life I have wasted waiting for this moment. Life will never be the same
 again. Now, let me see Toad Hall accounts, month ending August
 1921.

Watkins wages: 20 shillings.

Repairs to panelling in the Great Hall: £95. *(aside)* Account to be
sent to the Chief Weasel.

Repairs to caravan: £20.

Birthday present for Mole: 5 shillings

My oh my, am I going to have some fun with this.

(exits calling) Watkins, Watkins.

*(as TOAD leaves the room, a small weasel enters through the window
and relieves TOAD of the computer)*

End of Scene

Scene 2: Weasels' Lair

CHIEF Henry, get that floor scrubbed. Harold, get outside and polish the limousine. Herbert, go and get my violin-case pronto. Horace, some more cigars, I've run out. *(to this, each replies in turn: "Yes, Boss")* Hubert, fetch my Hubert. HUBERT.

HENRY He's gone out Boss.

CHIEF Gone out. What d'ya mean, gone out. He can't just Oh, never mind. The rest of yous come 'ere and listen to what Hannibal has to say, at the double.

HANN Well lads, you know that fat green slimy creature we caused a bit of bovver earlier on

HORACE Yea, you mean that Toad.

HANN That's the one. Well, I've been casing the joint where he hangs out, called *(with emphasis)* Toad Hall *(laughter)* and I've got some information you might like to hear. You'll never guess.

HERBERT Go on Hannibal, what is it?

HANN He's got himself a computer. *(much reaction from the Weasels)*

PERCY Hey. You know what this means lads. If we could get our hands on that machine, just think what we could do with it.

HENRY Yea. It could knock years off our campaign to take over the Riverbank and open our new regional headquarters at Toad Hall.

HERBERT Just think: we could cream a little excess cash off the tax man and use the money to become the financial wizards of the wild wood.

HORACE The other animals would not stand a chance. They would all go bankrupt.

PERCY We'd be the scourge of every living creature in the wood.

CHIEF Steady now boys. Don't get carried away. But this much I will tell you; we have to have that computer. I don't care how you do it.

Stand on that Toad's little green webbed fingers if you have to but get that computer.

SONG 3 The Computer Song

Intro Click, whirr, click, whirr, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep.
Click, whirr, click, whirr, beep, beep, beep, beep.

Doo be doo be doo be doo be doo be de,
Do be doo be doo be doo be doo be de doo.

1 Anyone who's anybody, has to have, they have to have one.
Anyone who wants to matter, has to have, to have the latest.

2 To be the top dog in the wild wood, you must get one,
You must get one.

Chorus Ooh ah, computer baby. Ooh ah, computer baby.

3 Mister Toad has got himself a brand new p.c.
Not for long though, not for long though.
Stealing it will be so very easy,
Then we'll have the latest, baby.

Chorus Ooh ah, computer baby. Ooh ah, computer baby.

4 Will it help to make my fortune, baby?
I could swing it, I could swing it.
Pickin' all the winning lott'ry numbers,
If you've got the latest, baby.

Chorus Ooh ah, computer baby. Ooh ah, computer, baby.

5 Make a killing on the markets, baby.
Bulls and bears now, stocks and shares now.
Turn Toad Hall into a prince's palace
Filled with all the latest, baby.

Chorus Ooh ah, computer baby. Ooh ah, computer, baby.

Click, whirr, click, whirr, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep.
Click, whirr, click, whirr, beep, beep, beep, beep.

HENRY Come on lads. What are you waiting for? Let's go. (*much commotion as HUBERT enters, struggling to carry a heavy load*)

CHIEF Hubert, my office, five minutes.

HUBERT But Boss. Wait a minute. I've got something to show you. Look at this. (*gasps from WEASELS and shouts of wow, crickey, crumbs, fantastic, etc. as the computer is revealed*)

CHIEF Well done Hubert. You've got Toad's computer.

HERB Did he sell it to you?

OTHERS Get over, come off it (*and groans*)

CHIEF This is it boys. There's no stopping us now. Next stop Toad Hall, head office of the Weasel Enterprise Company. And then who knows? Maybe even the Wide World itself. (*cackles of evil laughter*)

Blackout, end of scene

Scene 3: The Riverbank

SONG 2 Reprise (animals)

(Enter RAT confidently, whistling and carrying a picnic basket)

RAT Come on Moley, you do lag behind so.

MOLE Sorry Rat. I find it hard to keep up with you. I've only got little legs.

RAT This looks like as good a place as any for a picnic. Help me with the cloth. *(they struggle to lay the cloth etc)*

MOLE Do you think Toad will come? He has little idea of time when he has other things on his mind.

RAT He'll come, Mole. He wouldn't let old friends down. You lay the cutlery, Mole, while I see if he's approaching. *(RAT walks down centre and peers into f.o.h. Just then three weasels pass by, F.O.H., and RAT hurriedly conceals himself)*

HENRY I can't wait, Horace. On Tuesday we will be sitting in Toad Hall, masters of the house, our new head office, and with our very own computer. How stupid of that Toad to leave the window open so we could borrow his computer.

HORACE Sweet revenge, Henry. I remember well the last time we took over the Hall. We were caught off guard by a whole army of animals and driven out.

HANN Never again. They can't catch up like that twice. In any case, they won't get past our guard again. We will have that secret passage covered this time.

HENRY I'd like to see them try.

HORACE Next Tuesday, you say. *(fading into the distance)*

HENRY That's right. At midnight. We assemble at the old oak.

HORACE I can't wait.

(RAT comes out of hiding in great alarm and agitation, muttering to

himself. As he runs back to MOLE, a small creature emerges from behind a tree)

- FREDDIE Oh my, oh help. I must tell the other field mice. *(runs off, F.O.H., in the opposite direction to the WEASELS)*
- RAT Mole, oh Mole. I've got the most dreadful news. You'll never believe what's happened.
- MOLE Now, now, Ratty. Don't upset yourself. It's not the end of the world if Toad can't come. We'll have a nice little picnic
- RAT No, Mole, you don't understand. It's the weasels.
- MOLE *(Looking frightened at the mention of weasels)* What's happened? Ratty, you look as if you've seen a ghost.
(Enter TOAD)
- TOAD Hey ho chappies, what a lovely day for a picnic.
(Stops dead when he sees their faces)
- RAT *(Getting faster and more hysterical)* Oh Toad, I'm so glad you've come. The most awful thing has happened. I just overheard *(breathless)* some weasels talking about taking over Toad Hall stealing something called a computer. Head office secret passage
- TOAD *(Wailing very loudly and uncontrollably)* No, no, not my computer! No, no, please no.
- MOLE *(Scolding)* Hang it all Toad, you haven't started another craze? *(sniffing)* You **promised** that you would keep yourself out of trouble. Computers mean trouble.
- TOAD *(Wails again)* But you don't understand. You never understand. I just couldn't help it. I just had to have a computer. Oh no! My accounts. They are all on the computer. Those weasels have all my intimate financial details in their hands. Just think what they could do to my reputation. *(wails again)*
- MOLE Why Toad? Have you something to hide?

RAT *(Pulling himself together)* Never mind that. What about Toad Hall?
We can't let them take over Toad Hall again. We must get some help,
but how?

MOLE *(Forcefully)* BADGER.

OTHERS Where? *(looking around)*

MOLE Badger will help us. He is so generous and wise. He always knows
what to do in times of trouble.

SONG 4 When in Trouble or Distress

- 1 When in trouble or distress
Badger is of friends the best.
Sunk in misery or woe
Off to badger we all go.
- 2 Dear old Badger, seek him out,
Such a friend without a doubt.
Dear old Badger, where's he at?
Mind as agile as an acrobat.
- 3 Badger's such a useful chap,
When the world is on your back.
When your worries crowd around
Advice from Badger's always sound.
- 4 Dear old Badger, wise old man,
You'd not say a flash in the pan.
Dear old Badger, always stout,
When we stray he always helps us out.
- 5 Badger's such a useful bloke
When mankind thinks you're a joke.
When we stumble, fall and howl,
Badger's as clever as an owl.
- 6 Dear old Badger, Straight away
Comes around to save the day.
Dear old Badger, such a friend.
He'll support us to the end.

TOAD By gad, you're right Moley. We can't deal with this alone. I'll send Watkins into the Wild Wood with a message for Badger to come to Toad Hall.

RAT Toad, why don't you call a big meeting of all the riverbankers. They will all come when they hear that Toad Hall is threatened. We can all go out and spread the news.

TOAD Indeed. Then **tomorrow** it is. Three o'clock in my parlour.

RAT Until tomorrow then.

OTHERS Until tomorrow.

Blackout, end of scene