



**From:** Richard Hammond – Top Gear

**Subject: My words to WAGS**

It's the numbers that amaze the most: this year marks 40 years of WAGS; it's 26 years since I was in it; 4500 tickets will be sold to this year's shows and Tony Guy is 150 years old. So much to take in.

I wish everyone involved in this year's production every possible success and I hope that they all of them, whether taking to the stage, tweaking lights, painting scenery, playing instruments, making costumes, selling tickets or writing scripts, have a wonderful, rewarding time that they can look back on as happily as I look back on my own WAGS experience.

It's a quarter of a century since my bared knees alarmed the audience at Stratford's RSC and whilst I understand that the populace has recovered fully, I carry still a vivid memory of running through the auditorium and up to the stage holding aloft a fake Olympic flame whilst the cast sang 'Going for Gold'. The audience doubtless wondered what the pale young man with the nervous face and ill-advised headband was doing running across the stage with a giant ice cream in his hand. Well I can answer that now, after a quarter of a century. I was building my character, that's what. I consider myself very lucky to be counted amongst the thousands of youngsters who not only enjoyed their Wags experience but have felt the benefit down the years since in whatever fields life has taken them to. So thank you WAGS for giving us all the chance to do something unique, to be part of something special and to belong, even if only for a brief while, to a team that will be forever in all of our memories. And thank you Tony for making it all possible.