

Ode to Alan Baddeley and Graham Hitch after 40 years of Working Memory
Third International Conference on Working Memory
After dinner rendition, Trinity Hall, Cambridge. July 10th, 2014
by Robert H Logie

Based on 'The Owl and the Pussycat'(1871)

With acknowledgement and apologies to Edward Lear (1812-1888)

Baddeley and Hitch, they went to sea
In a beautiful Cambridge punt.
They took with them graphs and plenty of laughs
Wrapped up in a quizzical grunt.
Hitch looked up to the stars above
And sang to a small guitar,
'Is my memory storing, is my memory exploring?
What a puzzling memory you are
You are,
You are!
What a puzzling memory you are!'

Baddeley said to the Hitch, 'You clever old stitch,
How rhythmically you query.
It would be great, to articulate
But what shall we do for a theory?'
They floated away for a year and a day
To the land where the data trees stoop,
And there on the shore was a short-term store,
With a phoneme stuck in its loop
Its loop
Its loop
With a phoneme stuck in its loop

'Dear Hitch do you think that we're on the brink
Of a breakthrough nearly in reach? '
They recited in thirds and lengthened the words
With suppression and irrelevant speech.
'But science is tough, this is just not enough'
Said Baddeley while driving his car.
They stopped being sad and sketched out a pad
Then went for a beer in a bar
A bar
A bar
Then went for a beer in a bar.

'To reach our real goal, we need some control'
Said Hitch, as their thoughts became random.
With homunculus stew, they pondered anew
To do two tasks - in tandem.
With just a mention, of divided attention
They subjected their model to test;
And while chewing some beans with some variable means
They updated, switched and suppressed
Suppressed
Suppressed
They updated, switched and suppressed.

Their punt took a turn, as they started to learn
Of rivals that grew thick and fast.
A fried egg won't do nor a cache or two,
And complex span will never last.
These are all duffers, let's bind with a buffer
To promote our runcible pitch.
While refreshing your mind, with your theories aligned
A toast to Baddeley and Hitch
And Hitch
And Hitch
A toast to Baddeley and Hitch.