



THINGS THAT GO

'I'M NOT VERY SMART... BUT I CAN LIFT HEAVY WEIGHT

● Never mind the prancing git with the engorged cucumber down his tiger print spandex, the true hero of rock 'n' roll is THE ROADIE – 'invisible' mid-set fixer of blown fuses and broken strings, grinning survivor of 1,001 nights in Room 69 (bring your own stomach pump) and gobshite oracle of all that has passed between musician and 'minder' – anecdotes that would make Bernard Manning blush and Madonna reach for the smelling salts. Beer gut and bum cleavage to the fore, fearless key jangler STEVEN WELLS goes amongst the gung ho gurus of gaffer to find out how he too can make it in the erm 'heady' world of rock 'n' roll touring...

"No logs in the bog – no roaches in the ashtray."
Basic tour bus etiquette

"Class and colour don't really come into it. It's a bit like the Foreign Legion really, we roadie to forget..."
Roadie Russ Wonder Stuff

"roadie: n. (colloq.) manager of itinerant musicians, (f. ROAD + IE)"
The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Seventh Edition

DIRTY, smelly, warty, shite-encrusted pigs with muscles like basketballs, balls like wrinkled melons and brains the size of cockroach dicks. Sperm-spurting, Marlboro smoking, speed-snonking, gurdy-haired sexist bastards in "Genesis World Tour 1976" T-shirts barely covering hairy pot bellies, beer rusted keys dangling from power lifting belts, lard arses oozing from greasy, tattered Levi 501's.

Roadies are the unsung heroes of the rock 'n' roll myth. They sweep into towns and cities across the world like the savage infantry of some ale-crazed barbarian army, ignoring the art galleries and museums in favour of the strip joints, the drug dealers and the sexually available young women. Rock films ignore their existence (apart from the racist git "Ray" in *Rude Boy*). Few books exist that catalogue their exploits and there is but one roadie song – Motorhead's epic 'We Are The Roadcrew': "Another town I've left behind/ Another drink, completely blind/ Another hotel I can't find/ Another backstage pass for you/ Another tube of superglue/ Another border to get through/ WE ARE THE ROAD CREW! Dang dang dang gang dang!"

"This idea that people have that we're all big horrible beer monsters – we all wear designer Biffas, that's the only true stereotype I can think off..." claims trendy geared roadie Russ, brother of The Wonder Stuff's Miles. Forget The Farm, forget First Offence – roadies are the true rock 'n' roll proletariat. "An equipment roadie's life is misery," moans Who roadie Peter 'Dougal' Butler. "For a start he is by no means overpaid, even if he does get first shot at the left over dope and surplus groupies. He is the geezer who receives the platefuls of shit that are thrown around if anything goes wrong with the gear. It is certainly not unusual for the equipment roadie to arrive at his hotel completely knackered and starving only to find all the grub in other people's stomachs and that several of those people are now using his bed..."

Not for these horny sons of toil the comforting thud of the royalty cheque on the 'Dunrockin' doormat in old age. Not for them the lust filled sex-mail from young men and women eager to pork their tiny pop starbrains into mulch. No, the roadie is paid for manual labour and takes



No ifs, but plenty of 'bloodbutts', L to R: Stannard (Ned's) Russ Hunt (Wonder Stuff) Digby (Clash/The 101's), Simon Effemy (Stuffies), Tableman (Ned's) and Mr Smith (Ned's + Stuffies)

his (nearly always "his") perks were he can find them.

A IS FOR ANIMAL

"GOING OUT with a roadie is like going out with a sailor – except that you know that a sailor's going to be safely locked away for six weeks at a time..."

Susan, antiques dealer

"I've never had a decent blow job on the road..."

Big Al, Rigger

INTERVIEWS WITH 26 British and US roadies (managed despite their annoying tendency to chant "one TWO! one TWO!" into any microphone stuck in front of them) indicated that the legendary roadie days of SHAG SHAG SHAG may well be over.

Picture this: Public Enemy's Chuck D sat on a tour bus perusing a quilted photo album which he's

been handed by a member of thrashmetallers Anthrax. The book contains several hundred blotchy polaroids of "roadies' wives" – young women, fans of the band, in the various tired poses of bog standard open-crotch gynaecological pornography.

US Roadie 'X': "It's called the *Smut Book*. Maybe once you'd be having sex with these women but these days you gotta be careful. So, OK, they want a backstage pass or tickets or maybe a set list so you get them on the bus and you get them to pose for a photo. The guys on the AC/DC crew are prone to using a bowl of fruit and a video camera."

B IS FOR BLOW-JOB

A BLOW job voucher is a set list traded for oral sex. Salt Lake City is known as Blow-Job City because good Mormon girls don't want to waste their virginity on guys who shift amplifiers and flight cases for a living. Things are different in Brum.

British Roadie 'A': "This woman walked up to me and she said 'I've got to stop sleeping with support bands because I'm sick and tired of waking up in crappy bed and breakfasts'. Some people shag their bollocks off, it's there if you want it. If you've got a pass then you're a direct way through to the band. If you walk around with your pass and your dick hanging out you can't miss. But that's not the reason you do the job, it's more of a perk for some people – like petrol allowance."

Q: What's the difference between a roadie and a pig?

A: A pig won't spend all night trying to f— a roadie.

Roadie Joke (Trad)

Meanwhile, back on the bus, Chuck D is stunned into silence, the female press officer is totally disgusted, Anthrax's Scott Ian is profoundly embarrassed.

"It's what happens. We've had crew who are animals, who treat

women like shit. We don't put up with that, Anthrax aren't that sort of band."

Roadie Russ Wonder Stuff, brother of Miles, isn't that kind of roadie.

"There's this image of the roadie that he's hard drinking, shagging women every five minutes. It's not so much a glamorous job, it's a *laff* job."

Long lasting relationships can and do form on the road. Nathan 'Newt' Mathias, a 24-year-old lighting engineer claims he was "a non-stop party animal" until he met Denise, a caterer.

"Most caterers tend to be women," says Denise, "but they tend to leave us alone, maybe it's because they think we can f— with their food. I don't know what it is but you put a bunch of nice, reasonable men together on a tour bus and they seem to revert to a mental age of about five."

Some of the roadies I interviewed were dismissive of the very *idea* of female roadies – "they haven't got the strength, they haven't got the muscles". But others were proud to boast of their female colleagues – Duchess (U2), Jane (New Order), Rebecca (Men They Couldn't Hang), Adele (Sputnik, BAD, Banshees), truck driver Lyn Scoffen and the similarly named Lyn 'Stilts' Scotten who "does the lights" for U2 and James Last. When you get past the beery façade of blokieness, some roadies are willing to admit that, as in most jobs, not only are the females good at their jobs – they have to be *twice* as good.

But the average roadie is a working class bloke in his 20s with pretty average working class bloke attitudes, ideas and aspirations, no more addicted to the joys of casual sex and substance abuse than the average estate agent – but with far more opportunity.

"You don't become a roadie for the sex," says Russ, "if you did you wouldn't last five minutes. You become a roadie because you love the music, you hate the idea of working nine to five and maybe you've got some mates in a band that need helping out."

"Being a Metal roadie is like being in Vietnam. You've got these incompetent prima donna assholes who get all the credit while we do all the f—ing work!..."

And if you tear apart the façade of the first two paragraphs you find that roadies are just as soft, as lovable and prone to sexual loyalty and having babies as the rest of us.

Colin, currently road manager of The Manic Street Preachers, became positively misty-eyed as he sat in his council flat whilst his children swarmed over him and attempted to eat the tape recorder (excellent basic training for coping with the Preachers) as he told me of the time that he was sat on a beach in The Philippines, boozing and chatting with a fellow roadie. They got around to showing each other their family photographs and before long both were in floods of uncontrollable tears, unbearably homesick. His phone call home cost him £75.

Digby is a guitar roadie and made his name working with The Clash in their heyday.

"It's cost me two marriages working on the road. But that's what I do and I'm not about to give it up. It takes a very, very special type of woman to understand what you do."

"Those guys over there... they were pointing over here at Evelyn and Courtney and Ashley... I think they're the roadies who look for chicks to go backstage and have

'A-B, A-B' A DICTIONARY OF ROADIE-SPEAK

MR BORING: The last person in bed at night.

CHESNEY: Cocaine.

CREATION: A disco. Home to the "raving roadies".

DRUMMER: (noun): An unintelligent person. A bit of a "wendy".

ELECTRIC EEL: As in "she's got a tongue like an electric eel and she likes the taste of a *man's* tonsils". Stolen from *Blackadder*.

ELEVEN: As in "he was blasting it out on 11" meaning he was playing very loud. Taken from the film *This Is Spinal Tap* where Nigel tries to convince the interviewer that his amps are extra-loud because his dial goes up to 11 rather than ten.

KISS MY ASS: A phrase muttered when everything goes wrong. Another *Tapism*.

NIGELS: Students, as immortalised in the XTC song 'Making Plans For Nigel'.

NOISE BOYS: Sound Engineers (derog.).

THE POND LIFE CLUB: A roadie society

dedicated to achieving the same mental state as frogspawn.

RAVING ROADIES: Those roadies who have caught the rave bug. All roadies are much better dancers than all musicians.

SLOPPY SECONDS: Leftover drugs, food or sex donated by the band to the road crew.

TOILET TOURS: A concert tour consisting of lavatorial venues.

TOP SAUSAGE: A person generally regarded as being supreme at their particular profession.

TRAGICALLY WRONG: A favourite expression of The Wonder Stuff. Things never go wrong, they always go "tragically wrong". As in "it's all gone tragically wrong".

WENDY JAMES (noun): A bit of a "drummer". An unintelligent person as in the standard roadie joke: "Wendy James wears a Walkman all the time. On it she plays a tape which says – "breathe in... breathe out..."

DOOBIE DOO (Or Something ...)

Roxanne's 'Bang Zoom (Let's Go)'.

Chic got it wrong in '77, when they put the nonsense in the brackets - 'Dance Dance Dance (Yowsa Yowsa Yowsa)' - likewise, **The Bay City Rollers** 'Remember (Sha La La)' and the doubly ludicrous **Tom Browne**, who took a whole tin of biscuits in '82 with 'Fungi Mama (Bebopafunkadiscolypto)'. Breaking in someone else's teeth then or what?

This catalogue of claptrap would not be complete without a cursory nod to **The Beatles**. Usually content with titles about love, love and love, nearly all four of them rode the bollocks bandwagon in solo form - see: **George Harrison's** 'Ding Dong' ('74), **Paul McCartney's** 'Hi Hi Hi' ('72) and **Ringo's** 'Back Off Boogaloo' ('72).

Stop making sense, geezers!



Donovan forgets the words to another baby-talk epic

Rock Folly: And the rest...

ABACAB Genesis
AY AY AY MOOSEY Modern Romance
BA-NA-NA BAM BOO Westworld
BANG BANG Squeeze
BANG BANGBA Robertson
BOOGALOO PARTY The Flamingoes
BOOGIE OOGIE OOGIE A Taste Of Honey
BOOM BOOM Black Slate
BOOPS Sly & Robbie
BUZZ BUZZ A DIDDLE IT Matchbox
CHICK A BOOM 53rd & 3rd
CHICK CHICK CHICKEN Natalie Casey
CHIRPY CHIRPY CHEEP CHEEP Middle Of The Road
DIGGI LOO DIGGI LEY Herreys
DING A DONG Teach-In
(DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO)
HEARTBREAKER The Rolling Stones
DO WAH DIDDY DIDDY Manfred Mann
DUM DUM Brenda Lee
DUM DUM GIRL Talk Talk
FOE-DEE-O-DEE The Rubettes
GERTCHA Chas & Dave
GIDDY-UP-A-DING-DONG Freddie Bell & The Bellboys
GIMME DAT DING The Pipkins
GOO GOO BARABAJAGAL Donovan
HI DE HI HI DE HO Kool & The Gang
HI LI LI HI LO Alan Price
HONALOOCHIE BOOGIE Mott The Hoople
IEYA Toyah
I KO I KO The Dixie Cups
I.O.I.O The Bee Gees
JOCKO HOMO Devo
KLACTOVEESEDSTEIN Blue Rondo A La Turk
LE-DE-DAH Jackie Dennis
LA DI DA Sad Cafe
A LITTLE BOOGIE WOOGIE Shakin' Stevens

LOOP DI LOVE Shag
LOO-BE-LOO Chucks
MA-MA-MA-BELLE ELO
MUCHO MACHO Toto Coelo
MY COO-CA-CHOO Alvin Stardust
NA NA IS THE SADDEST WORD The Stylistics
OO-EE BABY Stonebridge McGuinness
OOH WAKKA DOO WAKKA DAY Gilbert O'Sullivan
PAPA OOM MOW WOW The Rivingtons
RAMA LAMA DING DONG Rocky Sharpe & The Replays
RUB A DUB DUB The Equals
SHABOOH SHOOBAH INXS
SHA LA LA Manfred Mann
SHA LA LA LA LEE The Small Faces
SHANG-A-LANG The Bay City Rollers
SHOO DOO FU FU OOH Lenny Williams
SHOO BE DOO BE DOO DAH DAY Stevie Wonder
SHOOP SHOOP DIDDY WOP CUMMA CUMMA
WANG DANG Monte Video
SPLISH SPLASH Bobby Darin
SUPERCALIFRAGISEXY Prince
SUSSUDIO Phil Collins
UM UM UM UM UM UM Wayne Fontana
WAP BAM BOOGIE Matt Bianco
WIG WAM BAM The Sweet
WIMOWEH Karl Denver
YAKETY YAK The Coasters
YEH YEH Georgie Fame
ZENGEM Roy Harper
ZABADAK! Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick & Titch
ZIP-A-DEE-DOO-DAH Bob B Soxx.

* Hi there. Pedants! We wouldn't like you to think that we haven't researched this amusing item properly. No, we've deliberately omitted several obvious and really good nonsense songtitles. If you know what they are, please write and tell us and we'll send you a life. It couldn't be simpler!



The 'Go-Go's' New Romantic bollocks a speciality

MEANINGLESS IS MORE NME's TOP TEN NONSENSE RECORDS

- 1 DOOBEDOOD'NDOOBE DOOBEDOOD'NDOOBE Diana Ross (1972)
- 2 OOH TO BE AH Kajagoogoo (1983)
- 3 DE DO DO DO DE DA DA DA The Police (1980)
- 4 NENE NA NA NA NA NU NU Bad Manners (1980)
- 5 OB-LA-DI OB-LA-DA Marmalade (1969)
- 6 OOHY KOOCHY/CHIKKI CHIKKI AH AH Baby Ford (1988)
- 7 DA DOO RON RON The Crystals (1963)
- 8 AGADOO Black Lace (1984)
- 9 NA NA NA Cozy Powell (1974)
- 10 WHO PUT THE BOMP (IN THE BOMP-A-BOMP-BOMP)? Showaddywaddy (1982)