

**waterway
recovery
group**

The “New” navvies songbook

Compiled by “Bungle”

Issue 2.1 (30/9/2003)

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Aston Locks re-opening dirge

Music: "And the band played Waltzing Matilda" (Eric Bogle)

Lyrics: Martin Ludgate

First Performed by: Martin Ludgate

Notes: Thanks to Mike Palmer for providing us with such an easy target, and supplying a never-ending sequence of 'Last Ever' Mont Camps.

First Heard: WRGTV (1999 National at Worcester)

When I was a young man I carried my pick
And I lived the free life of a WRGie
Shared many a joke 'bout the old Basingstoke
And the marriage of Andy and Fergie (OK, what else rhymes?)
Then in June '87 Alan Jervis said "Son,
It's time to stop rambling, there's work to be done"
So he gave me a hard-hat and a big piling gun
And he send me away to the Mont

And Mike Palmer said "It's not a problem"
He said "Trust me, it's going to be fine
We'll be finished in weeks -and
who cares if it leaks?
They all do - at least all of mine."

How well I remember that terrible camp
And the terrible lessons it taught us
The cold and the dirt and the smell and the damp
And that's just the WRG sleeping quarters
If you must spend your holidays at Aston Locks
And don't want to come home in a big wooden box
Just remember your hard-hat (and lots of clean socks)
And ignore what the WRG chairman tells you

And Mike Palmer said "It's not a problem"
He said "Trust me, it'll all be OK"
And we trusted him then
And again and again
'There's one born every minute', they say.

Well those who survived all returned the next year
To that mad world of mud, tea and porridge
For eleven long years, we all drank lots of beer
Which Mike didn't do much to discourage
Then he said "It's all finished, you can all stay in bed"
And we didn't know what we could work on instead
Or whether to believe what Mike Palmer had said -
Never knew if the bastard was lying

Continues.....

And no more I'll go working at Aston
For we've finished locks one, two and three
And the boaters all moor
Where the pump was before
No more working at Aston for me

They collected the navvies; we stood in the rain
And watched the official reopening
The gormless, the legless, the daft and insane
And the one who got locked up for groping
I saw the old Transits all knackered and bent
And I looked at the place where the Elsan once went
And the old Punchbowl Inn where our money was spent
And I knew why the landlord was crying

And Mike Palmer says 'It's not a problem'
He says "Trust me, it'll all be OK"
But they trust him no more
'Cos they've heard it before
And they turn their faces away

And now every summer I stand on the bank
And I watch all the boats pass before me
I hear the old WRGies re-living each camp
And you won't believe how much they bore me
I hear all the jokes that we've all heard before
And the younger ones laugh and say "tell us some more"
And the boaters all ask "What's that monorail for?"
And I ask myself the same question.

And Mike Palmer says "It's not a problem"
He says "Trust me, there's nothing much to it
There's a bit of a leak
Can you make it next week?
I reckon one more camp should do it..."



Ever so slightly libellous

Music: The Philosophers song (Monty Python)

Lyrics: Martin Ludgate / Lesley McFadyen

First Performed by: Martin Ludgate

Notes: Any threats of legal action will be dealt with by Mick Beattie and the Logistics team after dark under the viaduct. (handy for the hospital)

First Heard: WRGTV (1999 National at Worcester)

James Brindley never had them singly,
always had a couple of dames,
The Duke of Bridgewater was chasing all their daughters,
And old John Rennie was the same
William Jessop always liked to dress up,
impress them with his dicky
And Michael Streat gave them all a treat -
"Have a ride on my big Ricky"

David Fletcher was a lecher with a proper working pair;
Leader Williams built a lift so he could do it in the air...

Richard Drake was a right old rake,
who plied them with bottles of gin
Thomas Telford's sizzling in Hell for
his totally original sin
Alan Jervis gave them all a service
Aickman was a rare old charmer
And Laurence Hogg was a randy old dog
Who was worse than Michael Palmer.
But Richard Drake he was the greatest - how he did it we don't know -
He had twenty thousand under him at eighteen pounds a go.



Mike Palmer



James Brindley

F. E. C.

Music: Let it be (The Beatles)

Lyrics: George "Bungle" Eycott & Al Moore

First Performed by: Bungle & Al Moore when drunk.....

First Heard: 2002 National (Huddersfield)

When I find myself in times of trouble
Mick Beattie talks down to me
Speaking words of wisdom, FEC
And in my hour of darkness
He has parked his truck in front of me
There will be an answer FEC

(Chorus)

FEC FEC

FEC FEC

Curses words of wisdom, FEC

And when the broken excavators
Stuck out on the site are freed
There will be an answer FEC
For though they may be knackered
We can still claim on the guarantee
Blame it on Ed Walker FEC

Chorus

And when the food is mouldy
And there is no chippy I can see
Send out for a pizza FEC
I wake up to the sound of farting
Palmer blows a middle C
Cursing words of wisdom FEC

Chorus (Repeats)



Fridge over troubled waters

Music: Bridge over troubled waters (Simon and Garfunkle)

Lyrics: Bungle and Just Jen

First Performed by: Bungle (Badly)

First Heard: Never....Yet

When you're weary, feeling small
When tears are in your eyes, I'll drive the vans.....away
I'm on your side, oh, when tools get bust
and mugs just can't be found
Like a fridge over troubled water
I won't even frown
Like a fridge over troubled water
When you f*** around...

When you've packed the trailer away
When its on the street
When tools fall over so hard
I will strap them all,, again.
I'll take apart, oh, the tangled mess
And paint is all around
Like a fridge over troubled water
I won't even frown
Like a fridge over troubled water
When you f*** around

(brief instrumental interlude)

Ride in RFB
Sail in VOJ
With trailers hitched behind
All your tools are on their way
See how they shine
Oh, but you can depend
on leaving spades behind
Like a fridge over troubled water
More tools we will find
Like a fridge over troubled water
More tools we will find

Goodbye NUH

Music: Candle in the Wind (Elton John)

Lyrics: Marcia Davies

First Performed by: Bruce Peckett

Notes: Based on an original idea by Martin Ludgate. (Not to mention a slightly more original one by Elton John.)

First Heard: WRGTV (1999 National at Worcester)

Goodbye NUH

Though I never liked you at all
You served a greater purpose that
No others round you could
They crawled out of the fastlane
They were choking on your exhaust
They showed you a hand sign
And called you several names

And it seems to me you spent your life
with no mats upon the floor
Never knowing what would fling to
When the brakes jammed in
And I would have liked to scrap you
Cos you were such a wreck
Your brake drums burned out long before
Your gearbox ever did.

Starting you was tough
Toughest ever we had to start
Replacing those starters was
The greatest price we paid
Just keeping you going
Oh Logistics still hounded you
When you failed your MOT
And then your whole exhaust just blew

And it seems to me you spent your life
With no handles on the doors
Never knowing what to cling to
As the rain came in
And I would have liked to scrap you
Cos you were such a wreck
Your gearbox burned out long before
The engine ever did.

Several years have passed
Since your windows rolled up at all
You had Isopon to hold yourself
Together while you crawled
Rust instead of chrome
Glimmers as you carry on alone
All others would have abandoned you
Somewhere along the side of the road

Continues...

And it seems to me you spent your life
With no headlights on the road
Never knowing where to turn to
When the dark set in
And I would have liked to scrap you
Cos you were such a wreck
Your engine burned out long before
Your second engine did.
Your drivers gave up long before
Your second engine did.



In Car Park One (with Cath)

Music: "On Ilkley Moor, bar t'hat" (trad Yorkshire)

Lyrics: Mark Antony Richardson (Mk2) except * : Martin Ludgate

First Performed by: Mk2

First Heard: 2002 National (Huddersfield)

Another one which originates from the Huddersfield IWF, where humming a suitably local tune helped you to take the mind off why you were spending your annual holidays arranging vehicles in a car park. PS. No unsuspecting motorists were verbally harangued during the writing of this song. Well, not many.

Where hast thou been since I saw thee

(I saw thee)

In Car Park One with Cath

Where hast thou been since I saw thee

(I saw thee)

Where hast thou been since I saw thee

(with no trousers on)*

In Car Park One with Cath

In Car Park One with Cath

In Car Park One with Cath

I've been parking rows of cars

(rows of cars)

In Car Park One with Cath

I've been parking rows of cars

(rows of cars)

I've been parking rows of cars

(with no trousers on)*

In Car Park One with Cath

In Car Park One with Cath

In Car Park One with Cath

All the signs are the wrong way 'round

(the wrong way 'round)

To Car Park One and Cath

All the signs are the wrong way 'round

(the wrong way 'round)

All the signs are the wrong way 'round

(and they've got no trousers on?)*

In Car Park One with Cath

In Car Park One with Cath

In Car Park One with Cath

Continues...

We've only got one bottle of squash
(bottle of squash)
In Car Park One with Cath
We've only got one bottle of squash
(bottle of squash)
We've only got one bottle of squash
(what, with no trousers on?)*
In Car Park One with Cath
In Car Park One with Cath
In Car Park One with Cath

Where hast thou been since I saw thee
(I saw thee)
In Car Park One with Cath
Where hast thou been since I saw thee
(I saw thee)
Where hast thou been since I saw thee
(with no trousers on)*
In Car Park One with Cath
In Car Park One with Cath
In Car Park One with Cath

I've got a brand new excavator

Music: I've got a brand new combine harvester (The Worzells)

Lyrics: George "Bungle" Eycott

First Performed by: Bungle

First Heard: 2002 National (Huddersfield)

I got fed up with changing hoses each night,
When bits fell off it was a terrible sight,
Well now I've spent some money and I'm sure you'll agree,
This excavator is the best you will see

(Chorus)

**Well I've got a brand new excavator and I'll give you the key,
Come along now lets dig together in perfect harmony
I've got a Case Poclairn and you've got a JCB
Now I've got a brand new excavator and I'll give you the key**

Crawling in the mud was not really a joke
That fateful day when the slew pinion broke,
Flat batteries in the morning are a thing of the past,
Now I've got rid of the old girl at last

Chorus

That muck Mick he's got a lovely V8,
and all the girls just can't wait for a date
Well that's about to change now I've got some class
I'll have them girls come running at last

Chorus

That Michael Palmer tried to pull the other day
Some young girly that was going his way
But he didn't stand a chance 'cause his equipments out of date
In fact you could say it was really second rate

Chorus

I've got a little list

Original song: As someday it may happen (Gilbert and Sullivan - The Mikado)

Written by: Allan Scott

First performed: 1997 Henley National by Dave Parish as part of Snow White and the Severn Wharfs

As someday it may happen that a stoppage must be found
I've got a little list
I've got a little list

Of waterways throughout the land that should be underground
They never would be missed
They never would be missed

Like K&A and Macclesfield, the Bridgewater and Peak
The Caldon, Rochdale, Huddersfield,
The arm that runs to Leek

And drain the reservoir along the GU up at Tring
Just think of all the chaos and confusion that would bring
I could go on and on but now I think you've got the gist
They'd none of them be missed
They'd none of them be missed

You may put them on the list,
You may put them on the list
And they'd none of them be missed,
And they'd none of them be missed.

We can't forget the do-gooders restoring bits of cuts
I've got them on the list,
I've got them on the list

Like KESCRG, BITM, WACT and WRG and groups of similar nuts
I've got them on the list,
I've got them on the list

Then theres all those trouble makers domiciled at 114
What is it that they do all day?
I'll give them all "what for"!

And IWA groups and festivals and rallies 'cross the land
And Chairmen such as Audrey Smith, it's getting out of hand
And the editor of Navvies who we know is always pissed
They'd none of them be missed
They'd none of them be missed

You may put them on the list,
You may put them on the list
And they'd none of them be missed,
And they'd none of them be missed.

Jude's way

Original song: My Way (Frank Sinatra)

First Performed: 2000 National (Waltham Abbey)

Written by: George "Bungle" Eycott

Notes: Dedicated to Jude, deputy leader of the wrg 2000 National camp

And now, the end is near, I turn and pack, the final trailer,
cock ups, there's been a few, just one or two, of which were major,
at the cash, and carry we, have travelled each, and every aisle way,
and more, much more than this, we did it Jude's way.

Regrets, I've had a few, but then again, too few to mention,
we did, what we had to do, and saw it through, without exemption,
we planned, each charted course, each careful step, along with Iway,
but more, much more than this, we did it Jude's way.

Yes there were times, I'm sure you knew
when we felt there was, too much to do,
and with the food, though there was doubt,
I ate it up, and didn't spit it out,
we've done it all, and then stood tall,
and did it Jude's way.

I've worked, and laughed and cried, and had, my share of fencing,
and now, as tears subside, I find it all, so amazing,
to think, we did all that, and may I say, not in a shy way,
oh no, oh no not us, we did it Jude's way,

Well there were times, I'm sure you knew,
when I said rude words, and you did too,
yes we had problems, and we had fears,
but we just said "sod 'em", and drank more beers,
and I am proud, yes proud to say.....
we did it, Jude's way.
Yes, it was Jude's way.

Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud

Music: The Hippo song (Flanders/Swan)

Lyrics: Bruce Peckett

First Performed by: Bruce Peckett

Notes: Mud supplied by Hereford & Gloucester Canals Trust, Droitwich Canals Trust, Barnsley Canal Group etc. etc.

First Heard: WRGTV (1999 National at Worcester)

A red shirted navy was digging one day
At the base of a derelict lock
He was up to his neck in the mud, bricks and clay
And silently cursing his lot
While all those around him seemed happy and gay
His face it was showing the strain
His companions espied this
And to raise up his spirits
They sang him this little refrain

(Chorus)

Mud, mud, glorious mud

A navy's most happy when covered in crud

Your not a real WRGy unless you are dirty

And up to your neck in the glorious mud

The Waterway Recovery Group's purpose they say
Is restoring canals which have gone
But the truth which is bound to come out some fine day
Has been known to a few all along
Now the WRG heirarchy and all that malarkey
Are part of a devious plot
For they all have a fetish and what they most relish
The rest of us put in plant pots

Chorus

At uprooting trees and clearing out weeds
There really is no finer crew
And when duty calls, they'll rebuild lock walls
And sink the odd digger or two
Each week they're out working in gangs large and small
On camps, big digs and work groups
They won't be complaining, when it is raining
'Cos that's what it takes to produce

Chorus



Navvies Jerusalem

Original song: Jerusalem (William Blake)

Written by: Stanley Holland

First performed: God knows, it was written over 20 years ago!

And did that pound in Brindley's time
Wind among England's valleys green?
And was a noble flight of locks
On every lovely landscape seen?
But then the railway giants came,
With soot and smoke, and fire and flame,
And they despoiled the waterways
To England's everlasting shame.

Bring me my boots and grappling iron!
Bring me my mighty JCB!
Bring me my spade! O ecstasy!
Bring me a gallon flask of tea!
I will not flinch from seas of mud,
Nor shall my sludge-pump idly stand,
Till we've restored the waterways
Through England's green and pleasant land

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a new Transit Van

Original song: "Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?" by Janis Joplin

Lyrics: Mark Antony Richardson (Mk2)

First Performed by: Mk2

First Heard: 2002 National (Huddersfield)

Notes: This was knocked up in about 10 minutes, which probably explains something. If anyone has a copy of the definitive WRG version of "Oh, Lord..." which apparently has already been written, would they please forward it to Bungle (bungle@wrg.org.uk)

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a new Transit van
My friends all drive Sprinters
I must make amends
I dig hard all day, Lord
it just never ends
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a new Transit van?

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a new JCB?
I just can't go further
with a KL15
I dig hard all day, Lord
and I'm stuck in a trench
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a new JCB?

And Lord, won't you buy me some sodium lights?
They'll be wired up by Bungle
They're sure to burn bright
I dig hard all night, Lord
so show me the light
Oh Lord, won't you buy me some sodium lights?

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a new minibus?
For those new-shape Transits
I've just got the lust
It's a matter of days, Lord
'til NJF busts
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a new minibus?

And Lord, won't you buy me a new Transit van?
My friends all drive Sprinters
I must make amends
I dig hard all day Lord
it just never ends
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a new Transit van?

Palmer's sick note

Original song: Paddy's sick note (Dubliners/Trad)

Lyrics: Dr. Liz

First Performed by: Bungle

First Heard: 2003 National (Beale Park)

Dear Sir, I write this note to you to tell you of my plight,
For at the time of writing it I am not a pretty sight,
Me body is all black and blue, me face a deathly grey,
And I write this note to say why Palmers not at work today.

Whilst working on the Mortice lock, some bricks I had to clear,
But to throw them down from such a height was not a good idea,
The leader wasn't very pleased, him being an awkward sod,
He said I'd have to carry them down the ladder in me hod.

Now to move all of these bricks by hand, it was so very slow,
So I hoisted up a barrel, and secured a rope below,
But in me haste to do the job, I was too blind to see,
That a barrel full of building bricks was heavier than me.

And so when I untied the rope the barrel fell like lead,
And clinging tightly to the rope, I started up instead,
Well I shot up like a rocket, 'til to my dismay I found,
That halfway up I met the bloody barrel coming down.

Well the barrel broke me shoulder, as to the ground it sped,
And when I reached the top I banged the pulley with me head,
But clinging tight though numb with shock, despite this mighty blow,
while the barrel spilt out half it's load, some fourteen feet below.

Now when these bricks had fallen from the barrel to the floor,
I then outweighed the barrel and so started down once more,
Still clinging tightly to the rope, me body wracked with pain,
When halfway down I met the bloody barrel once again.

Now the force of this collision in the midst of Mortice lock,
Caused multiple abrasions and a nasty state of shock,
Still clinging tightly to the rope I sped towards the ground,
And I landed in the broken bricks that were all scattered round.

And as I lay there on the ground, I thought I'd passed the worst,
But the barrel hit the pulley wheel and then the bottom burst,
A shower of bricks rained down on me, I didn't have a hope,
As I lay there bleeding on the ground, I let go the bloody rope.

Now the barrel then being heavier, it started down once more,
And it landed right across me as I lay upon the floor,
It broke three ribs and my left arm and I can only say,
Sure I hope you'll understand why Palmers not at work today.

That dumper is a Tramp

Original song: That lady is a tramp (Frank Sinatra)
Originally performed: Never (yet)
Written by: George "Bungle" Eycott

Its got no mudguards, the seat is a crate
Though there's a steering wheel, it will not drive straight
Its got four gears, all of which grate
That is why the dumper is a tramp

Doesn't like starting, the handle is bent
You'd think it's a diamond, the money we've spent
Gets stuck in the mud, where the others all went
That is why the dumper is a tramp

It needs the extra large aerosol can
That's easy start man
Its a joke, and its broke
Will not turn over, when its cold and damp
That is why the dumper is a tramp

You get red diesel, to fill up the tank
If it ever gets started, it really smells rank
And as for the brakes, just run into the bank
That is why the dumper is a tramp

If you drive it all day, you'll need a large beer
If you want to get started, shove it from the rear
If you can hand start it, you'll get a big cheer
That is why the dumper is a tramp

It needs the extra large aerosol can
That's easy start man
Its a joke, and its broke
Will not turn over, when its cold and damp
That is why the dumper is a tramp

Transit Rhapsody

Original song: Bohemian Rhapsody (Queen)

Written by: George "Bungle" Eycott & Martin Ludgate

First Performed: KESCRG/LWRG Christmas bash 2002

Notes: Black text is the main singer, red is the chorus singers and blue is Mike Palmer (or his stand in)

Now I'm in real strife,
It's not my fantasy,
Stoved in the van side,
No escape from reality.
Opened the door,
Stepped down to the floor and seen
Several big dents, can't cover it easily.
Because its easy come easy go,
can I have my ticket oh.
Looking in the mirror, didn't really matter to me, to me.

Roger - just killed a van
Backed it straight into a wall,
Felt the crunch, and heard it fall
Roger, Camp had just begun
But now I've gone and blown it all to cock
Roger, 0000-0000-00000-0000
Didn't mean to hit that wall -
I sometimes wish it had never been there at all
I carried on, carried on, As if nothing was behind me...

Too late, my tickets gone
Sent it off in the post
It'll take a day at most
Goodbye every body - I've got to go
Gotta leave you all behind and face the board.
Roger, 000
I just want to drive
I'll even drive NJF to the pub tomorrow

I had a nasty little letter in the post,
"You have crashed, our new van, now you can't drive our plant oh"
Roger and the wrg board very very frightening me.
Cleaning bricks, cleaning bricks,
Cleaning bricks, cleaning bricks,
Cleaning bricks you must do.....
I'm just a small boy, cleaning bricks is not for me,
He's just a small boy wants to drive another toy,
Spare him his life from this brick cleaning ploy.

Continues...

It was my fault, that I know. It was a mighty blow
Yes Roger knows, it was a mighty blow - Mighty Blow
Oh Roger, it was a mighty blow - Mighty Blow
Oh Roger, it was a mighty blow - Mighty Blow
Was a mighty blow - Mighty Blow
Was a mighty blow - Mighty Blow
Was a mighty blow -ooooo

Bang crash bang crash bang crash crunch.

Ah Michael Palmer Michael Palmer, maybe I still have a chance
Michael Palmer you're the chairman will you give my ticket back to me, to me to meeeeeee....

<headbang interlude>

So you think you can crash a van and drive away
And you think you will get your plant ticket today
No Way Mate - Cause the damage was so great
We've got a big bill - we've got a big bill over here.

Ooh Yeah Ooh Yeah,

Excuses didn't matter,
anyone can see.
That bloody great brick wall, that bloody great brick wall f*&ked me

wrg Angels

Original Song: Angels (R. Williams)

Written by: Mike Palmer

First Performed: 2003 Beale Park National

I sit and wait
Does my leader contemplate my fate
And does she know
The places where we go
The Tardis and Gazebo
Cos Cath's told them
That car parking needs a lot more men
So when my feet are made of lead
Radios talking in my head
And I'm dying for my bed
I'm wearing Hi-Vis instead

And yet again she puts me on the fencing
Setting off in some direction
Whether it's right or wrong!
Waiting for the forks
Wherever the hell they may be
I know that Nige won't fail me
Despite the crap he talks
They're dancing a ceilidh
We're doing fencing instead

And now its light
And they walk around our nice new site
I look across
And I see a trader arguing the toss
Lets hit the beer tent
Until all our cash is spent
And when our booze is dead
We'll all drink Gav's beer instead

And yet again she puts me on the fencing
A lot of blocks and erection
Whether it's right or wrong
And down on waterspace
Wherever they may send me
I know the work won't bend me
When I'm on the boat
With gloves they lend me
I'm doing elsans instead

Continues.....

And bugger me the toilets need some mending
The flush is never ending
And there's an awful pong
There's quite a lot of shite
And plenty of the hire kit
I know that George will break it
But when our leaders call
We can't ignore it
So let's send Baylis instead

Wild rOver

Original Song: Wild Rover

Written by: Martin Ludgate

First Performed: 2001 Huddersfield National

I've been working at Over for over a year
And I've spent all my money on plant-hire and beer
But now it's becoming a real Severn bore
So I never will work down at Over no more

(Chorus)

And its no, nay never
No nay never no more
Will I work down at Over
No never, no more

I went into a hire-shop I used to frequent
And I told the assistant my dumper was bent
I asked her to fix it, she answered me "nay,
You've f*cked all our dumpers - now please go away!"

(Chorus)

I phoned David Penny, to ask him for help
And she shot out the door with a terrified yelp
She said "Take all our dumpers, our diggers as well,
And our pumps and our gennies, and just go to h*ll!"

(Chorus)

I'll go back to Mike Palmer, and tell him "It's done
Please send us to Droitwich, we've heard that it's fun"
And if he won't let me, I'll give him what for
Cos I never will work down at Over no more

(Chorus)