

THE NEW CHRIS DE BURGH CLUB

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THE GETAWAY GAZETTE

Welcome once more to the official Chris de Burgh newsletter, The Getaway Gazette, and apologies to all of you who've been waiting in vain for it over the past few months. There have been many problems with Chris's fan club, and he has now severed all links with the organisation responsible for running it, the International Association of Fan Clubs. The I.A.F.C. has also handled clubs for several other groups and artists who have been similarly let down.

As Chris puts it: "I am very upset about what has happened and, although I am not to blame for the problems, I do feel personally responsible to all of my fans. I hope you will continue to help and support with new fan club arrangements. I hope we can start afresh".

New and better plans are already being worked on to set things up at a more local and personal level. You'll be kept informed of the situation as soon as details are available over membership. Existing C de B Club members will also be contacted in time.

As for the Gazette, the intention is to keep it as it was; a personal, exclusive and direct communication from Chris to you. On that note, we'll proceed with the job in hand and bring you up to date on his thoughts, projects and plans. He extended a recent trip to London by a day to talk specifically about it all.

But first, a few facts about Man On The Line - for the record! It charted in every European country, going to number one in Germany and staying put for eight weeks - it's still in the Top 100 there nearly a year after release. It created history in Switzerland when it became the first album ever to go straight in at number one.

Another first for Chris came in France, where the single High On Emotion earned him his greatest success there, and first national number one. "It was a huge dance song", he explains. "They loved it in the discos, went mad for it. It was number one in the dance charts right across the country; imagine me being number one in the dance charts - bizarre!"

In England, the Very Best of Chris de Burgh album blossomed into his biggest hit ever in that country, reaching number 6 in the charts. Chris is now considering directions for his next album - which he says will be a move away from Man On The Line - but more of that later.

As you'll be aware, touring ate up a sizeable chunk of 1984 for Chris and, as a result, he retired exhausted to his Irish retreat for a well deserved "recovery period" during the first three months of '85. But, proving that you can't keep a good man down, Chris has just announced the good news that he's going back on the road again!. He'll be doing a series of open-air concerts, at large venues and with impressive support acts, to brighten up Europe in the summer. Many of the dates have yet to be finally confirmed, but refer to the attached schedule for the most current details at the time of writing.

The Man On the Line tour was very important to Chris and studded with moments memorable to him, these are but a few.....

TALES FROM THE ROAD

"Last year, I was away from home for 9½ months and, during that time, my wife also gave birth to our lovely daughter, Rosanna. We did around 85 concerts - 60 of them in Europe

in 70 days. We played 14 countries, I think. The whole tour was fantastic, especially German, Swiss, English and Scandinavian dates. The Irish shows were incredible. During those dates, we auctioned off two tickets, just to see what the demand was. We auctioned them for a charity which I support called The Friends of the Rotunda. It's a maternity hospital in Dublin which does research into cot deaths, infant mortality and everything connected with children and babies. We got £180 for the pair, which I think was amazing. I did six concerts in a row in Ireland and it was simply exhausting! However, in the middle of them all, I was presented with a wonderful birthday party. What a great night that was; six kiss-o-gram girls and comedians! I love playing in Dublin because it's home and it's also one of the most challenging shows because I've got a reputation for putting on one of the best shows of the year there. People come from far and wide and they expect to see the best. And, because it's home, I know that it's very important to get it right - because I've got to live there for the rest of the year! If it's a shoddy night, you'll see people walking down the street going 'Oh-oh, there he is' and pointing accusing fingers!.

WHAT'S A DAY OFF?

"To give people an idea of how tough a tour can be, they should look at my tour schedule. Everybody who bought the tour programme can see it and work things out for themselves. It always makes me laugh when I see the words 'day off', because a day off usually means travelling to the next show! I got my first genuine day off - where I didn't have to do a concert or travel anywhere - after I'd been on the road for ten weeks non-stop. It was the first time in that whole period that I had nothing to do. I remember getting up in the morning and being shocked to realise that's how hard I was working. Most people have no concept of how difficult it is on the road. I also have to do all the interviews, the TV shows, the radios - because there's no other Chris de Burgh around to do them. All that plus having to do a two-hour show. So at the end of a concert, I've lost about two or three pounds in weight each night - just from sweating and from the energy I've put out. I come off stage, jump in a shower - and after that I'll just be shattered. To be honest, the last thing I want to do is just stand outside in the cold and sign autographs. I had my wife and daughter with me, too - I couldn't subject them to hanging around. My attitude is that either you sign all autographs, or you don't sign any. I remember three nights in a row spending an hour-and-a-half after a concert signing autographs for hundreds and hundreds of people. That really upset me. I thought 'Well, this isn't right.' It's not fair on me. So I've virtually stopped signing autographs in that way now, although I don't mind if people stop me in the street and ask. I don't mind that at all. But, knowing that there's hundreds of people waiting for autographs after a show....I just have to be really strong and say 'I'm very sorry, but I can't do it.' I'm physically unable to do it. After a show, I get back to my hotel, have a beer - and collapse. So not signing autographs isn't an attempt to be rude to any of my fans, it's simply that I give fully of myself onstage - and I think I should be allowed my time after that. Another problem - and those who come to my concerts will notice this - is that I sing extremely strongly for two hours, night after night when I'm on tour. The way you lose your voice is through talking, so I'm very careful about talking. If I talk to 20 or 30 people after a concert it can be dangerous - because I could blow the show next day if I lose my voice. I remember the show in Frankfurt, we had some people from the fan club back to meet me. My wife and daughter were really anxious to get back to the hotel - yet a couple of people wrote to me asking why I didn't spend more time with them. Well, I spent about 30 minutes with them - and I could see my family wanted to go - so to be criticised for that...it's really not fair. I think I'm being a lot better than some of these stars who really don't give a damn for their fans. My fans are very important to me and always will be. It has never been my intention or desire to avoid them; I value their continued support and kindness too much for that.

MAGICAL MOMENTS

The tour was by far my most successful. An example of that is that the tour I did in Germany was the biggest of the year there; nobody sold as many concert tickets. The previous time I sold 120,000 tickets, and this time it was 240,000 tickets. While in Germany, I was given a Golden Europa Award for the most successful international album of the year. I did a TV show for the presentation and the actress Elkie Sommer, who's a big fan, handed me my award. I sang a song and wound up in her arms at the end of it, which was amazing! *Man On The Line* was also Germany's second biggest-selling album of the year - behind a German act. The Swiss dates were extraordinary as well and we also played Denmark, Copenhagen, for the first time. I think that of those 60 dates in Europe, just about every one was sold out. That was very pleasing. There were so many magical moments in so many different cities that it's hard to mention every one. But the enduring memory, for me, is not only the fantastic atmosphere of the shows, but also the number of gifts and cuddly toys which people gave me for my daughter, Rosanna. These people may be interested to know that, as there were far too many for her, I gave away about 60 of these toys and teddy bears on Irish TV as Christmas presents for children in a Dublin hospital.

"Also very fresh in my mind, were the last two nights of the tour at Hammersmith Odeon, which were fantastic. To be honest, English audiences tend to be a little quieter - not less appreciative for it - but quieter than European or American audiences. But I remember the last night very well. I was exhausted, really hurting. I played the last song, the encore, and the audience was on its feet - they'd been up yelling for most of the concert. I was just about to jump in the shower, and by this time the houselights were up and music was playing, when I thought 'Hold on, what's that sound?' It was the audience yelling for more - they went mad! So I hastily got dressed and ran out to sing a couple of Christmas carols. Everybody sang along, and the crew came onstage waving a banner saying 'Happy Christmas'...it was memorable, just memorable. The audience knew that it was a special night - it was for me, too. But, I'll tell you, one of the sad things about playing concerts for me is that, while a night like that is really memorable for the people who went to it - hopefully they'll remember it for years if it was that good - but, for me, it's very difficult for me now to remember individual concerts - except where something extraordinary happens. I somehow feel cheated by that."

HATS OFF TO CHRIS

The keen-sighted among you might just have noticed Chris going in to his show at Wembley Arena - through the main entrance. Here's why: "I did it because I don't like ticket touts," he explains. "I think it's disgusting that those guys can get away with what they do. They were selling tickets at Wembley for £50 and £60. I always keep some complimentary tickets for me and my guests and, that night, I had a couple left over. So I went out the front in my deer-stalker hat. There were a lot of people looking for tickets, and I spotted this young couple. I went up to them and said 'Would you like to see the show?' They said they would love to, thanked me, and then I took off my hat and said 'You're welcome'. They seemed really surprised.....I often wonder who those people were. I do that kind of thing quite a lot, actually. I just don't approve of those guys buying tickets at face value a few weeks before a show and then selling them for a huge amount outside the door on the night. The same thing applies to people who sell scarves and stuff with my name on illegally. They're breaking the law, basically, and I always try to encourage people not to buy things from them. In Dublin, we had two guys using megaphones down the street shouting 'Do not buy any of this merchandise - it is illegal!' That really annoyed the traders, I can tell you! But, the fact is, they're not allowed to do it."

Right, we'll wrap up Chris's tales from the road there - but look out for further comments from him on live performance, his singing technique and how he keeps sane on tour in the next newsletter. However, Chris would like to pass on a special message to his followers in Scotland: "Scotland has some of my strongest supporters and I'm really sorry that we couldn't get there with the tour. These decisions aren't really made by me, but the logistics of putting together a tour with 60 shows is very, very difficult. We simply didn't have the time to play Scotland - but I'll definitely make the effort to do it next time. It always concerns me when fans have to spend money and travel far and see me play - but it isn't always possible to play everywhere, so we have to choose major, central cities and venues."

ANYONE FOR SOME INTIMACY?

With Chris's desire to reach the more out of the way locations in mind, he's struck on the following idea - and been warned it could mean some action on his part! "I have this desire, this feeling just to go into a small theatre with my guitar and a piano - and play solo for 90 minutes. I've always believed that I want to be close to people and, what with doing these huge concerts nowadays, I feel kind of sad that I don't have the close contact I used to. I do my best, but there's no way round it. People say 'Well, why don't you spend a week in a small venue?' but, frankly, I just haven't got the time. I would be on tour for years if I did that! The demand has got so strong that I have to bear that in mind, I have to play the big places. But I can't stop thinking about solo concerts - I just might spring one for the hell of it. I've done them before and they've been amazingly successful - some people prefer them to the big shows. I wouldn't attempt to do all the more powerful stuff, I wouldn't do High On Emotion or Man on The Line - forget that. I would do the gentle stuff. So, I'm toying with the idea - and I'd be interested to know the fans' response to that, to learn whether anybody would find that fun."

During his time off at the beginning of the year, Chris afforded himself the opportunity to take stock and consider his next steps. This is what's in store....

BEST MOVES IN '85

"This coming year, I'm not going to get sucked into the old writing, recording, touring conveyor belt bit. I've done that for the last three-and-a-half years and really feel that I deserve a break. I haven't had a holiday for nearly four years, so I'm definitely going to allow myself the luxury of one with my family. I'm also going to get involved in other projects - as I have done already this year with this video I've just done. It was recorded over three nights in Munich, during the tour. It's an accurate and exciting rendition of what went on: a very true reflection of the Man On The Line tour. The video will be available soon and we're also having discussions regarding selling it to TV. It's called The Munich Concerts. I'll also be writing songs for films this year - maybe co-writing with other people - but I don't plan on recording a new album until the autumn, or even just before Christmas. So there won't be another album until the beginning of next year, because it takes about eight months to write and record one. I don't want to diminish the value of a record just by slamming out another one because one record has been successful, you don't follow it up immediately by just entering the market place again - although there are people who'd like you to do it. I just resist that, because it would water down what I do. Besides, somebody like me doesn't have to be in high profile all the time - I'm not a singles artist. My whole thing is as an album artist, really - with singles success if I can get it! - and touring. But even though the album won't be for some time, I have already a pretty clear idea of what I want. I want to get right away, in the opposite direction, from synthesised drums and synthesised music. Synthesisers are great when used as splashes of a paint brush - but not the whole canvas. I'm sick, absolutely sick, of hearing electronic music on the radio. It's so simple to do, unbelievable; you get a drum machine, programme it up, press a button - and you get a drummer. So next time, I intend to use real musicians, a real drummer, a real orchestra - and make it sound fresh, exciting and sort of cinemascopic in dimension, rather than very tight and controlled. Man On The Line is as close as I'm every going to get to that. Some people would argue that it was even closer than that and

over the top, with synthesised sound - but I'm just not interested in that end of things any more. Therefore, I don't know about a producer yet, but it would have to be a producer who enjoyed that kind of production. I have not started writing for the album yet, but the key to it all is to get some kind of idea of where I want to go - and once I establish that, then I'll have to start sitting down and disciplining myself to write. I haven't done it so far because I haven't had the desire to! That's fine, I'll just wait for that particular thing to happen - and take it from there."

WAX LYRICAL.

Chris is inundated with letters from fans asking him to explain his lyrics - and he's perfectly happy and willing to do so. Indeed, he wants to encourage you to write in with any questions about songs from his previous albums. We hope to make this a regular feature of the Gazette, and to launch the idea, get a load of this: "One guy asked me about my song The Painter," says Chris. "He asked whether I'd got anything against painters or whether it was just a bit of fun. Well, it's a bit of fun! It's based loosely around a poem by Robert Browning called My Last Duchess. So, if anybody wants to look that up and compare the two, they'll get some hints. Another enquiry was about the song Carry On, whether some of the lines are in French or another language. It's actually English written backwards. It was recorded in 1978 - but the truth can now be told! What you do is take a line that's written, start at the right hand end and write from left to right; take the last letter and put it first, and so on. If you do it, it will wind up as an English sentence. I like to do that stuff."

And on that confusing note - we're certain Chris knows what he's talking about - we'll sign off for this edition. In the next, we'll be reporting once more on all the very latest de Burgh happenings and talking intimately with him about the joys of being a father - and how becoming a parent may alter the way he writes.

In the meantime, if you have any ideas about what you'd like to see in future newsletters - or criticisms of this one - please write to Mike at:

The New Chris de Burgh Club,
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Chris is ready and waiting to give you all the information you need - and bursting to answer all questions - so let him have it! Goodbye and good luck.

Chris
deBungh



With best wishes -

Chris de Bungh -