

THE GETAWAY GAZETTE

Vol. 1. No. 5

First things first; a happy and prosperous New Year to all C de B followers from all of us at the club – not least courtesy of Chris himself. Or, as he prefers to put it: "I'd like to wish the very best in health, contentment and success to every member of my fan club. Their support and friendliness has been both greatly appreciated and of great inspiration to me throughout the past year – as always. Here's hoping that our relationship will continue to be as special and important to each one of us in 1986"

Keep those thoughts in mind, because there will be plenty to look forward to from Chris over the next 12 months – most particularly the eagerly awaited follow-up to his smash LP *Man On The Line* and a series of concerts over Europe. Dates are being negotiated at the moment, and are expected to be in September but, fear not – we promise to inform you of the final arrangements well in advance of the actual concerts, even if it means bringing out an edition of *The Gazette* earlier than usual. Chris has insisted on this plan of action in order to ensure that club members have every opportunity of obtaining tickets in good time. At present, we're unable even to tell you which countries he'll be visiting – so please bear with us! Meanwhile, be prepared for a new single from Chris. It should be out around the beginning of April but, again, we can't be any more specific than that at the moment – or give you any details about what the song will be called. Not even Chris is certain of the situation yet! Suffice to say that a new de Burgh masterpiece is on its way – so be ready for it.

As for the album, well, as promised, subscribers to *The Gazette* will be the VERY FIRST to learn everything about it – and a whole lot more. You'll no doubt recall that we had intended to bring you all the news, and an in-depth breakdown of the songs by Chris, in this newsletter. However; what with plans changing, that hasn't proved possible – simply because Chris hasn't reached the stage yet where there's very much to break down! Having travelled over to Canada late last year to play some of the new material to his band, Chris is – as you read this – now in the studio and hard at work on the project. He's currently putting the album together in a hide-away country retreat and will be moving into London to add the final touches in a few weeks time – and that's when we'll pounce! Chris feels that then will be the best time for him to talk in a relaxed and leisurely manner about the music he has created. The idea is

to introduce the new songs to you in his own words - giving club members an exclusive and deeply personal insight into each track. The information will be in your hands in plenty of time before the actual release of the album. We caught up briefly with Chris a couple of days before Christmas – and after he'd fully recovered from the festive celebrations at his management's office party! – and spoke to him about progress so far on the album



"The recording of it will take approximately ten weeks, I would say", he explained. "The album that I always wanted to make throughout last year was very much a live-sounding record – so this one will be involving my own touring band, to a certain extent. I'm also going to over-record; for the album, I think I'll have ten songs – but for the compact disc, and hopefully for the cassette, I will have more than that. You're always restricted to ten songs for an LP, but I think going for 14 would be much more interesting – if we have the time. I'm pleased with the way things are shaping up so far but, if you're right in the middle of all of it, it can be very turbulent. However, the people who have heard the stuff think it's very, very good indeed – and very exciting. For a couple of tracks, as I outlined in the last *Gazette*, I am going for a Bruce Springsteen kind of rocky approach – but that's only to reflect exactly what happens on stage during one of my concerts. For me, such occasions are wildly exciting and completely thrilling, and that's the angle I'm aiming at. As for the rest of the album – all will be fully revealed, in time!"

CHRIS AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas is always a busy time, and for Chris it was doubly so. Here's how he kept himself occupied. "The Thursday before Christmas Day I was very pleased to take part in Carol Aid. It was an event to support the Band Aid fund and involved a whole bunch of musicians and celebrities singing. Apart from myself, it included contributions from people like Cliff Richard and Elton John. I did the song A Spaceman Came Travelling. It's part of a compilation record called 'Now the Christmas Album' which was Number One in the British album charts over the Christmas period. So at least Chris de Burgh is now getting known in the U.K. – because something like close to a million people went out and bought that album!

"On Christmas Day I met up with my wife's family. Incidentally, my wife and daughter are both in terrific form; Rosanna is turning out into a gorgeous little girl. We all went to my brother-in-law's restaurant which is nestled at the foot of the Wicklow mountains in Southern Ireland. There were about 17 of us there and we all sat around one table in front of a roaring fire; kids, dogs, grannies – it was all very festive. The day after Christmas I went down to see my parents. It's always hard when you have to separate the thing between parents, but I think the way we manage to organise our time at Christmas means that everything works out well. On December 29, I went to a major music awards show in Dublin. The money from the event goes toward the Rehabilitation Institute, which is for car accident victims and people who have been paralysed. They have all sorts of categories at the awards – folk, rock, classical and right across the spectrum – but the final and most prestigious prize is the Adjudicator's Special Award. I was presented with that for being the most successful songwriter ever to come out of Ireland. It was a great honour"

WAX LYRICAL

As a taster for the sort of explanations you can expect from Chris when he chats about the songs on his new album, we've taken this opportunity to put to him many of the questions you have asked about his older material in this special, extended Wax Lyrical section. Read on and be informed

SPANISH TRAIN: "A lot of people have written in to ask me about this one", Chris admits. "It took shape when I was on holiday in Spain in 1974, when we took a break from recording my very first album. I got hold of my guitar and took a train into Seville; at the time I spoke fairly good Spanish so I thought I'd go there. So, I was on the train, going very slowly, and I remember looking out of a window and up at a hillside. I was struck by the way the Spanish made divisions between fields; they'd get two or three pieces of wood, put them together, stand them up - and make a sort of rudimentary fence. These bits of wood were very gnarled, twisted and dried. I recall peering out of the window, seeing a line of these things going up the hill as the train doodled on by, and thinking 'God!, they look like dancing skeletons ...! This was my imagination at work, you see. Then a few minutes later we crossed a bridge over the Guadalquivir River, and I just scribbled on my piece of paper 'There's a Spanish train that runs between Guadalquivir and old Seville' - I had to put 'old Seville' to get the proper rhyming. And then I had this vision of a train thundering through the night with a driver - a skeleton. You could see his bones being lit by the fire at the front of the engine as he sort of leered out of the cabin. That's what it started with; I got the first line and wrote the song on the train. The rest of the song is pure imagination - I confess! I made it all up as I went along. I thought about the game of cards, and about God and the devil gambling for the souls of the dead. It just developed from that beginning - but that's the way I do it; I start off with a simple idea and expand it into the way my imagination tends to run"

THE TOWER: "I'm asked whether this song draws any reference from a book by W.H. Hudson called Green Mansions. The answer is '.... none at all: I've never heard of the book. The song was inspired by the time I spent working on a farm. During the summer, one of the greatest hazards of being a grain farmer is that the birds stamp down the corn - they can destroy half a crop just by doing that and eating it. They fly in in great big flocks and knock it all down. One of the ways of preventing this is to shoot a few and hang them up. I remember one day I went off shooting, and killed a lot of birds to stop the crop destruction. But I felt kind of disgusted with myself because it was so unnecessary. If you look at the lyric, you'll see that what I'm really saying is that there's no point in killing for sport. Although I wasn't killing for sport - it was for a reason - it just made me think about it all. In some countries, people are renowned for killing anything that flies - so I was thinking what a good idea it would be to write a song where the birds get their own back, as it were. Just a fairy story".

DEVIL'S EYE: "No, it wasn't influenced - as someone has suggested - by the film Poltergeist. It's just that I had the idea of people taking over broadcasting stations. It has actually been done; where somebody has interfered with a signal and put their broadcasting station on the air. In fact, it happened in England; for about 30 minutes, I think, somebody cut into BBC1 in the Southern region and showed their own stuff on the TV. Secondly, I was also struck by the idea of having a camera hidden inside the television set itself, watching you as you watched it. Because TVs are in everybody's homes and I think that television is the biggest, single most powerful source of propaganda and information there ever has been".

EASTERN WIND: "This was about what was happening in Iran, actually, and the 'mad old man' is, of course, THE mad old man; Ayatolla Khomeini. I go as far as literally saying Iran in the song, in the line 'I ran to the door'. Again, it was a play on words. The song concerned the situation in that country at the time; the whole Muslim uprising. I wasn't judging, just observing the whole sweeping of Eastern culture and commenting on how a man in the West felt threatened by it all".

DON'T PAY THE FERRYMAN: "I know that many listeners are baffled by the spoken words in this song. Well they are an amended form from lines which are in the Shakespeare play, The Tempest. Early on in the play, the boatman is describing the storm and his speech starts 'We were dead of sleep and clapped under hatches'. I thought that was appropriate".

There you have it; more riddles unravelled. If you have any more which have been causing you to wonder - then send your questions in. Chris is only too happy to put on his thinking cap and provide the answers.

DE BURGH – THE BOOK!

Coming your way soon a special 90-page souvenir booklet about a certain person called Chris de Burgh. The book, which is currently being put together, will be packed full with more than 70 photographs – many of which have never before been seen in public as they are held in private collections. As for the text, it will focus on important events and memories spanning from Chris's life as a child right through to the present day. We can assure you that the author of the book is in a very good position to reveal all kinds of secrets about Chris and his experiences – and, certainly, nobody knows him better than the writer. You've guessed it; Chris will be penning all the information himself. Copies of the book – which is to be published by Omnibus Press and is a must for all C de B fans – will be available through the club at reduced rates to members just as soon as it appears. We'll keep you posted as to precisely when that will be.

DE BURGH – THE VERY BEST OF

Over the past few months, many of Chris's fans living outside of Britain have been writing in and enquiring about his 'Very Best Of' compilation album. Will it be released abroad?, you ask. Chris has this to say by way of an answer: "We have been approached by several people about the possibility of international release for it, but I'm not exactly sure. That tends to be a record company and management decision. The thing is, the album is actually nothing to do with me – that should be stressed. It's a lease deal where an independent company rents the material and sells it. I had nothing to do with the choice of songs, the running order of them - or anything. So, under those circumstances, I'm not that keen to let it get out - not unless I have some kind of control over it. An amended form might be available, but we'll have to wait and see".

A LIVE ALBUM? ...

Another subject of interest to several readers of The Gazette has been the situation regarding Chris ever making a live album. These are the details: "We have thought a lot about a live album - in fact we were planning one from the Munich '84 video tape concert. But we thought 'well, it's a bit much to expect people to buy a video tape AND a live album'. There are mixed feelings about live albums; some record companies like them, others do not. We felt that, currently, the major part of a live album would be reflecting my last two albums; The Getaway and Man On The Line ... it's a lot of work, actually, a live album. It demands a lot of studio time. However, the answer is 'Yes! – I'd love to have a live album out, but the time has to be appropriate".

CHRIS AND TINA TURNER

The eagle-eyed among you will have noticed that Tina Turner is given a credit on Man On The Line – but what exactly did she do? Over to Chris: "She didn't sing, actually. She spoke and whispered on the song The Sound Of A Gun. How it all came about was that Tina happened to be in the studio and I said to her 'we're looking for a female voice, and yours is nearest to hand – I'd be very pleased if you felt like helping out'. Being the very nice lady that she is, she agreed".

Chris has another tale to tell that emerged when he was recording Man On The Line at Farmyard Studios "I remember a girl who lived close by asking if she could come along to a studio session one day", he explains. "That day I spent about 90 minutes putting one word to a song. It was actually on Taking It To The Top; it was the very last word I sing on that song before its ending. I sang about ten different notes! It makes it sound very out of tune, but it also makes a very interesting sound. The girl was absolutely amazed. She said, 'Well, if it takes eight weeks to make an album – then it's hardly surprising when you do something like that!' I just happen to like getting things right, no matter how long it takes".

PEN PALS

Since the idea was first floated of fellow C de B enthusiasts contacting each other by letter, we're pleased to note that many pen pals have stepped forward. We can't possibly publish every address, but here are a few to be going on with. Keep them coming - and get writing soon

Iris Seiler, Im Grien, CH-3806 Bönigen, Switzerland
Neil and Kay Allison, 39 Moors Land, Northfields, Birmingham, B31 1DG England
Carmella Langham, 6 Mansfield Close, Edmonton, London, N9 7LU England
Sabine Kernchen, Gerichtstr. 17, 1000 Berlin 65, West Germany
Robert Poizner, 10444 Canoga Avenue, 55 Chatsworth, California 91311, U.S.A.
Jill Richards, 1191 Tucson St., Aurora, Colorado 80011, U.S.A.
Eva Pedersen (age 32), Akjaersvej 10, 4600 Koge, Denmark
Penelope Appleton, Flat 21, 22 Thicket Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4PS, England
Eddie O'Connor, 29 Panther Croft, Yorkswood, Shard End, Birmingham B34 7SB, England
Joanna Childs, 186 Shore Drive, Bedford, Nova Scotia, B41 2E5, Canada
Denise Lee, 294 Rio Lindo Rd, 9, Chico, California 95926, U.S.A.
Lorie McCloud, 1901 16th Street, Corpus Christi, Texas 78404, U.S.A.
Heather Ash, 18 Spinney Close, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 6DQ, England
Peter Seed (Aged 17), 2 Beech Lane, Farsley, Pudsey, Yorkshire L528 5JZ, England
Sharon Parry, 2 Beech Way, Basingstoke, Hants, RG23 8LW, England
Mrs K. Allcock, 8 Edgwood Road, Kimberley, Nottingham, NG16 2JR, England

... and a word to future pen pals; please write your name and address clearly in BLOCK LETTERS. If I can't read your writing, then you won't be getting too many letters!

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME ...

Right, that just about wraps things up for this issue but, before we go, a special mention must be made of Catherine Cooney from Liverpool. If you've been admiring the excellent sketch of Chris on The Gazette's cover - then this is the talented lady to blame! Please continue to send in any art work you have of Chris or his songs for use in future editions.

Finally, a few words about letters to the fan club. As you no doubt realise - we hope! - it is virtually impossible to make a personal reply to each and every one we receive. Instead, what we aim to do is cover the majority of enquiries by way of the newsletter - but don't think that correspondence never finds its way to Chris personally. "I read letters from members of the club often", he says, "and I get a lot of inspiration out of doing so. I can't help thinking 'My God!, people out there are really interested. It's quite awesome actually. People say the most genuine things - even if occasionally they are critical of something that I have done! However, I always listen to their opinions'. And remember - write to me, Mike, with any views, ideas or names for the pen pal section of The New Chris de Burgh Club, P.O. Box 276, London, E2 7BW. If you have any questions about Chris or his music - however bizarre they might be! - then jot them down, too. Chris will be only too pleased to tackle them.

We'll be in touch soon with the next 'album special' edition of The Gazette, so good luck and goodbye from us all until then

STOP PRESS!

Chris has been in touch with us again since the main text of this GAZETTE was completed, to provide extremely up to the minute comment on the new album; "I just thought that people might be interested to know some of the song titles, although there will be more. So here goes. 'Last Night', 'The Simple Truth (A Child is Born)', 'Fatal Hesitation', 'The Ballroom of Romance', 'The Way You Look Tonight, and 'A song for Rosanna'. There is also a trilogy titled 'The Leader', 'The Vision' and 'What About Me?'. It's three songs in one".

"There will of course be fuller explanations in the next newsletter, which I hope you'll all be looking forward to. Meanwhile, take care and love to you all" - Chris.