

THE NEW *Chris de Burgh* **CLUB**

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APRIL 1998



THE GAT|A|W|A|Y
GAZ|E|T|T|E



Hello, and welcome to the latest edition of the Getaway Gazette. We apologise for this issue reaching you somewhat later than expected - the original plan had been to send it to you in February - but, for reasons which will immediately become very clear as you read on, this did not prove possible. Indeed, of late, pinning C de B down has become something of a sport - you must have played it yourself; it's called telephone tag, in which, over a period of many weeks, phone calls are missed and many messages left. A particularly memorable one from Chris went 'I'm so sorry not to have called earlier. I'm feeling so guilty about all of this that I've even been dreaming about doing this interview! But, don't worry; you have your fish hooked - now you've just got to land him at the bank. Speak to you soon.' Ultimately, of course, we did just that - although what you are about to read was recorded in two separate interviews, weeks apart. And now, in true Gazette style, we'll abandon all preamble and simply pass you over to the man himself....

CHRIS: "OK. Last time we spoke, had we covered Princess Diana's death? No? Well, I should mention that, then... What I've got here is my notes from last year, so I'll just start going through them, shall I? On the 30th of August, I was in the Czech Republic, in a small town where they were doing a major benefit concert for the victims of the flood disasters that have caused dreadful devastation right throughout the Czech Republic and through Germany. The River Odra had burst its banks and thousands - hundreds of thousands - were homeless, and many died. I did this concert in the pouring rain, as it was *still* raining, in a football stadium; just me, with my guitar. Peter Oxendale came on and played the piano. The evening subsequent to that concert was an extraordinary one... The man who promoted the concert was a major benefactor in the area, a youngish man - and very wealthy. He had his own private sort of Disneyland! He had a zoo with Siberian tigers and other animals there, and he would bring handicapped children to this place, to give them a day out. We went to this place after the concert, when it had finally stopped raining, and it was absolutely gorgeous. We had an indoor barbecue that he had set up with all the flames going up in the air. It was held to celebrate this very strong apple-based alcoholic drink called slivovitz. It was the annual Slivovitz Festival. I wasn't mad about it, although I drank a few. The rest, I chucked into the fire, and each time the slivovitz went into the fire there was a massive 'bang', as this stuff caught fire. We also had a few humorous escapades on the way back from the barbecue; firstly, the driver - reversing out - managed to put one wheel over the edge of a small cliff (!) with a drop, I would say, of 30 feet. So we all scrambled out of the car and got a lift with somebody else...in a two-seater sports car, with five of us jammed in it. Now, *this* driver lost his way - and then reversed over the edge of another cliff. However, the anaesthetic properties of the slivovitz had just made most people laugh a lot! That was the night of August 30. The following morning, Sunday, August 31, I was getting ready to leave, and I called home. Diane told me that Princess Diana had been in an accident. I rang back again - and it had been confirmed by then that she was dead. That was just an absolute shocker... I remember telling Chris Andrews (Chris's personal assistant), and he took it like a punch; you know, he actually fell to the floor. He sat down on a chair and all the wind went out of him. One of the pilots, Big Bill, who was flying our aircraft back home was in tears. He said 'She was *our* Princess...' Anyway, I'll kind of move along from that, but that's where I was on that day..."

Now, I will just dwell on this subject for a little longer, if I may. What's been said about Princess Diana - and a lot has been said - is, somehow, never enough, but you actually knew her. So I think it's fitting that I should ask you something as inane as...how did you feel when you heard the news?

CHRIS: "I was absolutely devastated. I was in Paris last weekend, actually, and went to visit the short, underground section of road where she was killed, and it is *really* short; you get through it in five seconds, maybe less. It's just a very short underpass, with these pillars, and it's the only underpass I noticed in Paris that wasn't protected. That's the irony of this thing. Also, I think a lot of people thought that Diana was immortal. I was driving along in a Mercedes in Germany just yesterday and thinking 'I feel vulnerable now.' You know; if it could happen to her, it could happen to anyone. That's, I think, the overall thing that everybody has become aware of; we lost a marvellous, charismatic woman - but, also, I think we lost our innocence, as well. For many people, Diana was just a product of the media age, and probably only existed as a person that was in photographs or on the TV...it never really occurred to a lot of people that she was actually flesh and blood, and vulnerable. But, personally, I was destroyed by her death. I was terribly upset. In fact, at the end of that week I was supposed to be in Moscow, headlining three major concerts - two of which were in a football stadium - to celebrate the 850th anniversary of Moscow, and I just felt I couldn't do those shows. The funeral was obviously on September 6th but, at the point I cancelled the Russian trip, I had no idea that I would be invited to Westminster Abbey; I just knew that I wanted to be at home, grieving, along with millions of other people. I didn't want to be celebrating something, across the other side of Europe. So, I cancelled the trip to Moscow, sadly. Then, during the week, I got two invitations to attend the funeral at the Abbey - and that was extraordinary; I think most people remember that. Being there, amongst all those famous people and people that she knew and who loved her, was...extraordinary. Walking around Westminster Abbey the night before, and seeing thousands and thousands of people camped on the streets, it was like a scene from a movie - and there was almost complete silence as these people sat there with their pictures of Diana. There were little children and grannies with flasks of tea, there were sleeping bags and tents and candles...it was a vigil, and I was moved to tears many, many times. The subsequent day, the funeral, I was in admiration of what Elton John did - I appreciate the difficulty of what he did, and the courage it took - and, secondly, when Earl Spencer made his speech and all of the applause poured in from outside into the Abbey, through the big doors, and everybody picked up on that...that was an extraordinary moment. I remember lots and lots of people inside the Abbey crying their eyes out and applauding the Earl for his courage in saying what he said. Subsequently, because not only did he, apparently, have all of the tabloid editors removed from the Abbey - or removed from the guest list, with their invitations to the funeral withdrawn - and because he was saying, effectively, that his sister was driven to her death, hounded by the media, he has been receiving negative publicity; the press is doling it back to him again. Which doesn't surprise anybody. And he's absolutely right about the scum that these people really are, at that end of journalism, at any rate. I'd rather not say too much more about that side of things... Anyway, after the funeral I was talking with David Dimbleby and a few other people about it. It was just an extraordinary event and, certainly, something I'll never forget. It was astounding. The world grieved. In fact, I met a very sensible woman only last week and she said 'I can't think about it. Every time I think about it, I start crying again.' I think the reverberations of her death will go on for a long time. As I say, Diana was the product of the end of the century, of an age of extraordinary transmission of information - and she was the icon. She was the Number One. She will be regarded, a hundred years from now, as possibly one of the most important figures in the 20th Century. I was dreadfully sad about her death; really, terribly upset."

We should also mention the song you wrote following Diana's death; there has been an enormous amount of interest in it, and demand for it...

CHRIS: "I remember; it was at about 7 o'clock on Wednesday evening, after she was killed...I had no intention of writing a song, per se, I was just playing my piano and these words came out 'There's a new star up in heaven tonight.' And I knew what it was about immediately

because, obviously, Diana had been on my mind. It took about ten minutes to get the melody through and then, the following evening, I spent about 45 minutes working on the words. That wasn't difficult - because I knew what I wanted to say, anyway. The whole thing took about an hour. The song was just an expression of grief, in the same way that a lot of people wrote songs or wrote poems. The BBC people heard about it, so the song was filmed and the film was shown as she was being taken back to Althorp House. A couple of weeks later I recorded it properly in a studio and, because of Elton and his success and because he was the one who was asked to do *Candle In The Wind*, I just made 100 copies and numbered and signed them. As of now, 20 copies went to Earl Spencer, 5 to the Duchess of York, one went to Steven Spielberg - and the rest are going to be auctioned for charity."

Why Steven Spielberg?

CHRIS: "Well, the night of the funeral, Diane and I stayed with the Duke and Duchess of York, out at their place, and the dinner that night was extraordinary again; Steven Spielberg was there, the Duke and Duchess, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, Tom Hanks...there was 12 of us in all. After dinner, I played the piano - and I played that particular song. As he was leaving, Steven Spielberg came up to me, shook my hand, and said 'Princess Diana was very lucky to have you as a friend.' Coming from a man like that, I'll tell you what, that meant quite something to me. Anyway, I sent him a copy."

Are there plans ever to release the song commercially?

CHRIS: "Well, at the present time - no. Actually, we're being very careful indeed about this because there's been so much cynicism generated in the media, which is hypocritical because the media love to make the money from the 'Diana Story' but they are critical of anyone else who is, apparently, trying to benefit. And I do not want us to be seen to be benefiting - not one iota - from this. However, I will be performing the song at the June 27 concert in Althorp House. That'll be it's first public performance, with an orchestra - which is the proper way to do it. So, I don't know if it will ever be released; we're not bending to public demand at the moment."

Thanks for sharing your thoughts about such a terrible tragedy. Let's move on...

CHRIS: "OK. This now brings us nearly into the release of 'The Love Songs' album - and this involved plenty of travelling. For example, in September I was in Berlin...The Lottery Show and VH1, back in England...I was also finding time to go to quite a number of the Formula 1 Grand Prix! On the 22nd of September, I was in London and I did a little solo concert, in beautiful surroundings, to a lot of top people, like Richard Branson, who were supporting a thing called The Crocus Trust, which I spoke about in the previous newsletter. Its aim is to raise awareness of bowel cancer - which kills more people than any other cancer, except for lung cancer, and it's also extremely avoidable. At least half the people who die from it each year could easily be detected if they would pay a bit more attention to what they eat - which involves having a high fibre diet - and not be so stupid about contacting doctors if they've got any problems. Also, doctors aren't that great, either, about spotting the difficulties that people have. So, the Crocus Trust was started by Lynne Faulds-Wood, a television presenter, who discovered that she had bowel cancer and, I think, has fought it successfully. I enjoyed doing that concert which was followed, later in that week, by the Ryder Cup in Spain. The Europeans won it, it was incredibly exciting and fantastic to be there. Having said that, it wasn't as exciting as one of the two Ryder Cups I've been to before in England, but it was notable for the European win - and the dreadful rain. The rain in Spain follows mainly in Marbella! Appalling weather; the worst for many, many years. Anyway, the competition went on and it was great fun to be involved with that. 'The Love Songs' album was released on Monday, 29th of September, and subsequently I did more radio promo...oh, and I did a signing session in Harrods. It was lovely to see so many friendly faces in Harrods - please put this in, because they'll all be reading this! It was great to have my picture taken with so many people; some real, regular people who turn up at the most extraordinary events - not only the concerts, but also hanging around outside in the bitter cold after TV shows that I do, like morning TV programmes such as GMTV. So...radio promotion...I went to Zurich, did the Gerry Kelly Show in Northern Ireland...ASCAP Awards dinner. Oh, yes; Lady In Red was, again, one of the Top 20 most played records on American radio, and I got another award - I believe it's the sixth time I've had one - at the ASCAP dinner. That was fun; Lady In Red just keeps on going on and on and on. Later on that week I was in Portugal for two days, and then I did a dinner gala - a huge dinner with, I think, a thousand people there - in aid of UNESCO, Save The Children. That was in Germany, and the night raised 3 million Deutsch Mark, I think - which is in the region of £1 million. A huge amount of money raised. I was the guest of honour there and did a concert which went down really well. I enjoyed that a lot, actually. The next week I was in Holland...I was all over the place..."

I've got your itinerary here in front of me, in case I needed to prompt you, and we're now moving through November last year...

CHRIS: "Scooting through November at a hell of a rate. I did Talking Telephone Numbers in the UK on November 17. Meanwhile, I was going to rugby matches - like Ireland versus New Zealand when, unfortunately, the Irish were predictably thrashed by the excellent All Blacks. I've got four regular seats at Lansdowne Road and I take my two boys and a friend to the rugby matches, which is great fun. Then I was in Potsdam, Germany, later in November. Yeah...on Wednesday the 3rd of December I got a call from Kenny Thomson in Canada to say that Glenn (Morrow) was very seriously ill. So I rang Glenn that night, the 3rd, and the poor guy was in great pain, but he was still able to have a laugh and ask me how I was, how things were going; always had an interest in me and what I was up to. I talked to him, I suppose, for the best part of an hour that night. Jeff and Kenny had also gone up to see him at this time and, I think, at that point, he stopped fighting... I mean, the guy had fought this cancer amazingly courageously for eight years - when the life expectancy with this particular cancer is about two years. He put himself through all the chemotherapy...and he had an absolutely appalling time. We were marvelling at his courage and his strength but, I think, when his two friends turned up on that Wednesday, and they spent the day and most of the evening with him, I think he said his time had come - and he died early in the morning of the 5th of December. I couldn't, unfortunately, get over for the funeral but I've put together an occasion - which is something that I've always wanted to do - for sometime in May; all the remaining members of the band will get together in Canada, we'll drink lots of beer, watch lots of funny videos that I shot on the road all those years...and cry a lot and talk about Glenn. That's going to be coming up next month. I lost a very good friend in Glenn; I'd known him since 1976. So...on Tuesday the 9th of December I did a Children In Crisis concert in the London Arena. Cliff Richard was one of the people singing there, and I performed there for the Duchess of York - it was her charity. The event also featured the world's biggest choir; it numbered an astounding amount of children - three thousand, I think it was. Then I went to Warsaw, to do some major TV shows. That was good fun, and then I went and supported the Jose Carreras gala, in aid of cancer. Jose had leukaemia, and this was a big, big TV show at which I sang and then, subsequently, went to Birmingham as a guest of Jasper Carrott on his Christmas special. That brings us up to Christmas time. I don't actually have any more notes of what I did, but I went away with my family to Mauritius, for the third year, and I did a concert with the local band there, The Rising Sun Band, again. It was in a big marquee and was a great success. It was a wonderful, relaxing holiday. Which brings

us, smartly, into 1998, which we celebrated with a firework display on the beach in Mauritius - four hours in front of everybody else. So, the New Year...nothing much happening here...Ireland versus Scotland!...Oh, I've been doing quite a few trips into the UK, supporting 'The Love Songs'. The first single from that album in the UK was 'So Beautiful' and it did very well; I wouldn't say it was a hit, but it got loads of airplay. BBC Radio 2 has been incredibly supportive and that station is now, I believe, the biggest radio station in the UK. A lot of people listen to that. All over the world, the album has continued to do well. It's just one of those albums. In fact, it was kind of re-released - or given another shove - in February, on Valentines Day. Also in February, I went to see my favourite football team, Liverpool, playing. I took my two sons, Michael and Hubie, to see the Blackburn Rovers game - and the people down at Liverpool Football Club looked after us so well. They were brilliant. It's a very family orientated club. We arrived there around lunch time, and they gave us lunch. Then they took the boys onto the pitch, before anybody came into the ground, and we stood in the goalmouth of the famous pitch of Anfield, had our photos taken in the players' dressing room - and then with the players when they finally arrived: Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman. They couldn't have been nicer, those lads. They were absolutely marvellous. Smashing people. And the chairman and chief executive of Liverpool Football Club really looked after us. We saw the match and, after, the boys were given Robbie Fowler's shirt and Patrick Berger's shirt - and they were also given the two footballs that were used during the match itself. They were absolutely so proud of that. That was fantastic. A few weeks later, we went to see another Liverpool match, this time against Everton - and I'm hoping to get to another couple of matches at Liverpool before the end of the season. So...what next? Oh, yeah; I did a private concert in a beautiful big house - actually very close to where I'll be living, in a place called Enniskerry. It was just a private gala, and the reason I did it was that I gave the fee to a local charity, but it was an interesting evening because Eddie Jordan came up and played the drums at the end of the concert. That was great. Oh, yes - Dermot Morgan. Dermot Morgan died on Saturday the 28th of February. I'd known Dermot Morgan for 20 years. I was a huge fan of his, and a huge friend of his; we often used to go out drinking and for meals. I tried to help him last year - I organised an entire tour for him around the UK - and I was going to get him to open up for my open air shows, but he wanted to really concentrate on his writing, rather than his performing. I thought Father Ted was the funniest thing I've ever seen, and when we were on tour in Europe the year before, he sent me the second series before it was transmitted. We already had the first series, and that was all we watched again and again and again on these long, tedious bus journeys. I introduced several English friends to this extraordinary place called Craggy Island and Father Ted. They just thought it was the most bizarre, weird, spacey, incredibly funny TV series. I was so thrilled for Dermot because when he won the television Comedy Actor of The Year award - I had been out that night but when I heard the news - I was jumping up and down. It was about two o'clock in the morning, I wrote out a fax, sent it and, to my amazement, he answered the phone. He was at home with his partner, Fiona. I said 'Dermot - why are you home so early? You should be out there, celebrating.' And he said 'D'you know, it hasn't sunk in yet. I haven't had a drink all night - I don't know what to say. I've dreamed of this moment and, now it's come, I'm just completely confused. It hasn't sunk in.' I was just so happy for the guy and then... Ironically, he was just moving on to new things, after the last series of Father Ted... I went to both of his funerals, which sounds rather strange, but he would have seen the joke; I went to the one in London, and then he had one in Dublin at which Fiona, his girlfriend and the mother of their three-year-old son, asked me to sing. I stood in the cathedral there, with my hand on the coffin, and sang 'Here Is Your Paradise.' And then we buried him. I loved the guy to bits. He was actually in my house just before Christmas. We had a Christmas party, and the children were mad for him. The little ones, they adored him! And he was great; he went downstairs and chatted to the kiddies - who just looked at him and were absolutely awe-struck that this was Father Ted. I was very, very sad about Dermot's death. Still am. There you go; life..."

Well, that must bring us pretty much up to date...

CHRIS: "Almost. At the end of March I went to Disneyland Paris with the family, our second visit, and we came back absolutely exhausted. I never wanted to go on Great Thunder Mountain, Space Mountain or any of those rides ever again! But we were very fortunate in that we had a guide who took us to the front of queues everywhere - and it was just overkill. One minute you'd be doing Space Mountain, and then the next you'd walk on to another ride. It was just too much; there was no standing about, getting over the ride just before. It was just 'Where would you like to go next?' and the kids would say 'There!' or 'There!' Oh, my goodness, I got home ab-so-lute-ly knackered! I won't go back there again for some time. But it was fantastic, and they looked after us so well and were so generous. OK, I then went to the Wales versus Ireland rugby match - which we lost - and I was back in London again supporting the Crocus Trust in WH Smith last week. And I was in Germany, getting an award - the Lifetime Achievement Award - in Mannheim, the night before last. I was very pleased to receive that, and also sang a few songs."

OK. You've now covered everything on my list that I wanted to speak to you about - apart from one very nosy query - which you may choose to ignore; I know, from when we last spoke, that you were having a house built. What's the latest on that?

CHRIS: "I don't think I'll be moving in for at least a year. It's a huge project and, currently, it looks like a Scud missile has hit the place; everything, all the outhouses, have been demolished. There's a huge demolition job going on there at the moment. The main house...half of it has gone, the roof is just about to be replaced. I believe that I'm in a fortunate position to be able to make this house a water-tight and waterproof place to live that's in great condition for, hopefully, the next 200 years. I don't want my great-grandchildren cursing me for doing half a job. It's going to be a really smashing place to live in the future, but it's going to be a year before anyone can live there. Speaking of the future, when it comes to songwriting, I've always waited for, as it were, the muse to come to me - and, I would say, for the last three months, the muse has been dancing around on my head quite a bit. So I've started writing some new material. The last two albums have, I suppose, been fairly soft - you know 'Beautiful Dreams' and 'The Love Songs' - and I'm not saying I'm ignoring that side of it, but I definitely want to go back to the excitement, again, of 'Don't Pay The Ferryman' and 'Spanish Train' - those kind of songs. That's sort of where I'm heading for right now. In terms of when a new album might materialise, I would say we're looking towards 1999, at this rate. It's just that I'm unbelievably busy - as you've unfortunately found to your cost! Like, for example, I can easily spend two days in the company of architects and engineers - and get nothing else done at all. Just this house project, which is massive."

Finally, and looking forward again, any thoughts of this year's series of summer shows - in particular the one at Althorp?

CHRIS: "Yes. That's on June 27 and, I think, 12 artists will be performing at it. There was a lot of media fuss about the ticket price for that concert - and talk about a controversy generated about absolutely nothing. I actually went on quite a few things, Radio 5 and TV shows, and talked about it. I was asked about it, and said 'Well, fortunately, most of the controversy has passed me by because I live in Ireland, away from this kind of stuff.' But to say that £39.50 is too much for this concert is absolutely absurd. Firstly, it's for charity and, secondly, if people want to pay that sort of money, they'll pay it. Nobody is forcing them to. If it had been £100 a

ticket then, obviously, it would have excluded a lot of people - but it's for charity! And if people wanted to pay £100, so be it. If it's £5, so be it. It's completely up to the organisers - in fact, it's completely up to Earl Spencer - what price to choose, and I think he chose a very good price. When you consider that, I think, the Elton John/Billy Joel ticket is £37, or £35, Jose Carreras is £50, the concert supporting Monserrat last year was, I think, £80...do you see the point? The controversy over the Althorp ticket price is absolute garbage, total rubbish, and I had pleasure debunking those who would criticise it. Anything to do with Princess Diana, and the controversy rages. Anyhow, you're getting 12 artists - of whom at least three or four, I reckon, could sell out the venue on their own, anyway. It's going to be somewhere between two and five songs per performer, and I think it's going to be a very emotional time. I pray for good weather, as always on these outdoor shows, and I'm really looking forward to it enormously. Plus, of course, I'll be doing my own shows in the summer. It's a slightly different format this time; I'm beefing up the band section more than last year. I like to create a bit more excitement. I know I was doing a lot of solo stuff - which I will still do a fair amount of - but, also, I'm going to start integrating individual band members. My old friend Phil Palmer is going to be playing the guitar - he's a stunning guitar player - Peter (Oxendale) will be on the keyboards, and some other friends on bass and drums and stuff. I will be incorporating them a lot more into the earlier part of the show, as well as having them creating excitement, along with the orchestra, in the second half. So I think it's going to be more...I wouldn't say energetic, but it will be all the elements that people loved from the other concerts - plus a little bit extra for me. I look forward to seeing everyone there."

So, in short, you're keeping busy?

CHRIS: "Oh, yeah. This coming week, for example, I'm in the UK again on Tuesday and Wednesday. I'm in Germany again on Thursday and Friday. I come back Saturday and then, hopefully, have a break for Easter. I'm just one of these people who likes to keep myself occupied. In fact, somebody said to me recently 'Why are you doing this? Why don't you just build your swimming pool in the country - and retire?' And I said 'Well, I just always feel that I have this gift to sing - and I should use it, for as long as people want to hear it...'"

PERSON TO PERSON

For the benefit of any new club members, this section puts **you** in the interviewer's chair...

As a fan of high-powered cars like Porsche, Ferrari and BMW, what is your favourite car or cars? (Lyndon Campbell, Leeds).

CHRIS: "Well...I tend to drive BMWs. I have a 7 Series, a 740, and a slightly older 850. Also, I'm hoping to get a 5 Series in the next few months. I've never had one of those before. I'm a big fan of driving, and of BMWs, but I suppose, in my dreams, I'd love to have an Aston Martin DB7. There's quite a few of them available, but they're horrifically expensive in Ireland because, although we're a member of the EU, they've held out for some special status - and, because of that, I think it's 49% that you can add on to the price of a car if you buy it here in Ireland."

Which song do you feel gets the audience responding to it the most? (Jason Horne, Liverpool).

CHRIS: "The only answer I can give to that question is that it depends when in the show you're doing it. For example, you couldn't start off a show by doing High On Emotion; you've got to get people's enthusiasm working first. There are various points during a concert where I would hope you are raising people's energy to a different level. I would certainly say that High On Emotion would be one of them that, at the end of a concert, really gets people up and at it. And, of course, Lady In Red always gets a response. But moving back to the earlier part of a show, something like even Sailing Away, a gentle song, kind of starts people's feet sort of tapping along. It's a series of milestones within the show itself that, hopefully, things begin to happen at."

Do you think you will always live in Ireland? (Rita Jasper, Sweden).

CHRIS: "At present, certainly in the short term, the answer is yes. There is a family home down in Argentina, where perhaps I will return to."

If you were marooned on a desert island, which two items would you like to take with you? (Vicky Bell, South Africa).

CHRIS: "Hmmm. Well, obviously a piano. Does a woman count as an item?! I'd say female company and a nice piano."

During your tour of South Africa during 1996, I know that several of your concerts were taped - including some at unique venues, such as the show in the game reserve. Will some kind of a video be released of any of this? (Warren Morton, South Africa).

CHRIS: "We filmed the show we did in the game reserve and, I believe, it was then transmitted on South African television. I'm not yet sure whether this will be released as a video, but I have a funny feeling it will be. I'm not certain about the answer to that..."

Are there still plans to release all of your videos on one tape, and do you still plan to do a short documentary/drama. If so, can you please give us some more information? (Allan Campbell, Scotland).

CHRIS: "As of now, I haven't heard anything about such a video release but, for me, I'd love to see all of the ones that I've filmed, because they go back quite a long way. It would be great to see me getting younger and younger! As for the short documentary/drama, these kind of things do come up from time to time. We're often in receipt of proposals, at the office, to do that kind of short documentary project - either about something specific, or about the music in general. So it's an on-going thing, and I think we'll be seeing a few of them coming up, hopefully this year. Watch this space!"

Which book is currently 'beside your bed'? (Dean Schindler, England).

CHRIS: "Oh, it's called Floodtide. It's a thriller by a guy called Clive Cussler, and it features his amazing hero called Dirk Pitt. It's a great fun. A soothing kind of thing I read before I go to sleep."

Are you a happy man? (Elin Aasen, Norway).

CHRIS: "Yeah! And, in fact, I very rarely get depressed. I'm very balanced in that respect. Indeed, I only realise that I've been a bit low after I've come out of it. If I feel slightly below par, maybe I've got an illness lurking or something; that would be my first thought, not that I was depressed. I wouldn't say that I go through life jumping up and down and kicking my feet together, mind you, but I am a realist. I suppose I'm a realistic pessimist - with a lot of optimism thrown in, for good measure."

Have you any idea how long you're going to write music and sing for? (Georgie Kendall, USA).

CHRIS: "The answer is...maybe there's two answers to this. The first is that I believe, having

spent the best part of 25 years learning how to write songs and perform them, I won't lose that skill and that I'll carry on doing it for as long as it makes sense to do it. What I mean by that is, if you spend a year on a project and, at the end of the day, really there's only a few thousand people interested in what you've done, then it's pointless having done it, to be perfectly honest. We have to be pragmatic about this. The other answer concerns the desire to do this; the desire to write and having something to write about. You go through phases; you either have absolutely nothing going on in your head or, suddenly, you get all sorts of ideas. I think the answer is that, yes, I probably will carry on writing."

In this technological age, how do you get on with computers? (Ann Wootton, Essex).

CHRIS: "I'm actually quite friendly with computers. They're extremely useful tools. I'm not, however, a person that likes to sit down for hours on end scanning the Internet. I often find that I can get information far quicker by going to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, instead of having to turn on my machine and trawl through all sorts of stuff. The Internet is fun, and it is a critically important thing to have information technology at your fingertips - and it definitely will be over the next few years - but I certainly also believe that people shouldn't forget that we are flesh and blood and human beings, as well, and we can't necessarily survive by staring at a TV screen."

What kind of music does Rosanna like. Is she a fan of any boy group - and what does she think about your music? (Susanne Hahlein, Germany).

CHRIS: "She likes my music, and she does listen to a lot of...well, you can ask her the question yourself. Let me see if she's close by. Hold on..." **ROSANNA:** "I like some boy groups - Backstreet Boys are good - and I do like my Dad's music, although it is a bit old for me!" (At which point Chris can be heard shouting "Hey!" in the background). **CHRIS:** "Rosanna's current favourite is the theme song to Titanic, by Celine Dion. That's a gorgeous song. She likes Celine Dion, but she's not a mad fan of the current sort of techno-pop. She prefers melody."

Do you like dancing? (Caroline Shorter, Australia).

CHRIS: "Yeah, I love dancing. I don't get to do it very often, mind you, but I like it. I think I have a decent movement in my body. Can I actually do any of the classic ballroom dances? No, I can't." **So, you're the same as most men; you can dance in a circle, very slowly.**

CHRIS: "Yes, that's what goes on. Although I can do the Charleston. Really!"

Do you or your wife or your children sometimes, or often, listen to your own CDs - and does it give you a special feeling to do so? (Jean-Marie Le Dru, France).

CHRIS: "When I'm driving along in my car, I have a CD player that holds six CDs - and I always have whatever my most recent record is among them. It's there just to check; when I'm listening to the radio, I'll check the sound, how the songs stand up and all that sort of stuff. Basically, it's part of the business. I don't often listen to it and, certainly, at home we don't put on my music."

You narrated 'Beauty And The Beast' on radio in the UK on Boxing Day. How did this narration materialise, and do you plan anything similar in the future? (Chris Williams, Essex).

CHRIS: "It materialised from the radio station Classic FM. I'd been down there in November of last year, and I think somebody there liked the sound of my voice and thought that it would be a good idea to get me to narrate Beauty And The Beast. I absolutely *adored* doing it. It was something completely different. I was a little scared at first - because I didn't want to make a real mess of it - but, in the event, I heard it...and even the kids think it's great. They love the way that I speak and narrate the story, because they're used to me telling them stories, and I'd love to do some more of it, if asked."

I read in a recent German newspaper article that you have a golden retriever dog called Scooter. Do this mean that you now have another dog, apart from Millie? (Chris Williams).

CHRIS: "Well, as we know, everybody can believe everything they read in the papers!... The thing is, I was down on a beach, at a place called Sandy Cove, having a photo shoot - and this golden retriever wandered up out of absolutely nowhere, I've no idea whose dog it was or even the name - I think they even made up the name - and the photographer said 'Oh, great! Stand there with the dog.' So, we took a few shots with the dog...and that's who the dog was; I have no idea who the dog was!"

Have you any plans to come and play concerts in France? (Sonia Kourda, France).

CHRIS: "I used to have such a big fanbase in France... That is not the case now, for a number of reasons - primarily because of the way that the French government started squeezing out foreign acts on radio in the mid-'80s. That caused difficulties. But I love France; I love the French, I love their wines and food, I speak French fluently. So, the answer is yes, I'd *love* to go and play France. It's just a question of timing, a question of when and where."

Which type of concert do you prefer; the outdoor picnic style, or indoor venues? (Toni Jehan, Essex).

CHRIS: "I like *big* indoor shows, places that can hold a lot of people - like the 10-14,000-seater arenas, such as the Westfalenhalle in Germany. That can hold up to 18,000 people indoors, so that's really exciting. With these sort of concerts, you can actually hear and feel the applause. With the outdoor shows, you can't really feel the applause because it dies away very quickly. What I like about the outdoor shows is the fact that you are breathing fresh air - which is obviously far more energising - and you can see all of those people, away in the distance, with all the little candles, lights and picnics. So, as you know, we're going to do six more of those this summer. And I do like those a lot, actually - particularly when the weather is good."

Who is, or are, your greatest critics? (Ellen Dichte, Germany).

CHRIS: "I would say that...hmm...my close friends and family would be the people I would listen to with most clarity, because they'd know me and the background to the music. That's one side to it. The other side would be people like Kenny and Peter Oxendale - musicians that I've worked with. Those people I give a lot of credibility to, along with people who are familiar with my style of songwriting. And, of course, I listen to my band and musicians that I'm close to. The people who I utterly ignore are the so-called critics who set themselves up as music critics. I don't pay any attention whatsoever to them - because the general public, at the end of the day, are the ones who make up their minds whether they like something or not."

Having said all of that, if you were asking for opinions from friends, family and musicians, and you had already decided that the song or music in question was just right, only to be told that nobody else liked what you had done - which way would the vote then go?

CHRIS: "Well, the best way to tell if you've got a good song or not is to stand out in front of thousands of people that you've never met before, with one instrument, and sing it. And you know in your gut *immediately* whether it's working or not. And that, for me, is the rule of thumb."

What do you think of the Irish band Picture House? (Ellen Dichte).

CHRIS: "I have never heard of them!..."

What is the most embarrassing question you could be asked? (Ellen Dichte).

CHRIS: "You mean apart from the question I've just been asked?! Well, I'm not a big fan of questions on a personal basis, because it's nobody's business except mine."

Have you ever had a supernatural experience, and do you believe that we have more than one life - even though you've packed plenty into your present one? (Mandy, Derby).

CHRIS: "Yes, I feel I have had several supernatural experiences. Hard to define. I suppose in a way they're kind of...private. But what I can say is that I am quite convinced that we are all part of a complete pool of energy that may, or may not, lead on to a future life or a past life. But I think that the energy that humans - and all living things have - comes from one massive energy source that we may all call God, or the universe or whatever."

If any of your children decided that they would like to pursue a career in music and follow in your footsteps, would you try and change their minds? (Ellen Dichte).

CHRIS: "No. I'd look very carefully at what talent they had, and I'd look very carefully at the current playing field of music; whether it was suitable to their style - be that classical side or the modern side - and just generally consider how the business is at the time that they want to enter it. If it looks all green light, I would encourage them and say 'Go for it.'"

After the tragic death of Glenn Morrow, will you ever play with your old band again? (Rob Dondy, Warwickshire).

CHRIS: "Well, the answer is yes, I would like to. The difficulty is that all of the other lads have gone off to create their own private lives and business but, that said, I think there is room for a reunion concert, or concerts, because I love those guys to bits. I'm sure there will be an opportunity - hopefully in the near future - that we can all get together and do that."

Remember: If you have a question to ask Chris, then send it along to the fan club address, marked 'Person To Person'. As you have just read, the purpose of this regular feature in the Gazette is for the club to put your questions - however weird, wonderful or just plain inquisitive they might be - direct to Chris, on your behalf, each time we conduct an interview with him. Space allowing, we'll print as many of his replies as possible. This is **your** opportunity to interview C de Be - so use it!

THE C de B HOTLINE

Due to a recent office move and events beyond our control, the Chris de Burgh Hotline - as advertised on your club membership card - is no longer in operation. Callers will have noted the infrequency with which new messages were recorded on line over recent years, and while we apologise for this, it's indicative of the problems we were experiencing with the service. However, our Premium Rate 'C De B Hotline' is still very much at your disposal - although, at present, it can only be accessed if you are living in the UK, unfortunately. Calls are charged at the rate of **50p per minute at all times** (please ask permission from the person paying the phone bill before making your call), but we are able to up-date this service as and when necessary. Be aware that new messages are only ever be left when relevant - and the date of each recording is always announced in the first few seconds of a call, to enable callers who have already heard it to hang up immediately, should they choose. The number to call is:

0891 334 255

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME...

Once again, that brings another Gazette to a close. In the next edition - which we will most certainly endeavour to ensure is not delayed as seriously as this one! - we'll be speaking to Chris again about his busy schedule (including his views on the forthcoming summer shows) and catching up on any progress with his next studio album.

So, until the next time, don't forget to send any comments, criticisms or questions for Person To Person to me, Mike, at: The New Chris De Burgh Club, P.O. Box 276, London, E2 7BW. Incidentally, this is also the address to which you should send any requests for Pen Pals; the club does advertise pen pal addresses, should anyone be seeking correspondents, world-wide. Naturally, you already have one major interest in common - C de B - so if the idea of writing to people of a similar mind appeals to you, then send us your name, address and age (if you wish). However, please make sure you write your details **clearly** and in **BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS**, so we can understand what you've written. The plan is to print a new list of pen pals in the next Gazette.

Finally, and as ever, many thanks for your support...and patience!

PS: You should already have received notification from us of Chris's summer shows but, for the record, details are:

August 8 - Blickling Hall, Norfolk; August 22 - Somerley, Hampshire; August 29 - Penshurst Place, Kent; August 30 - Harewood House, West Yorkshire; August 31 - Knowsley Hall, Liverpool. Tickets for all shows cost **£25 (plus booking fee)** and, with the exception of the Knowsley Hall show, can be obtained by calling the **Ticketmaster** 24-hour credit card hotline on: **0541 505415**. To obtain tickets for Knowsley Hall, call: **0151 709 3789**.

In addition, just prior to going to press with this magazine, Chris's manager Kenny called to give us the following German tour dates:

July 21 - Bad Segeberg, Freilichtbuhne; July 23 - Singen, Hohentweil Schloss; July 24 - Kunzelsau; July 25 - Muhlendorf/Inn, Antenne Bayern; July 26 - Bonn, Museumsmeile; July 28 - Rostock, Stadthalle; July 29 - Dresden, Elbuffer; July 31 - Halle/Saale, Gerry Weber Stadion; August 1 - Halle/Salle, Peissnitzbuhne; August 2 - Halle/Werzenberg, Waldbuhne.