

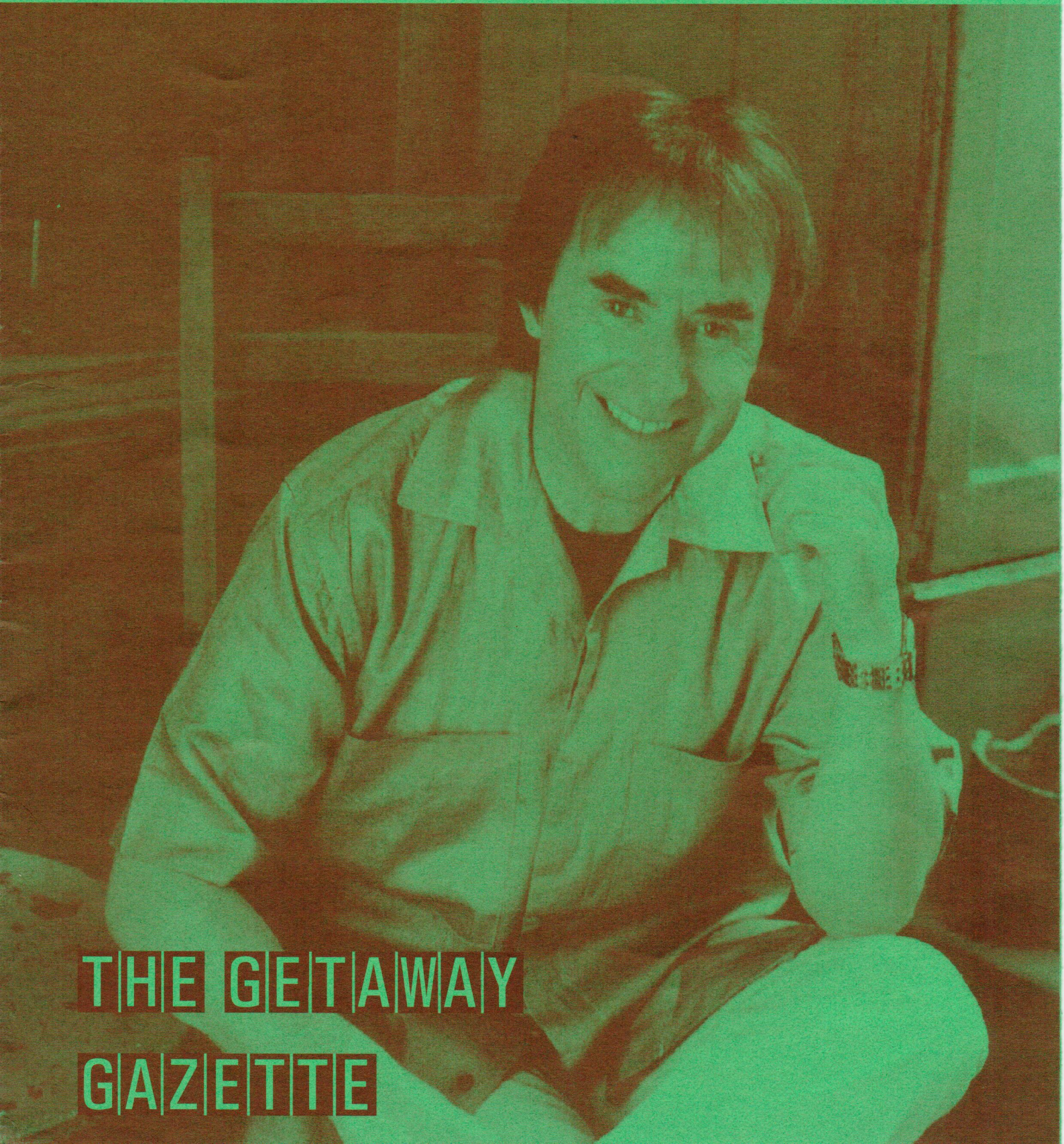
THE NEW

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CLUB

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THE GETAWAY

GAZETTE

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of The Getaway Gazette.

As has all too frequently been the case in the last couple of years, this edition has taken its time in reaching you and, indeed, is actually our first newsletter of the year. By way of a small gesture to acknowledge your patience and goodwill, we have enclosed a copy of the souvenir brochure which was produced and sold during Chris's UK summer shows this year. Many of you may already have a copy, many of you will not but, either way, please accept the programme with our compliments. Beyond that, and in the circumstances, it would be improper not to apologise for the club's poor service lately – while also pointing out that there has been at least one very valid reason for part of the delay in bringing this newsletter to you. Chris lost his father earlier in the year and, as you will surely understand, the club did not feel even remotely inclined to bother him for an interview for some considerable time after his sad loss.

Simply put, the months then quickly rolled on from that point, always finding Chris either out of the UK or, when he was around, busy with one particular project or other – about which you will be able to read in a moment.

Clearly, finding the appropriate time was crucial in putting this newsletter together, and it arrived in early October when C de B called to ask "Is now a good time to talk?" This is what he had to say...

CHRIS: "It is a long time since we last spoke for a newsletter... As I recall, I had mentioned in the previous one that I was then just about to go off to Beirut, so we'll pick things up from there. The trip to Beirut was outstanding. Not only because of the warmth of the reception that we got there with the band, but also because of the changes I saw since the last time we were there – which was in the autumn of 1993. The city has come on enormously. It used to be known as 'the Paris of the south' and it really is a beautiful place. It has *extraordinarily* beautiful women of all ages – not that I was looking, of course! – and the people in general couldn't have been more charming. We did a concert at a racecourse, just outside the city, and there were a lot of people there. They looked after us extremely well and, to be honest, I can't wait to go back. Lebanon and Beirut are frequently in the news, for all sorts of different reasons, but I was certainly treated with extreme kindness and hospitality. The band and I *loved* it.

"In October (of 2000), I was invited to go to New York to pick up the award – which I mentioned in the previous newsletter – from the American-Irish Chamber of Commerce. They get together annually at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel and, in the past, the organisation has been supported by Bill Clinton and, in fact, he sent a message of support. Basically, the top businessmen of the American-Irish community got together and they handed out three awards to people who had contributed significantly to American-Irish relationships, down the years. Significantly, the awards are virtually always awarded to business people. For example, the year before, the former Chairman of Aer Lingus, (the late) Bernie Carrell, went over to New York from Ireland to collect his award. So I was really surprised and thrilled to have been selected to receive this honour. They asked would I do a couple of songs on the night, so I got up and...had the place rocking. It was enormous fun. They said 'Oh, it would be really great to have you back next year', but that won't be happening because I'm too busy.

"That brings me to the UK tour, 2000 – and the whole thing was great; really enjoyed that. Highlights, again, were the Albert Hall show and, of course, playing in Manchester – the day after Liverpool had beaten Manchester United at Old Trafford, in Manchester. I managed to get a few barbed comments in about that... Anyway, the whole UK tour was great and then we finished the year with our traditional sunshine holiday. Once again, we went to Mauritius – and returned home to the snow. It's quite something lying on the beach on January 1st, reading the news of all the horrible weather back home. I just feel that we're very fortunate to be able to go to such a beautiful place, and it does kind of break up the miserable winter months. I must say, I'm never particularly a person who enjoys the winter months. Our ancestral urges are to hibernate in the dark during the winter and to basically close down. I know a lot of people are beginning to recognise that they, to a greater or lesser extent, suffer from SAD Syndrome - Seasonal Affective Disorder – where they just feel kind of low and miserable. When there's not enough sunlight, that's what can happen. There are ways of allaying this, however. Apart from a winter holiday, sufferers can get a light box with ultra-violet as well as normal light in it. People who suffer

severely from SAD have to sit in front of the light box, or near it, for something like four to six hours a day – possibly longer – just to stop their melatonin causing problems to their depression. SAD is a recognised problem. Anyway, I am not affected to that extent, thank goodness, but sometimes I do think 'God, I wish this winter would finish.' So, I got back from Mauritius, and one of the first things I did was a little private solo concert I had been asked to do at the Liverpool Football Club's football party. For the first year, they invited all of the players and their wives, and it was just...*a real* thrill for me. Everybody was up and dancing and yelling and clapping. To see my own heroes, the Liverpool football team, doing that was marvellous. Of course, Liverpool then went on to win the Worthington Cup, the FA Cup, the UEFA Cup, the Charity Shield and the World Club Championships out in Monte Carlo. To see them dancing to what I was doing was quite something for me. After that, I went to Winchester and spent a time working with Chris Porter on the planning of my track, my duet with Shelley Nelson, '*Two Sides (To Every Story)*'. Chris and I did that and a few other bits and pieces for the '*Notes From Planet Earth*' album.

"Just flicking through the diary here...Worthington Cup Final - it all seems to be football matches! Ah, yes; Charles Spencer – Princess Diana's brother – came over to Ireland, and I showed him around the property I am working on in Wicklow, where I've yet to move! He was extremely impressed and he did say at one point 'Why did anybody ever need more than eight bedrooms?' Pretty funny, that, because he grew up at Althorp, where there must be thousands of bedrooms. He a charming guy. I like him very much. As always, I've been involved in a lot of charity work throughout the year...also, I've been doing quite a lot of travelling to Europe to do interviews and television appearances. In addition, I have done some of my solo shows, which I always enjoy. I'm very fortunate because I can do solo concerts, concerts with a string quartet – or an orchestra, or a band. So I'm fairly flexible to do all of that sort of stuff. OK...I was in and out of Germany, too, during the first few months of the year. In between trips away from home and as always, I like to keep fit. Every day of the week, every morning, I walk either with my wife or some friends up at least two good, strong hills. That'll really puff you out! I think, particularly as you get older, you've really got to keep the cardiovascular system going. Also, I recently splashed out on a very indulgent thing – which is a chair that massages you. And it's not just a little bit of a massage, it's a fantastic thing that, when people sit on it and get out of it 15 minutes later, their whole face is just drained off stress. It's a marvellous thing late at night. Keeps the muscles toned.

"So, back to the diary...again, we've got lots of Liverpool matches here that I either went to or watched...oh, yeah; I did a fair amount of promotion – we're coming into March here – for '*Notes From Planet Earth*' – in Europe and in England. Returning to football, I took my kids, my two sons, to the academy at Liverpool where they train up young footballers, from the age of three to ten. They find little fellas and they kick balls around. We met Steve Heighway, who runs the academy, and he showed us around. They've got eight amazing football pitches down there and, of course, watching these youngsters and the elder boys and seeing the number of kids who want to be footballers...you couldn't help but think about the very, very small number of them who actually ever make it to the top echelon. Just about every kid wants to be playing football in the Premier League. This hasn't got a lot to do with music, I'm afraid, but it's got a lot to do with leisure time..."

That's OK. At this stage of your career, you have time to do things unrelated to music, if that is your wish. I've no doubt that people are just as interested to read about that.

CHRIS: "Sure – but at this time, don't forget, I *was* doing a lot of promotional work for '*Notes From Planet Earth*', which came out shortly afterwards. On the 22nd of March my father died. It was one of those bizarre coincidences where I was actually at his bedside when it happened. I had heard that he'd been in hospital and that they'd said he could come out to be looked after at a nursing home for a couple of days – possibly before being allowed to go back home again. So, I went to see him, and my mum, on the 22nd of March. When I got down there, my mother called me up and said 'Come quickly to the nursing home; your father is going into decline. Something is happening...' So I got there, around about 1 o'clock, and by 3 o'clock he'd died. I was there, right by the bedside. I could have been anywhere in the world, but I was there. It was meant to be. Anybody who has lost either or both of their parents will know what a big shock it is. You go through an awful lot of memories... A lot of people from the fan club wrote to me and supported me, and I'm very grateful for that. I'd like to take this opportunity to say thanks

to them. You only get one dad and one mum, and that's the end of it...

"My father died on a Thursday and, the following Saturday, I was supposed to be doing *'Ready, Steady, Cook!'* – you know; the television programme? I was ready to do it but, my father having died, I just didn't feel up to it. It was the last programme in the series, so I'm hoping to do it at some time in the future instead. Back to the diary...Liverpool beat Manchester United *again!*...television shows...oh, yeah – I went and took a skiing holiday. The last time I had been skiing was when I was seven, and I hurt my leg. I decided that skiing wasn't for me. But everybody, all of my kids included, had kept saying to me 'Oh, you've got to go.' Anyway, we tried it and, much to my amazement, I soon – even without any lessons – found myself flying down the slopes. I got some private lessons but, after three days, I didn't feel I really needed any more. The great thing about skiing is that you can go at whatever speed you want; you can go slow, fast, medium – you're the boss, you're in control. You don't *have* to go at the speed of anybody else if you don't want to. So I thoroughly enjoyed it. I had one slight accident on a ski lift, though, which snapped two fingers on my right hand. We set off and my hand was gripping the rail when the lift suddenly plunged, flipping both my fingers back. It nearly tore them off. They were very sore. These are fingers I play the piano with and use to strum my guitar; I was really quite worried. It took a few weeks for the fingers to recover. I always sit at a piano or with a guitar and write, although I don't make much note of it in my diary...

"I did something extremely unusual in May; I had been asked to go to a place, a chateau, a little way from Bordeaux, where songwriters from all over the world would get together and spend five or six days working with each other. The chateau is owned by Miles Copeland - who used to manage The Police, and still manages Sting, I believe – and it's very baroque, a very beautiful place. It's got little rooms, and big rooms, all over the place. Miles Copeland's idea was to get people together there to write songs. Then you have three recording studios, quality studios, which have been installed there – all with good engineers. The idea was to get together with two other people, at half-past nine in the morning, and then write, complete and record a song by six o'clock in the evening. It's a tall order... The first day I was put together with a guy called John Berry, whose very well known in the country and western field, and Carole King, who is one of the great songwriters. We wrote a nice song together. We did the same thing – same task – for the next three days. I must admit, I had mixed feelings about this because, when you have skilled songwriters together, you will always write a song – whether it's a *great* song or just an ordinary song remains to be seen. It led me to a distinct feeling and opinion about songwriting which is, really, that there's no mystery to it. If I can draw a comparison - it's like being able to make a really beautiful chair; anybody can bang together four legs and something to sit on, but as you get better and as you develop a craft, you start to build more skillful things. Songwriting is actually very similar, in my opinion. *Anybody* can write a good song with enough time and devotion and practice. At the same time, there is also a reason why so many of these younger songwriters so often fail to hit that mark; I really believe you have to be a live act to write songs which can connect. You have to know how audiences react, to see the tear in the eye, to witness that physical reaction. I have seen this myself in the past, as have others. We have played hundreds, thousands, of shows all over the world and honed our skills as live performers, while also writing songs to perform – and getting better and better at it. So, the main thing I took back with me from that trip to France was that it's easy to write songs. The hard part is not the actual construction of songs – because you have to use the only chords we have – it's the belief in what you are doing and thinking about. If you haven't got passion and belief, you can have all the technical ability in the world, but your song will still have no emotion behind it. So, when I say writing songs is easy, it's easy if you have access to that passion and emotion which a good song will always require. That's something I word very hard at. That's why things either work...or they don't. In all, a very interesting trip.

"What else? Haven't been playing much golf! The project that I have going in Wicklow, in this big house, has been taking up an enormous amount of my time. Basically, the idea is to create not just a house but a whole...*ethos*, I suppose is the word, of out-buildings and main house which all look as if they could have been there for the last 250 years – but with *totally* modern interiors. Now, the exteriors are all beautiful stone and gorgeous work, while the interiors are all very, very modern in terms of the construction – although the interiors, what with the cornices and architraves and so on, are very Georgian. Very 250 years ago. So, if you grabbed somebody from 250 years ago and transported them to the present day, they would say 'Oh, this is

beautiful! It's just like our time.' Of course, we're thoroughly modern with our electrical and mechanical services. It just takes a hell of a long time."

What's the latest on when you might actually be moving in?

CHRIS: "Well, we don't know yet, to be honest. We just want to wait until the whole place is finished. That's how long it will take before we move in there. I feel it's a very valuable thing that we've done – if nothing else because we're creating a beautiful place for families for generations to come. Not necessarily just my family; I don't want to create a dynasty in the place. I feel that the house is a greater legacy than anything I've ever done in music. You know, it's all very well to put money into a project, but you've got to have vision, energy and imagination. This is why, when you go into a beautiful old house somewhere, somebody has gone through the torture and torment that we've gone through to create it. These things don't come easy. I'm grateful to the people who have left architectural beauties that we can enjoy in later years. So, anyway, that's what I've been up to on the home front. Moving into June...oh, I've been going to the odd Formula One race, and particularly enjoyed the British Grand Prix at Silverstone. On Friday the 15th of June I went to Holland, to a little place called Vollandam. I'm sure you may have had some letters about this and, certainly, there was a lot of interest in the event on the Internet. Talking of the Internet, I will be going on line shortly..."

Beg your pardon?

CHRIS: "I know! Big, big change. I've always said at the end of every day 'Oh – there's another day I haven't needed the Internet.' However, with e-commerce and so many other interesting things to find out about, I am finally going to take the plunge. Also, you can do these virtual tours of lots of places, which is also of interest to me. But I'm not quite sure which connection to go with, yet. As I travel so much, perhaps I'll go with AOL. I've also bought a new computer, too, because I got utterly sick of the PC I had, a Compaq, which crashed *unbelievably* often. I've now gone back to the Apple format I was using previously. I have an Apple G4 with a big, flat screen – and it's amazing resolution; you can watch DVDs and everything. It's beautiful."

It's my belief that e-mail is among the greatest communications inventions of all time...

CHRIS: "Yeah – well nobody is going to get my e-mail address! The thought of getting up in the morning and hearing my computer say 'You have 57 e-mails' does not appeal. Anyway, going back to Vollandam, a little fishing village – which is one of the most picturesque in Holland and is known as a big tourist attraction in the summer. On New Year's Eve in 2000, for the Millennium, there was a big party going on there for youngsters. I think it was for children between the ages of 11 and 18, and it was held above a bar. They'd turned it into a disco and they had all sorts of Christmas decorations and, at the stroke of midnight, they all lit sparklers to welcome in the New Millennium – and one of the sparklers set fire to one of the decorations. Which immediately started a blaze, which caused an inferno – and it hospitalized dozens and dozens of kids. It killed 13. In fact, the fourteenth died quite recently. This was a tragedy of enormous proportions for such a little place. Now, every time I've done a concert in Holland for the last 15 years – starting from when I was in Utrecht...I remember playing to about 1500 people there, and there was just this *crowd* of people in the audience, making so much enthusiastic racket. I thought 'Well, who are they?' And then someone shouted 'We are from Vollandam!' This was 15 years ago, and of the 1500 people at that concert – 1300 of them had come from Vollandam. They had hired buses, mainly because the guy that ran the local record shop had been playing my music – and had turned the whole village on to it. Coming to the concert, the people of Vollandam had got a police escort, all the way down the motorway to the show, and back again. Every time I played Holland from then on, it was 'How are you? Who's here from Vollandam?' And, of course, there'd be great cheers. So when I heard about this tragedy, I offered to do a concert – which I did in their local church. I think there were about 800 to 1000 people there, and it was really one of the highlights of my year. It was not only a beautiful occasion, but a very moving time. I had the opportunity to meet quite a number of the victims – who were appallingly badly burned; faces, hands burned off, fingers... What they must have gone through and the misery that they will suffer for the rest of their lives... So I hope that, for a short time, I brought some comfort, and I was very happy to do that.

"So, moving on. Oh, Highgrove! Oh, that was great. I'd met Prince Charles earlier in the year at a charity event and he had mentioned that he was a fan

of my peculiar type of music – and I had told him of our interest in gardens and beautiful buildings. He said ‘Oh, you must come down to Highgrove.’ Now, don’t forget, the foot and mouth crisis had been raging at this time, and nobody had been going to Highgrove – which is his home – where he has created, over the last 20 years, a world famous garden. Now, many people will think that Prince Charles is a bit of a goof, or whatever similar opinion they might have of him. I do not share that opinion. Certainly, from his ability to paint – which is exceptionally good – it is clear that he is a creative person. As for what he has created in his garden, starting with virtually no knowledge, just enthusiasm, it’s absolutely amazing. Again, it’s all very well to have money, but unless you’ve got the imagination, the vision and the energy, you’re wasting your time. Prince Charles has done something incredible at Highgrove and myself, my wife, my daughter and a friend – who’s really knowledgeable about gardens – we went round there and were just awestruck by the place. We were the first people to go there since the foot and mouth crisis eased off, and the head gardener showed us around. It was a wonderful experience – and I can highly recommend a visit to the shop there, where they sell the most amazing fudge. I am a complete martyr to fudge, as one of my regular correspondents well knows, a lady by the name of Brenda. Fudge Lady Brenda I call her. She knows I love that stuff! Actually, I’m the same weight as I have been for years. In 15 years or so I haven’t really changed weight. I’ve just got to watch that fudge...

“I also did another very interesting thing. I went to Scotland in July, where Jackie Stewart was having some friends for a week on a ship, The Highland Princess. He’d asked me would I come and sing for his wife, who was celebrating a birthday. So, I flew up there in the most *ghastly*, foggy conditions and, somehow – by hook or by crook – got there in a small aircraft. The ship had to divert to come and pick me up, and on board were people like Princess Anne, Sean Connery and his wife, various lords and ladies this and that – and Jackie Stewart, of course. That was an enormous pleasure. I had a great time, and then I went down to Le Manoir Au Quatre Saisons in Oxord and did a charity show there, just before the British Grand Prix. That was for my charity, which I am the President of, The Crocus Trust. The main purpose of the Trust is to bring attention to bowel cancer – and how at least 20,000 people a year can be saved if they’ve spent a bit more time worrying about their bums, and not worrying about what people think about it. I mean, 20,000 preventable cancer deaths – which they are – a year is incredible... The Vice-President of the charity is Sir George Martin, The Beatles’ producer, so he and I have frequent conversations about how to raise awareness of this issue. My Aunt Rosemary died of bowel cancer... A lot of doctors are unaware of the symptoms. People should become more aware.

“Then I did my concerts with my band in the summer, starting off in Liverpool – which was an enormous pleasure. As I said at the time, I feel like an honorary Scouser, almost, because I love the place so much. There was warm applause and six or seven thousand people there in this great big marquee. Then we did Belvoir Castle in Lincolnshire and Ragley Hall in Stratford, which I enjoyed enormously, as well. Finally we played Knebworth, followed by Blickling Hall in Norwich. It was just the five shows we did, mainly because this was the summer I was going to move house. Instead, I went to France. First of all we went to St. Tropez and from that extraordinary place we then went to my brother’s house near Bordeaux – which is very much a do-it-yourself barn that he has worked on, set in the middle of vineyards and fields of corn and maize. You can slop around in anything you want there, which is great. It was lovely, we enjoyed that. You’re wondering about work here, I’m sure... Oh, my album *Notes From Planet Earth* had come out by this time and not done nearly as well as anyone had hoped, but that’s another story. Also, we got good airplay on my duet from the album, *Two Sides (To Every Story)*, which I recorded with the singer Shelley Nelson. She also came along and sang the song, as well as doing some backing vocals, on four of the summer shows. She’s just great. What a great voice, and I know she went down *really* well. Oh, yeah – then I went to Germany, at the end of August, and I did four shows completely solo. Actually, Peter Oxendale played a little piano. Anyway, the shows were outdoors and in unusual venues – old castles, village squares – that held four or five thousand people. For those people that went to them, for me they were really, really spectacular and precious. They were *wonderful* memories and I can’t wait to do them again because it’s so one on one, so intimate. Just the guitar and the piano. Lovely. *Really* enjoyed them. I seem to enjoy what I do, quite a lot. Ha-ha!

“Well, now we’re into September and the current situation is that I’m planning for a European and UK tour next year – more details of which you will find within this newsletter. Also, because of my experience of writing songs, I

just got the desire to write again – and lots of stuff is coming out. In fact, what I might do is just throw a few titles at you so that club members can have a think about what on earth I am on about. Well, for obvious reasons – because of my visit there – here’s one called *‘Lebanese Night’*. Other titles are *‘Through These Eyes’*, *‘She Must Have Known’*, *‘Guilty Secret’* – and another one called *‘If Beds Could Talk’*. Then I have one here called *‘Love And Time’*.”

So you’re quite a long way into the writing process for the next album...

CHRIS: “Oh, I’ve written about ten or 11 songs, but I want to keep going. I want to have some really good ones. I’m not going to record more than 11 songs for the next album, and there’s a number of reasons for that. I think, at this stage, to spend that amount of time in a studio is not the thing to do. On *‘Quiet Revolution’* I put 15 songs on – and that was too many, although I insisted on it because I had the songs written and didn’t want to leave any out. Looking back, I just feel that it was too many songs. So now I will stick at ten or 11. I hope to work with Chris Porter again on the next album. He’s a very nice man and a very good producer. So, that’s the news on the album.

“OK...I think I should take an opportunity to mention what happened in America on the 11th of September. I think this was such a catastrophe, not just for the unfortunate people that died and their families and the tidal wave effect that came from it, but for the fact that it has made all of us, worldwide, incredibly vulnerable. Vulnerable in the sense that somebody bearing a grudge who we have never met, who we know nothing about, can suddenly decide to make us a target just because of the God that we believe in. Suddenly we are ‘legitimate’ targets. What a horrible word; *legitimate*. That means your children and mine are *legitimate* targets because of the God they worship or, maybe, don’t even believe in. I think this has shocked the whole world. It seems to me that it’s all very well to have a global village to go with our mass communications these days, but it’s a bit like being part of a spider’s web; what happens at one end will always reverberate right down through the web to the other end, I believe. Two hundred years ago, you wouldn’t have known about what happened in New York for months – and that is the downside of knowing so much about what’s going on in the world. I personally believe that we see far too much news. We see far too much misery and catastrophe. My children, for example, they couldn’t turn on the television without seeing the images of the aeroplanes smashing into the World Trade Centre – and it’s just horrible. What happened was horrible and it’s just made us think about our position in the world – and I believe it should make people think about how much we must get involved with current events. In that particular occasion, we’re *all* involved, there is no choice. The first thing that happened after the New York incident – and I know that most people will agree with me on this – is that we all rushed home. We all wanted to be in the home unit when the news of New York came in. For the whole of the week afterwards, I was in tears. I felt just...*absolutely shattered* at the end of the week. It was just horrible, particularly when you know so much about aeroplanes – as I do – and when you travel so much, as I do. And I know New York so well. Anyway, we move on...

“I’m hoping to go to Turkey at the end of this month (October) to sing with the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra in a Roman amphitheatre in the south of Turkey – without, I believe, any sound system. So that should be pretty interesting. I’ll have to make sure I sing loud enough! I also have a couple of shows coming up in Germany – one in Frankfurt and a television show in Berlin. I’ve been in Berlin quite recently for a television show, and I had the opportunity to sing at something called the Goldene Henne Awards there. It’s mainly aimed at the eastern part of Germany, but it covers everything – sport, music, world affairs. Receiving the political award was Mikhail Gorbachov – who was presented with it by the former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. I was the big sort of international star of the night, and I got a chance to sing for these two guys and their entourage – and meet them after the performance. Mikhail Gorbachov changed history, so I was thrilled to meet him.

“Looking forward to later on in the year, I’m performing in Luxembourg and Basle on the 10th and the 11th of November – and then I’m into ‘Night Of The Proms’. Now, ‘Night Of The Proms’ has been going for, I think, nine years and it’s *hugely* successful. It’s about a two-and-a-half-hour show, in two halves, and it features a big orchestra, playing classical popular hits, and then there are three or four key named acts – including Meatloaf and myself. And here’s the extraordinary thing; we only get to sing three songs each! Now, I’ve been offered the chance to do ‘Night Of The Proms’ in the past,

and I've said 'Three songs? I sing for three *hours* a night! I can't just sing three songs.' But I've managed to work out that, during the day – prior to the performances at night – I can do a lot of writing. We're in Rotterdam for two weeks and then we travel around Germany and Switzerland, so I can do a lot of writing in that time, and I'll also be doing some recording. So it's actually quite a good opportunity to really focus on the next album – as well as having the chance to do something unusual like this. I'm always trying to do unusual things. I did *Art On Ice* a while back with the ice skaters, and now I'm going to do 'Night Of The Proms'. I believe it's going to be a lot of fun."

I've actually been to a couple of previous 'Night Of The Proms' concerts, out in Belgium, and – I have to tell you – it's jaw-droppingly, hair-raisingly wonderful. I spent each performance with my mouth wide open. It is just...fabulous. The mix of classical, the orchestra...the audiences are so up for it. They will be selling tickets for next year's 'Night Of The Proms' shows right now, without even knowing who will be appearing on them.

CHRIS: "That's right. Well, I think I am doing 24 shows – and each one must be to at least 8,000 people. Now, you see, I have always been a person who is aware of promotion, because you don't get anywhere near the top – and you certainly don't stay anywhere near the top – unless you constantly work at it. So it occurred to me that it would be a very good idea to perform for so many people – 24 x six or eight thousand is a *lot* of people – and, I would say, a large number of them would never have come to one of my shows before. So there is a bit of thinking behind the decision to do 'Night Of The Proms', as well. It *does* eat into my family time and it does eat into the pre-Christmas run-up, where I will be missing choir performances, school plays – stuff that I always like to get to – but, on the other hand, I do believe that it is important to do this. Even after being in the business for 27 years, I remain familiar with the objective, which is to stay doing what I love to do. After 'Night Of The Proms', I'm going to head off for another sunshine holiday, which will be well deserved, I can tell you!"

I think that you, your music and your kind of performance is made for the 'Night Of The Proms' stage. You will knock the audiences for six...

CHRIS: "Let's hope so. OK, that's about as far as I go in terms of this year and then, next year, we'll be recording a new album. I've decided what I want to do with the album – and the first place I'll announce it will be here, in this newsletter. This is going to be a 'Beagles' album; a combination between The Beatles and The Eagles. OK? Beagles! What I mean by that is, when The Beatles and The Eagles made albums – particularly The Beatles in the early records where they didn't have much equipment – they simply went into the studio and did it. If they only had eight tracks to record on, they used eight tracks. Nowadays, if you have 48 tracks in a studio, people use 48 tracks. I think that's ridiculous. So I want to make it simple, with lots and lots of backing vocals – really *smooth* backing vocals, almost like The Beach Boys or The Eagles – but with very punchy, melodic, rhythmic songs. Catchy songs. *That's* what I'm after. I'm not after a big, major statement. I think '*Quiet Revolution*' was, in my opinion, a really great record and a great statement – but you can't keep coming up with this sort of thing every time. I'm pleased so far with what I've got, though. A track like '*If Beds Could Talk*' is just wild, as you can imagine! It's not a slow song. It's a crazy dance song. So, that's what I'm planning for next year."

PERSON TO PERSON

For the benefit of any newer club members, we should explain that 'Person To Person' is *your* chance to interview Chris by sending your questions for him in to the fan club. Remember, if you have a query for Chris – whether concerning his music, career or personal life, and regardless of how trivial the enquiry – then send it along to the fan club P.O. Box address, marking your letter 'Person To Person'. The purpose of this feature is for the fan club to ask Chris for answers to your questions, no matter how weird, wonderful or just plain nosey they might be – so USE IT! Here are Chris's latest responses:

You have written a song for your daughter, Rosanna ('For Rosanna' on 'Into The Light') and for Hubie ('Just A Word Away' on 'Flying Colours'), but have you ever written anything for your third child, Michael? (Elizabeth Boddens Hosang, The Netherlands).

CHRIS: "Yes. I wrote a song called '*The Son And The Father*' which was on the album '*This Way Up*'."

The last video you made that we were able to buy was 'Beautiful Dreams' are you planning to release another video in the near future? (Caroline & Michelle Hardwick, Gloucester).

CHRIS: "Not in the near future, because we haven't really filmed anything. However, it's possible that the performance I'm planning to do in Turkey with the orchestra, that may be filmed for a video. Not sure. I think people have to recognise the fact that making videos to the quality that I want is a *very* expensive business. You've got to make absolutely certain you can cover your costs before you even delve into it."

Have you ever written, or do you write, any poetry? (Toni Jehan, Essex).

CHRIS: "You know, I *used* to write poetry but then I found it more rewarding to ally words with music, because melodic notes can have a very big emotional punch. Allying them to good words is very challenging. I'll draw a comparison or, at least, I'll draw your attention to a song I wrote called '*Borderline*'; there's a line goes 'I watched a bunch of soldiers heading for the war.' There's a very unusual word in that. The word 'bunch' is not a nice word, but it's meant that way because, with the melody behind it, it's like the person saying that line is ignoring the soldiers, and dismissing them as a 'bunch', because he's got his own problems. He's heading for the border to meet his girl, and so referring to the soldiers as a bunch is almost like a throwaway thing – but with the melody, it works really well. So, it sounds wrong when you just say it, and even write it, but with a melody it comes to life. Putting the right words to the right melody is a big challenge."

What's your favourite movie – and the last film which impressed you? (Anna Timor, Russia).

CHRIS: "My favourite movie of all time, which I have got on video *and* DVD, is '*2001 – A Space Odyssey*' – which, even now, never fails to amaze, impress and excite me. I think that, for something which was made 30 years ago, it's *absolutely* amazing. An absolutely incredible film. More recently, a film I saw just a few months back – which I *loved* – was '*Sixth Sense*'. It made my hair stand up, although it's not a horror movie. And it wasn't until the end that I went 'Oh, my God! I missed it completely. I've got to see it again.' So I bought that on DVD as well."

What is your favourite soap opera? (Elizabeth Smith).

CHRIS: "I don't have one. Not interested. I'm too busy during the day, or in the evening, to actually be able to sit down and say 'Oh, look – it's 6.30pm, got to watch this or that.' However, I was part of the plot of '*Eastenders*' a few months back. Some girl was crazy about Chris de Burgh, and they were making all sorts of jokes about her; 'Oh, she keeps playing him so loudly, we can't get to sleep!...' I didn't watch it, mind, but I heard about it."

Being the storyteller you are, have you ever thought of making an album covering one theme only? (Beatrix & Maarten Ouwkerk, Holland).

CHRIS: "The answer is 'No' but, in fact, on this next album I am planning – assuming it passes the quality test – three songs, which all look at the same thing. It's not like one of my '*Revolution*' or '*The Leader, The Vision, What About Me?*' sort of trilogies. It's about something that I have just noticed happening an awful lot around me – which is people splitting up. It's a reality, and it's very sad. So I have three songs, and I must do this in order for you. The first song is '*Love And Time*'. It's about a guy who works all the time, ignores his partner and just stays out, working, working, working and making all the money – and he's thinking he's doing her a favour, making all of this money. Actually, what she wants *isn't* all the money. She wants *him* and love and time. So we have a dissatisfied woman at home. Maybe she's not at home – maybe she has a job of her own – but her relationship is falling apart. The next song is called '*She Must Have Known*' which is about a woman who is unhappy at home and goes out to party, sees a guy across a room and realises, instantaneously, this is the man for her, for the rest of her life. There's just something about him. It's like destiny point; whatever is waiting, it will happen. The third song is '*Guilty Secret*', which is the story of the man she meets at the party. It's about what happened when *he* saw her – and the fact that he knows she's married and that they're both living with this guilty secret. They're trying not to be found out, but they know they're made for each other. So it sounds like I actually put all three songs together, but I didn't; it's completely accidental. I *have* been thinking about the theme, so I then thought 'Well, what if I put these three songs together?' I think it'll work quite well. That's the long answer to that question."

What rare and collectable recordings of yours exist, worldwide, that you are aware of? (Steve Bennett, Oxon).

CHRIS: "Well, I would obviously have to say any of the recordings which have been limited, by law, to 100 or less CDs. The moment you manufacture more than 100, you get into a complete minefield where you have to go to certain offices for mechanical royalty statements, and so on. I'm not an expert at it, but I know it's very involved. Of my recordings that fit into that category, there are two. One would be the Princess Diana song – the original *'There's A New Star Up In Heaven Tonight'* – which I know is now on an American album. However, the original recording, with the original cover...I actually have quite a few left. I'm wondering if I could...maybe you could put into your newsletter 'would people be interested in having one and, in return, making a donation to a charity of my choice?' Of the 100 of these records which existed, I've only given away about 30. So there's about 70 left – and they're all numbered and signed. The sleeve has a picture of the place where Princess Diana was buried, the little island, and it's just covered in flowers. So, I think that record in particular would be the holy grail in terms of my rare and collectable recordings."

Now, in the excitement of hearing about Chris's offer, I completely forgot to ask him about the *second* of the two rare recordings – but I will pick the subject up again at another time. Meanwhile, if you would like to acquire one of the very few remaining copies of *'There's A New Star Up In Heaven Tonight'*, then here's what you will need to do... As Chris explained, all proceeds from purchases of the single by fan club members will go directly to a **charity of his choice** and, as such and in keeping with this worthy intent, we are setting a reserve price of **£100** per record – and inviting bids from that point. In other words, the minimum price anyone can pay for a copy of this ultra-rare record will be **£100** – and the higher the donation to charity, the more likely you will be to secure a copy. Copies of the CD will be distributed on a 'highest bid' basis; the biggest donations will get a record first, and then we will work back down to the reserve price of **£100**. Hope that's clear.

Chris's chosen charity is The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and you should make your payments, in UK£ sterling **ONLY**, please out to: The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. Send your order and request into: C de B Rare CD, P.O. Box 102, Stanmore, Middlesex, HA7 2PY, England. Finally, please note that the closing date for bids will be **December 15, 2001**.

PEN PALS

OK, we realise that it has been an entire year (gulp!) between issues of the Gazette and, consequently, requests from members to have their Pen Pal details published in the newsletter have not exactly been flooding in. In fact, we have just the one name to bring you right now:

Mahmoud Eslami, P.O. Box 4365, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (Aged 32).

If you would like to be included in a future list of Pen Pals, then please write your name and address **CLEARLY** and in **BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS** – specifying your age only if you wish – and send them in to the fan club P.O. Box. However, if we can't understand your writing, we obviously won't be able to pass your information on. Finally, just a brief note to point out that Pen Pals is an **international** service. We'd like to put as many people from as many different countries as possible in touch with one another as we can – and don't forget that you already have one major shared interest; a love of Chris de Burgh and his music. So, get writing!...

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME...

That's it for another issue of the Gazette but, before we go, we must inform you of the details of Chris's European Tour, 2002! Tickets for all of the dates listed went on sale on **Saturday, November 10**, via venues and all of the usual outlets. The European tour will be followed by a 12-date UK Tour – details of which you should have already received from the club by now, along with information about how you can purchase your tickets before anyone else.

September 26 - Dortmund Westfalenhalle.
September 27 - Grefrath Eissporthalle.
September 28 - Cologne Kolnarena.
September 30 - Kiel Ostseehalle.
October 1 - Magdeburg Bordelandhalle.
October 2 - Nurnberg Arena.
October 4 - Regensburg Donauarena.
October 5 - Stuttgart Schleyerhalle.
October 6 - Zurich Hallenstadion.
October 8 - Bamberg Stadthalle.
October 10 - Wurzburg Carl-Diem-Halle.
October 11 - Erfurt Messehalle.
October 12 - Gottingen Lokhalle.
October 14 - Berlin ICC.
October 17 - Munich Olympiahalle.
October 18 - Frankfurt Festhalle.
October 19 - Hamburg Sporthalle.
October 22 - Hannover Stadionsporthalle.
October 23 - Bremen Stadthalle.
October 24 - Minden Kampahalle.
October 26 - Oberhausen Arena.
October 27 - Rotterdam Ahoy.

Finally, make a note that the *next* edition of the Gazette will **not be published until next year**. However, when it arrives it will feature more exclusive conversation with Chris about his progress with the new album and, as ever, details from his diary. We will also bring you more **'Person To Person'** answers – so, please, do send some questions for us to ask Chris!

Until the next time, don't forget to call **The C de B Hotline** to keep in touch with what Chris is up to during those frequently lengthy (!) gaps between newsletters. Remember that the telephone number to call was **CHANGED** some time ago to:

090 63 63 33 40

NB: Calls cost 60p a minute at all times. Please ask permission of the person paying the phone bill before making a call. This service can only be accessed if you are living in the UK.

The reason for switching to this new number is purely because it allows us to up-date the phonenumber remotely, via an automated 'prompt' system, whereas the previous number could only be changed if a human being (remember *them?*) was available to actually record a message using a reel to reel tape recorder (remember *them?*). In all other respects, **The C de B Hotline** remains exactly as before and, as such, is only up-dated when required – with each message always announcing the date of recording in the first few seconds of the call, to allow you to hang up immediately if you have already heard it.

So, until the next time, don't forget to send any comments, criticisms, Pen Pal addresses or Person To Person questions to me, Mike, at the **NEW** fan club address:

**THE NEW CHRIS DE BURGH CLUB
P.O. BOX 102
STANMORE
MIDDLESEX, HA7 2PY, ENGLAND**

As always, many thanks for your continued support and legendary patience.

PS: If you are on-line, or have access to the Internet via any means, do check out Chris's OFFICIAL website at: www.cdeb.com