

Hello again to all you de Burgh devotees and welcome once more to the untold delights of The Getaway which, as you'd expect, is brimming with information, intimacy and interest. Since you last heard from Chris, Man On The Line has blossomed into his biggest British hit to date, while High On Emotion soared up the singles chart. Both records shot to number one in Germany, and did great things elsewhere in Europe. The album reached Top 20 in ten European Countries and the single reached No 1 Canada and Top 50 U.S.A.

BACK ON THE ROAD AGAIN

As you'll be aware, Chris has just embarked on another major tour, and has recently completed a rave Canadian leg — which saw him introducing his latest, greatest and most costliest stage show ever. The spectacular set has run up a bill of around £50,000! Currently, Chris is going down a storm in America — and he'll be heading for British shores shortly. European dates will follow. He's looking forward to playing them. "I really can't wait to get over there," he says. "I'll be bold enough to predict that my performances will certainly be worth watching for!" The tour has taken some mammoth organising, with venues and dates continually altering — so we apologise to those of you who have written in requesting any up-to-date information. We haven't been able to supply it, because up-to-date has quickly become out-of-date! However, now that the C de B Club is firmly established, we'll be able to provide special offers on concert tickets for Chris' next tour and preferential treatment to club members.

In the meantime, there's a competition on the back page of The Gazette to win V.I.P. tickets to meet Chris backstage for refreshments during the tour. Unfortunately, again, we've only been able to arrange this at two gigs; Wembley Arena, on October 19, and Frankfurt on December 10. The hectic tour schedule hasn't allowed for further encounters. Perhaps a few words from Chris on the subject of being on the road will help to explain why . . .

FROM START TO STARDOM

"The thing about touring is that, as the heat increases, regrettably you are unable to play the more out of the way venues, the smaller places. People who hear that might say 'Oh, Chris de Burgh used to with his guitar — but he's become such a big shot now that he has to play all these big halls.' But when things grow, and you're supporting a large amount of people, it becomes purely a matter of economics to do bigger venues. It's nuts to pay attention to those considerations although my interest is strictly on the creative side.

"In Britain for instance, we've been unable to arrange to play at all the remoter places — which disturbs me a lot because we get an enormous amount of letters from English fans. That's actually the key factor about all this which has made me think that there is definitely something with the music business. You see, half my volume of mail comes from England, and half from Germany — which is crazy on the face of it; why? Balance-wise, there's a huge difference; I sell ten times the amount of records in Germany than I sell in England — yet I get the same amount of mail from both countries. One of the problems about Britain is that people haven't come to terms with the fact that I am a stadium artist now. "It's like when I played in Canada on the last tour. There was this curious situation where I was playing 12,000 seat halls right across the country yet in one area where I wasn't very big — Vancouver — I was suddenly playing a 2,000 seater. The moment I started making moves to play a bigger venue, people were saying 'He can't do that! The guy's a theatre artist.' It's the

same thing in England — but you have to change. “A lot of people wrote to us last time saying that they hadn’t found out any information about my previous tour until the dates were either sold out or over. Again, this tells me that there’s a vast silent majority who are not being catered for by the music industry and who are rudely ignored — yet, occasionally, they show their faces. One of the chief reasons for setting up the C de B Club has been to take steps to avoid people missing out. In future, through the club, I’ll make every effort to ensure that people DO know exactly what is going on and when.”

Last time around, we promised you a retrospective recollection, in Chris’ own words, about how it all began for him. So, here goes!

CHRIS HOLDS COURT

“I was brought up in various countries of the world, and wound up eventually living in this old castle in Ireland. In the summertime, we used to have it as a family hotel and I’d entertain the guests — who’d be from all over the world — with my guitar in the living room. So before I even stepped on to a concert stage, I’d already played hundreds and hundreds of performances on a kind of domestic level. It was then that I went to university, and got a degree in French and English. At that stage, obviously, I was very interested in music — but I didn’t think of it at all as a career. I left university — and suddenly realised that I had to get a job! So I began singing around the place, because I realised that I could earn just pin money by doing it. You know hamburger restaurant, hair-dressing shop — I played here and there. I also did a few performances with a band in a concert hall and really enjoyed that. Then I started singing my own songs, people encouraged me, and I decided to come to London. For two years, nothing really happened, but I then got a publishing deal. The publishers supported me and they took my tapes to A&M Records — which brings me to the key point in all of this; that it is the song that actually does the business. It doesn’t matter what you look like, whether you’ve got an image or whatever. The song is the key. Today, we have machines — drum machines and synthesisers — that are able to make you sound like you can write a song, but when you strip it all away, you actually have to listen to the song itself. That’s what I discovered then, and that’s what I still believe in now. It’s what I think, actually got me signed to A&M in the first place. My attitude towards all this convinced A&M, I believe, that I was a long-term prospect. That’s the way I’ve always approached it, certainly. Being with the same record company for so long means that I have had the ability to forge a career — dashing from one label to another, which makes for very unstable ground. I know where I am, and A&M never interfere with the record-making process — they just leave me to get on with it, which is great. In some ways, however, if I’d been with a record company that had insisted on getting its money back really quickly, it would have meant a lot of commercial pushes.

COMMERCIALISM VERSUS CONSCIENCE

“Some artists have their tracks decided for them — I think that’s appalling! I would never have lived with that. I would have just told the record company, erm . . . ‘Go away!’, or changed labels. But A&M is a specialty label where they do allow their artists, in the main, to do what they want — within reason. It’s up to me to decide the commerciality of what I do, and to attempt to de-liminate the amount of success I want by the kind of material and how I record it — within reason. Then, if the record company feels that it’s not really enough to cover their expenses, they would encourage an artist to try something a bit more commercial. “I have never really thought about doing anything else but what I’m doing. It’s funny. Although going into music wasn’t even ever that much of a conscious decision, I just

found that I could do it. And then it was like the dawn slowly rising; I suddenly realised that, not only was I doing what I wanted to — expressing myself, I was also making a living out of it. I find myself psychologically well balanced through all of this because song-writing is a form of therapy to me. Every time I get upset or unhappy about something — I write a song about it. It's wonderful. It's obviously very satisfying being successful though, sure, there were black moments when I never thought I was going to come out of the shadows. But I definitely did! Fans have been, and remain, very important to me because, in the early days, if I got one letter from a fan — then it was a justification for carrying on. Today, if I get a thousand, or ten thousand, it simply represents a stronger justification to continue — because you are bringing hope into people's lives, and I think that's about the best one human being can do for another."

SONGWRITING — A CELEBRATION

We thought it would be interesting, not to mention revealing, to find out from Chris how he approaches the songwriting process — what inspires him, what motivates him. As you'd expect, he has the words to describe . . .

"To write songs, for me, is not exactly a positive thing — it's more a natural thing. It's a form of expression almost as natural as breathing — especially when it concerns things that upset, or which I would like people to look at in a slightly different light. But I'm not a kind of teacher, by any means, not do I attempt to be didactic. It's just nice to stir people's imaginations. I think the celebration of the human condition is one of the most tantalising things about a success. An instance of that is Torvill and Dean, the ice-skaters. The reason why they're so extraordinary is that you can actually watch these two human beings pushing the limits of human ability to unbelievable edges. It just makes you feel great to be human, to see people do things like that. It's the same thing with someone who's extremely gifted or talented in some way or other — that they are doing something in a way which has never been done before by anybody. You just think 'My God, I wish I could have said or done that!' I don't refer to myself in that way but, for me, it is an impulse to stand back and do that. It makes me want to write and fire people's thoughts and imagination.

LISTEN — AND YOU WILL HEAR

" Even when I do a concert, it's a celebration of one's ability to communicate — and I suppose that's what I do on the record, too. Not with every song, that would be impossible, but I would say on each album I've made there's been about three key pieces which do that for me. I'm often told that I have a very personal appeal to the listener, and have songs which seem to click in people's hearts and minds. Quite often, it surprises me when I have that sort of powerful effect — but sometimes I understand it more. Like with *Borderline*, a track on my last album. It has become a big favourite for a lot of people, but it's very obscure; there's nothing really happening. It's just a series of ideas. But when you grasp the essential core of it, you suddenly realise what it's all about. It's like an anti-war thing. If I can transfer the movie that I see when I write a song to the listener, then it's like a sudden awakening to them; 'Wow!, THAT'S what it's about.' It's that joy. When I get that off music, when I suddenly see, it's like a door is revealed and opened. It's very exciting indeed, and I think people find that a lot with me — which is very gratifying. My lyrics and music can take a bit of penetration at times, but I think it is satisfying when you go into it.

“Again, it’s been said that my lyrics could often be read almost as poetry, especially on the ‘story tale’ songs, but I haven’t made a conscious effort to make things that way. I think I’d make a lousy poet!, the discipline of poetry is completely different. However, when I was at Marlborough, my old school, I studied poetry a lot and like it. What I try and do is match the marriage of the word to the music. Quite often, you’ll get a word that, with a particular melody or sentence, doesn’t work at all — but if you just change one inflection on the word it suddenly becomes whole; the marriage is complete. Frequently, when I write, I mumble — it drives Diane absolutely bonkers! You see, I have the headphones on, the drum machine going and all the stuff coming through the headphones — but the only thing you can actually hear is me, mumbling! The reason I mumble is just to see if the sound of a word fits. Suddenly, you get that right sound and it gives you the key to the entire song. Just one word can do that. It frequently happens, but if I decided what the word was going to be before I started, it wouldn’t work, things just wouldn’t meld. So, when you take the words away from the music, the fact that they often read poetically is a bonus, I think. At least it is for me, and it’s not deliberate. When I write it usually involves several key things — of which I’m so aware now it’s like a game I’m playing with my sub-conscious. The first thing is that I have to be mentally relaxed — but searching nonetheless. Secondly, I have to be playing an instrument, quite often it’s the sound of a chord that will suddenly trigger something off. It’s almost like a computer going through the scan process and saying ‘Identify this source of music. What is it?’ Questions are always being asked in my head as I play away — and I genuinely don’t know what’s going to pop out as a result!”

Well, that’s just about it for now — and we hope that the gazette has helped you to reach a better understanding of Chris, the man behind the music. In our next newsletter, we’ll be talking to Chris about the tour, his plans for the future and catching up on the latest news. In the meantime, you might like to invest in Chris de Burgh — The Video, a 68 minute epic which takes a thrilling, candid look at Chris’ career and life. The cassette contains some great footage of Chris on tour, on location — and in interview. It’s available, priced £19.99, from A&M Sound Production, 136-140 New King’s Road, London, SW6 4LZ.

Right, it’s the aforementioned competition time. If you want a chance to enjoy a private audience with Chris, simply answer the following three remarkably easy questions:

- 1) Who produced At The End Of A Perfect Day?
- 2) What is Chris resting on his knee on the back cover of Crusader?
- 3) Who played saxophone on Eastern Wind?

Send your answers to Mike, Competition, 478 Fulham Road, SW6 1BY — to reach us no later than October 10 (for Wembley), or October 25 (for Frankfurt). Specify which venue you’d like to meet Chris at (of the two ear-marked) and the first 20 correct entries, ten at each concert, will find themselves face to face!

Thanks for all your response to the first edition of the Gazette, and if you have any ideas about what you’d like to see in the future newsletters — or criticisms of those already gone — please write to Mike at the above address and let us know.

But, before we go, we’ll be manning a Chris de Burgh Official C de B Club stand in the foyer of some of Chris’ tour dates — we don’t know which ones yet. Why not give a wave and a smile if you see us! We’ll also have back copies of the Gazette on sale for anyone who’s missed out. See you there?