

THE NEW

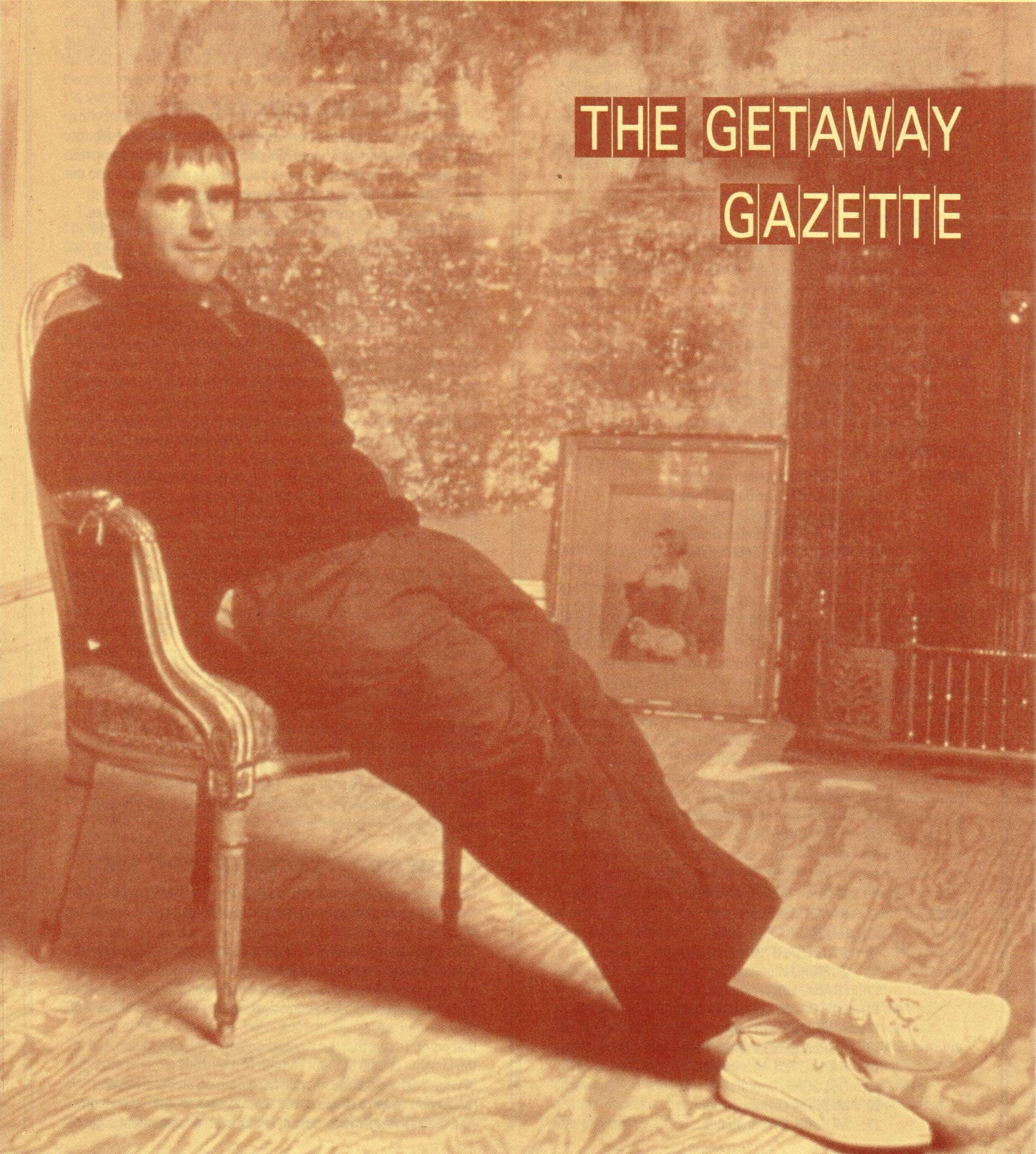
Chris de Burgh

CLUB

P.O. BOX 276 LONDON E2 7BW

JANUARY 1989

THE GETAWAY
GAZETTE



"I must say, I'm extremely optimistic for 1989. I think, particularly in England, my career has really exploded to the point where everybody seems to know me. As for how much bigger all this will get, I'm not bothered about it. I really couldn't care less. And it's because I'm a concert performer and an albums artist – not a singles artist. That gives me the strength. I mean, I can go on TV shows now confident in the knowledge that there are people out there who enjoy watching me, who have the records – and a lot of them have been to the concerts. More than that, most people know how to pronounce my name, *finally*, which is a relief!" Chris de Burgh, January 1989.

Greetings, and welcome to another year of the Getaway Gazette; it's our *sixth* birthday in 1989. Way back when we put together that very first newsletter, Chris had not made the kind of impact which has been his habit of late, and that's really what his above comments are all about; how the times have changed. The steady progress in his career has been the result of consistently producing quality music backed up by solid live performance and – as any who saw him play on the UK leg of his current World Tour last year will already know – the trend continues. It also goes further afield, which is an appropriate way for all of us at the club to announce the latest dates of the tour. The following information is literally hot off the presses – hence the slight delay in this edition of the Gazette reaching you – so, please, do check details with the relevant venues in case of any last-minute changes . . .

CANADIAN LEG:

- FEBRUARY** 21: HALIFAX, Metro Centre.
 22: FREDRICKTON, Aitken University Centre.
 24: QUEBEC, Coliseum.
 25: OTTOWA, Civic Centre.
 27: MONTREAL, Forum.
 28: TORONTO, Maple Leaf Gardens.
- MARCH** 1: HAMILTON, Copps Coliseum.
 2: SUDBURY, Arena.
 5: EDMONTON, Coliseum.
 6: CALGARY, Saddledome.

AUSTRALIAN LEG:

- MARCH** 21: PERTH, Entertainment Centre.
 25: ADELAIDE, The Barton Theatre.
 26: ADELAIDE, The Barton Theatre.
 27: MELBOURNE, Entertainment Centre.
 28: MELBOURNE, Entertainment Centre.
- APRIL** 1: SYDNEY, Entertainment Centre.
 2: SYDNEY, Entertainment Centre.

(N.B. There are plans to play extra shows in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney, but as we went to press, nothing had been finally confirmed. Just be warned! . . .)

EUROPEAN LEG:

- APRIL** 17: COPENHAGEN, Valby Hall.
 18: OSLO, Scedsmohallen.
 19: STOCKHOLM, Solnahallen.
 21: KIEL, Ostseehalle.
 22: KASSELL, Eissporthalle.
 23: MÜNSTER, Münsterlandhalle.
 25: ROTTERDAM.
 26: BRUSSELS.
 27: OLDENBURG, Weser-Ems-Halle.
 30: BERLIN, Deutschlandhalle.
- MAY** 2: HAMBURG, Sporthalle.
 3: HAMBURG, Sporthalle.
 6: STUTTGART, Schleyerhalle.
 9: ZURICH, Hallenstadion.
 12: FRANKFURT, Festhalle.
 14: DORTMUND, Westfalenhalle.
 17: NUREMBERG, Frankenhalle.
 18: NUREMBERG, Frankenhalle.
 19: HANNOVER, Mosschalle.
 22: COLOGNE, Sporthalle.
 26: MUNICH, Olympiahalle.
 27: MUNICH, Olympiahalle.

- JUNE** 2: FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, IBO Messehalle.
 3: MANNHEIM, Eisstadion.
 4: MANNHEIM, Eisstadion.

(NB: As with the Australian leg, there are also plans for extra shows in the following locations; HAMBURG, STUTTGART, ZURICH, FRANKFURT, DORTMUND, HANNOVER, COLOGNE, MUNICH, OFFENBERG, OLDENBERG, BERLIN, LAUSANNE and FRIEDRICHSHAFEN. Again, check with the venue as soon as you can). Incidentally, there will doubtless be various organised coach trips going out to some of the European dates from Britain, and one such operator has been referred to us by Chris' record company. In The Limelight will be taking a party out to the Cologne show on May 22, and anyone interested in details should write to: In The Limelight, 8 George Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2EH, England. We are told that anyone marking their correspondence 'C de B Club Member' will be given priority treatment – but we must stress that the company arranging the trip is NOTHING WHATSOEVER to do with the club, Chris, his management or his record company. We're simply passing the information on . . .

BACK ON THE SUITCASE CIRCUIT . . .

Living out of his luggage is a practice which Chris is well used to by now, and last November found him packing once again to begin his biggest and most extensive tour to date. He has a feeling it's also the best: "The preparations for this tour were very much longer than usual, in fact, and all credit to the band for handling that. You see, I was under such severe pressure doing promotional work and TV all over the place, that I had to say to the boys 'You're going to have to be ready to go on the day I arrive.' What that involved for them was rehearsing for something like six to eight weeks without me, and then I joined them for another two weeks. We rehearsed in Dublin, in a nice place, and the boys stayed over there as well – which was very convenient for me, as it's where I live. As I say, around about that time I was in and out of Europe and England, so there wasn't a lot of time for me to really get to grips with things. And, as I mentioned with the new album, one of the hardest things about putting a tour together is . . . the dreaded running order! The running order of the show is probably the most critical part of an entire concert – as it is with an LP – because if it's in any way wrong, you can totally lose the dynamics of a concert set. It usually takes me maybe ten or even 20 shows to get it right, but I think we got it right on about show number three on the tour, which we kicked off in November in Bournemouth. We have switched the running order of the songs around a bit, but the problem is, because you're working with so many technicians and so much electronic equipment and computers, you can't just suddenly say to the guys 'We're going to switch things round tonight.' I have to tell everyone in advance. For example, the lighting people have to know all the cues – because there are five computers running the lights and, of course, the operators have to run those computers. But I should emphasise that it's not just 'Switch on the computers and switch on the music'; it's definitely a very skillful hands-on situation involved. And, right from the start, the shows were great; everybody was so relaxed. You know, the first weeks of a tour can be a bit hairy, but I've never felt such confidence amongst all the people – all the crew, the band . . . everybody – as I did at the beginning of this tour. There's usually a few nerves at the start, but none whatsoever this time. It was like we'd just picked up where we left off from last time."

THE RIGHT PLACE, THE RIGHT TIME

Much of that confidence had to do with the fact that Flying Colours was such a resounding success on its release, as Chris is the first to admit: "The album came out on October 3 and, to everyone's amazement, it went straight into the number one spot in the UK. That was very exciting, and the record is going extremely well; it's nearing double platinum status in the UK even as we speak – which is nearly 600,000 copies – and the last album took, what, a year and a half to get to that point. To me, that is a vindication not of the new album, but of the fact that people thought enough of me to buy it on the strength of what I'd done before. There'd been nothing on the airwaves; there hadn't been a single out or anything to announce the album. And then Missing You came out. I think everybody thought it got off

to a bit of a slow start – it wasn't leaping up the charts like Lady In Red did. That did no harm, though, it took it's own sweet time and, as we know, it peaked at number three in the UK. I can't remember what was number two, but we had the Coca-Cola song at number one. It was kind of irritating to have to fight that because it was all about advertising – and Coke is advertised all the time.

"However, I'm not one to moan and I thought the second week at number three was even more brilliant because it kept out a whole bunch of top stars, like INXS and so on. More than that, to start the tour with a hit single from a hit album was a real boost for everyone. When you have that kind of situation working for you, it really helps! To be successful in the charts as you go on the road is really something you can plan and hope for – but never guarantee. When it does happen, it obviously comes as a pleasant bonus. We also felt that, finally, there was no longer a question about being a star in England; it was mega. You know, it really was big. As I say, I felt that after all these years, England had succumbed to . . . the de Burgh magic! So, as the show continued we were all feeling better as we went along – and then something weird happened. The shows became longer and longer and longer! By the time we finished the UK leg, I was doing 2 hours and 20 minutes on stage – which is nearly half an hour longer than anything that I'd done on the last tour. As I get older, my stamina appears to be increasing and the shows get longer. By the time I'm 60 I'll be doing a five-hour show . . .

ANY REQUESTS?

For the benefit of those among you who have yet to see Chris in concert this time around, what follows is a brief preview – only *brief*, we don't want to give too much away – of what the show entails. Such is the fact that Chris makes a point of calling out to the audience to ask what songs people would like to hear him sing. For those of you who *have* already seen the Flying Colours Tour, here's some of the fact behind the performance:

"I must say, I've particularly enjoyed taking requests – and I *am* taking requests. If I remember correctly, when we were playing in Dublin I did tend to stick to just doing two or three songs, though. I wanted to get a very good crowd singing reaction (the reason why will shortly be revealed), but it was a different story on the other nights. Then, when people would yell out, 'Broken Wings' or 'In a Country Churchyard' or 'Satin Green Shutters', I would just lay myself wide open – which is why I often forgot the words! I hadn't performed some of those tunes in years and years. So, that is a nice part of the show for me, but I'm really pleased with the whole concert. You know, after the first show we all looked at each other and said 'Christ, this is going to be a monster!' It felt amazing. It looks as if Missing You might well turn out to be an all-time favourite. I think it was a really interesting tune to do; we did it much rockier on stage, which I found very pleasing. When I was recording it, I think I was unaware that it could turn out to be a big hit, and I could possibly have done other things to it but, I mean, the fact that it *was* a hit, well, that's that. I'd say that's going to be a perennial favourite. I'm Not Scared Any More is probably the one that I enjoyed singing most of all from the new album, though. We tried doing Don't Look Back, but we couldn't do all the songs from the new album, basically. I think we've wound up with seven or eight of them. Suddenly Love is another one I wanted to do – we did prepare them all – and, who knows, if there's going to be another show in the UK before this tour is finished, like an outdoor show, or whatever, then possibly we'll try doing a few different ones. Why didn't we do Carry Me? Well, it occupied a space in the show that was filled by other songs.

"Again, it's to do with the trick of putting a running order together, but it is a favourite song of mine. It's just that some songs seem to actually go better on a record than they do live. And Carry Me is such a subtle tune that it sounded ham-fisted when we performed it; it didn't sound as graceful as it should have been. So, having run through it a lot of times with the band, we decided to leave it alone. I was just pleased with the way the show built, though; it climbs steadily all the way up to the top. And that was not an accident."

CHRIS AND THE CRITICS

Many of you have written to the club and to Chris complaining about some of the reviews of the show which have been published in various newspapers. Chris actually made playful references to

the press at several of his concerts, and the message to the journalists is clear . . .

"It means less than nothing to me. Mind you, having said that, I would say that of the 20 or so concerts reviews I read, about 17 were extremely good. The ones in London were not. The Dublin review was great but, the thing is, you can't knock that concert over there; everybody just knows it's a very special concert at which everyone has a great time. It was the London critics, mainly, who were not particularly charitable and, as I said on British TV at the time, I do actually sympathise with their point of view. They don't know me from Adam, except for Missing You and Lady In Red – two slushy, romantic songs – and then they go into this concert hall to find a stunning production in terms of sound, light and music, with everybody going absolutely bonkers . . . and they just can't understand it. They're not familiar with the music. Also, critics do not buy their tickets. They are sent free records. Most of them are failed musicians who wind up being critics not because they are good journalists but because they have come up through music papers like Sounds or Melody Maker. Most of them are absolutely cynical, and most have their firm musical favourites – which tend to be slightly off the wall and left-field. All that said, if they didn't like the show, that's fine. But some of the attacks are very personal, which I resent because it in some way belittles the audience – and that is absolutely wrong. I got a tremendous amount of mail about it, too; people writing me letters saying 'Ignore them, Chris. Don't pay any attention.' People have been saying 'Why bother sending a critic to review a show when he or she is patently going to hate it even before they've stepped through the door and into the hall?' I couldn't agree more. In fact, I sent Christmas cards to critics who have been friendly *and* mean to me, just saying 'Good wishes for the happy New Year', just to show them that I'm aware of these people – and that they touch me not a bit. In fact, that's what really irritates them; the more they throw the hatchet at me, the less the impact has. It just bounces off. The point is, I've always been a diplomatic bloke and I've always had good manners – I've never thought it seemly to bite back – but I think on occasions when it is so glaringly obvious that the critic is going to be nasty . . . well, that's wrong. That is journalistic arrogance. Just utter ignorance. You know, it's the easiest thing in the world to slag someone off. Oh, God, it's easy . . ."

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

As the Gazette has discovered over the years when discussing new material with Chris, he is always – without fail – modestly but confidently guarded about how his records will be received. Indeed, for those of you who didn't hear this on a previous Hotline message, after suggesting in an interview that Lady in Red would be an international hit, he asked for the comment to be struck from the text! Chris was similarly hopeful for Flying Colours, but silently so . . .

"Your're right and . . . well, I'm a realist! Recently, I was asked the question 'Do you think that your career has peaked?'. and I said 'I really don't know.' I had been fairly suspicious, having had such a monster hit with Lady in Red, about what could happen now. I did think 'Well, maybe I *have* peaked. Maybe this will be the far side of the hill.' But it's not looking that way at all as far as record sales and concert attendances are concerned. I have to admit it, though, I was surprised that Missing You was a hit. There was a lot of good songs about at the time, and it was coming up to Christmas too – and that's traditionally the hardest time of the year to take a song up the charts. I'd just like to repeat what I've said in previous editions of the Gazette; I took a bit of a chance on the new album. I made a strong effort for simplicity, and I made sure that the songs stood out as *good* songs. I also didn't want too much drama – as I did, for example, on The Leader – I wanted to make it a very smooth-sounding record. And, as a smooth-sounding record, it's funny but it didn't strike me as a strong album the first time I listened all through to it. Then, when I started listening to individual tracks, I thought 'My God, this has got some terrific songs on it.' Now, the album has really grown – and I think a lot of people have found it to be their favourite of the lot. Which is very strange! So I just want to say thanks for all the support and help. It's going to be a while before I have another new studio album, but there is going to be other stuff to look forward to . . ."

LIVE AT LAST

In particular, Chris is talking about something which he has previously resisted throughout his long career; a live album. Followers of his music have frequently asked when one would be released, and Chris finally thinks that the time is right. Not only that, but the live LP could be out at the same time as another de Burgh album . . .

"I'd say we'll probably play the last show of this tour some time in July or August of this year, and what we're planning to do after that is either release a live album or a Greatest Hits album – or both. We're not sure what we're going to do yet, but we've recorded a whole bunch of the Dublin shows we played last December. We've also filmed one of the nights in Dublin, and the word is the film looks absolutely sensational. So we're going to try and get *that* out, too, as soon as possible, really. It will be for television transmission initially and then, later on, presumably for video. As for the live album, I know I've previously expressed reservations about doing one – largely because of the fear of not capturing properly that live feeling – but, the fact is, we recorded the shows on a 48-track high quality mobile studio. Paul Hardiman, who produced my last two albums, was involved in that recording – and the sounds are very good on to tape. That's what I've always wanted.

"We also recorded in Dublin, as I say, where . . . well, my attitude towards live albums is that the music is actually incidental; the important part is the audience. I mean, if you want to hear the music, listen to the record! To get the atmosphere, the flavour of the gig itself, you've got to have a tremendous amount of audience participation – and Dublin is *the* place for that, really – certainly as far as singing along is concerned. So, we'd like to see a live album come out as soon as possible. Definitely."

FAMILY AFFAIRS

In common with a *lot* of other people, Chris spent his Christmas period with a bout of flu keeping him close company. In fact, the entire de Burgh household was unwell.

"Yes, it was a Christmas time filled with illness, not just for my family; everybody I know got flu or something – and Diane got pneumonia. She had a short stay in hospital because of it, but she's fine now. I got pretty sick with flu actually. In fact, when I did a TV programme called Daytime Live I had a temperature of 103.5 degrees. I got up at 7am that morning, and I was just hallucinating on the way to the airport. I felt that I had to go because I was due to do the programme with 150 kids who had been promised that they would be singing along with me; they'd done days of rehearsal. So I got there, felt absolutely awful all day, got home again and just about collapsed. How do I feel now? I feel really tired actually! My New Year's resolution is eight hours' uninterrupted sleep. Is it going to be possible? Oh, it'll have to be; I'll fall apart otherwise! The kids have also had sickness, but they're fine now. Their illness kept them awake at night, and what with the two of them waking up with one problem or another, it has been hard on myself and Diane. In fact, that's probably the reason why she went to hospital; because she was exhausted from that. So, resuming the tour will be a tonic for us all; I'm taking my family down to Australia – albeit slightly later than originally planned. We were supposed to be there in the middle of February – as opposed to the end of March – but due to a problem which was created, that wasn't possible. It was a record company problem, to be honest, where nobody thought to ask the question 'Where is Chris de Burgh's record in Australia one month after it had been sent there?' The record had been sent over, but it hadn't been received – and nobody was asking 'Where is it?' As a result, it was released so late that it made no sense whatsoever for us to go there at the times originally planned. We were forced to put the shows back to March – and that left a choice of either doing nothing until then, or going to Canada. Well, the album is flying in Canada, and Missing You has been a top five hit right across the country, so it seemed like a good idea. I must admit, I did have reservations about it though; it's a very cold place to tour at that time of the year! Anyway, after Canada and Australia, we've been invited to Tokyo to do a show. That's very exciting because I've never been there. We've also been invited to the Eastern Bloc, and to all sorts of weird places – in the nicest sense – like the Philippines and South America. That kind of thing is unlikely, however; I might lose my taste for

touring. You see, the trouble is, nowadays I look at touring and think 'Well, this could be my last tour . . .'"

PEN PALS

Chris de Burgh followers can be found all over the world, and this section of the Gazette is the place for them to get in touch with one another. Here's the latest selection of willing correspondents . . .

Helen Miller, 147 Campbell Avenue, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1E 2Z7. (Aged 25).

Val Wood, 1 Barford Row, High Street, Coedpoeth, Wrexham, Wales.

Maria Boles, 26 Bianconi Drive, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, Ireland.

Inka Spenner-Ellert, Koenigabergerstr, 12, 2900 Oldenburg, West Germany. (Aged 19).

Debbie Ostermeyer, 7 Kent Drive, Cockfosters, Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN4 OAP, England. (Aged 24).

Tracy J. Taylor, Henry Dixon Hall, Rivenhall End, Witham, Essex, CM8 3HR, England. (Aged 24).

Loel Poor, 21 Topsfield Road, Boxford, MA 01921, USA.

Jessica Brandl, Herbertstr. 2, 1000 Berlin 33, Germany. (Aged 18).

Debbie Elliott, 5 Slidelow Avenue, Bromsgrove, Worcs, England. (Aged 31).

Susanne Pechac, Hauptstrasse 12, 2100 Stetten/KO, Austria. (Aged 22).

Wrling Ulltveit, Trenesk/PBN, Box 7, N-9250 Barou, Norway. (Aged 20).

Rose Rieder, Kochelseestr. 3, 8201 Lauterbach, Germany. (Aged 18.)

Heather Cox, 314 South Park Street, Streator, Illinois, 6136Y, USA. (Aged 16).

That should give you something to get on with, but do keep the addresses coming in – and let's hear from a few males. If you would like your details to be included in future lists, then please write your name and address clearly in BLOCK LETTERS – specifying your age if you wish – and send it to the club address printed at the end of the Gazette. Happy writing . . .

PERSON TO PERSON

Exactly what, asks Val Wood (the Welsh pen pal listed above!) is Person to Person. It's a good question for new members and, at the risk of boring our established ones, I'll explain. Simply, it's a regular feature of the Gazette in which club members get the chance to confront Chris with any questions about himself, his life and his music. Chris refuses to refuse to answer any enquiry in this respect, so if you have any then just send them to person to person at the club address, and we'll publish a witty and wonderful sample in each newsletter. Except this one; the last batch have been lost forever in a recent office move. Humble apologies to all concerned.

WAX LYRICAL

Val also wondered about this section – in which Chris explains the inspiration and the inside story behind the lyrics of the many songs he has written. To date, there are approaching 100 of them – many of which have already been explained in previous editions of the Gazette – but, currently, we seem to have reached a stalemate. There have been repeated requests to know the details of certain particular songs – for example, Don't Pay the Ferryman, Perfect Day and A Spaceman Came Travelling – while a whole *wealth* of material is being overlooked. So, it's over to you . . .

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME

That just about wraps things up for the moment but, in the next edition of the Gazette, we'll have another exclusive interview from Chris conducted on tour at a far-flung corner of the world. Precisely which corner will be revealed in time; not even the man himself knows where it's going to be. In the meantime, please remember to send any Pen Pal address, Person to Person questions or queries for Wax Lyrical – along with any ideas or criticism about the newsletter, the service of the club in general – to me, Mike, at: The New Chris de Burgh Club, P.O. Box 276, London E2 7BW.

So, until next time, keep well and keep happy.