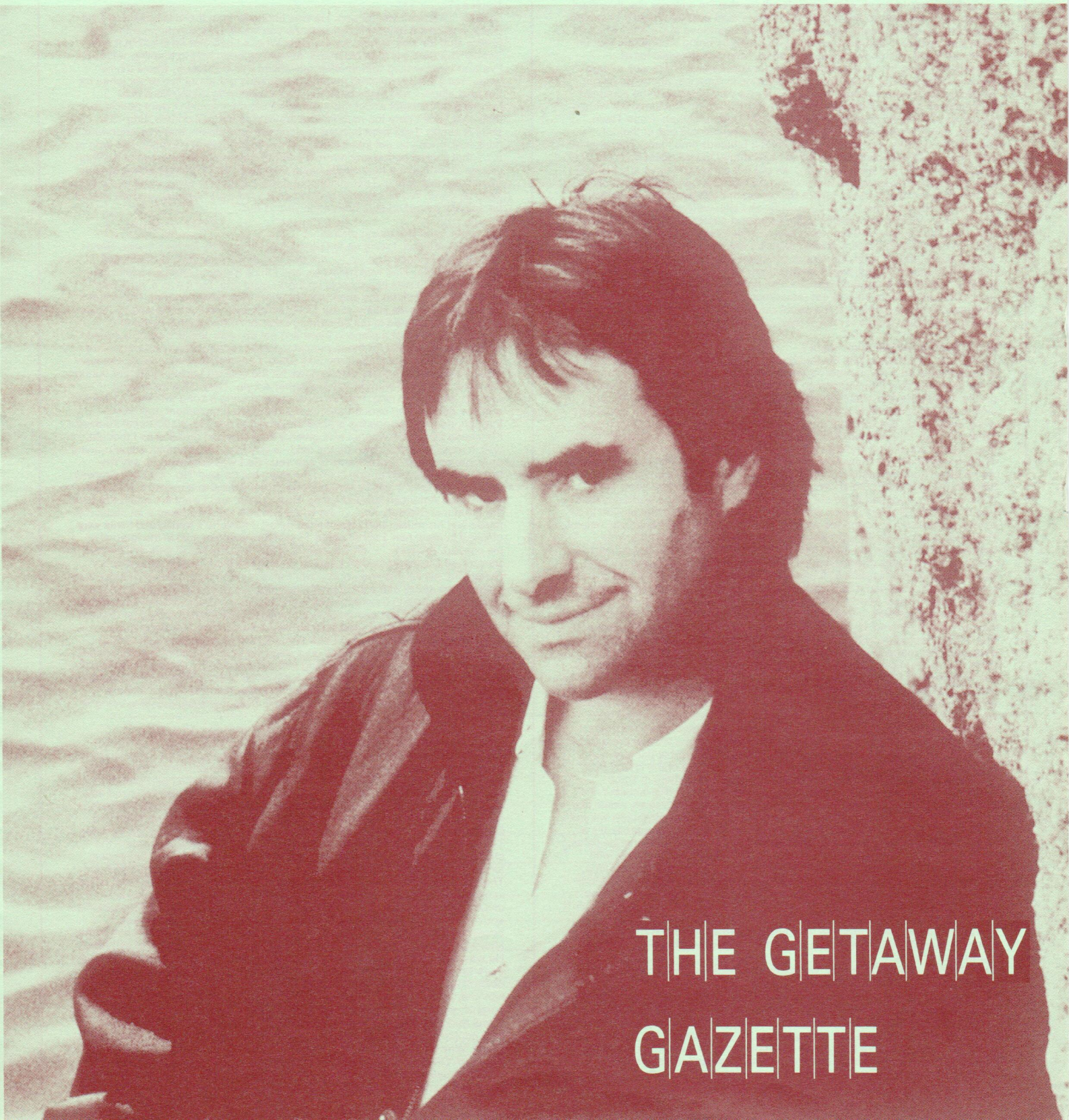


THE NEW *Chris de Burgh* CLUB

P.O. BOX 276 LONDON E2 7BW

OCTOBER 1993



THE GETAWAY
GAZETTE

Happy Christmas! It's probably a bit premature for such seasonal greetings, we know, but the least we could offer in the circumstances of yet another long-awaited Gazette is something else a bit early. . . So, welcome to the latest edition of the newsletter which, as we trust you are all aware by now, had been unavoidably and quite understandably delayed due to the unfortunate accident suffered by Chris' wife Diane during the summer. Naturally, we did not want to trouble Chris with an interview until Diane was well on the way to recovery or until he felt more able to find the time and energy to talk. The right moment presented itself towards the end of September, and the resulting long and frank conversation - with full details of Diane's injury and a new album - is reproduced over the next few pages, in full and verbatim. . . .

Our last interview was in January, when you were just about to leave for South Africa. . . .

CHRIS: "You're kidding! Wow. WOW! These people must be dying to hear something. Well, the South African trip was extraordinary, inasmuch as I hadn't been there for ten or 11 years - and seeing the constitutional democratic changes was terrific. I also held out, like everybody else, on the ban over performing there. Obviously, I had to adhere to the ban, sadly. Having visited the country twice before and really enjoyed it. I'd always wanted to go back. Nevertheless, this return visit was nothing short of sensational, and the audiences were absolutely fantastic. They were uncynical, they were giving, they were open. After, I suppose, having done the European tour - and I'm not talking about the fans here, I'm really talking about the media and the impact of a major concert tour coming into a country - when you are one of many, it doesn't have the same impact but it is interesting to do. When you go into a country where they've had no major stars, really, for a long time then it's something else. In South Africa, people tell me that I'm a bigger star than Paul Simon - who did the ground-breaking trip there, and paid for it dearly because he and his people brought, apparently, political overtones to the tour, which I think is a mistake. I wanted to break new ground by doing an ordinary tour on the basis that it was non-political, non-racist - and purely music for all. Certainly, judging by the reaction we got, we succeeded. There was a huge piece in Billboard, the music industry magazine in America, about 'De Burgh Breaks New Ground In South Africa' and it was very pleasing to be accepted on that level. Anyway, originally we put in 13 concerts, in stadiums, but wound up playing 21. All sold out. We played, initially, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein and Pretoria. I enjoyed every single one of them, I thought the country was terrific and we had a fabulous time there. The weather was nice, and it's the kind of place that I fully intend to visit again soon - probably in 1995. We were lucky that we did not get caught up in any political turmoil, particularly since this really was a high-profile tour. It was a tour done on a solid groundwork basis - and a tour going through a country in the same manner as any other country. The crowds, as I say, were magnificent - and most of the concerts were in five to ten thousand-seater stadiums. Other than that, the wines in South Africa were sensational; as you know, I'm a keen wine lover. In Cape Town, I had a chance to visit a few wineries and bring back quite a lot of South African wine. I think it is exceptionally good - and it has been made there for 350 years, so it's hardly a new world wine, as it were, like Chile or New Zealand or even Australia. It's high quality stuff, and I really enjoyed it - as did the band. There were great restaurants out there, great people. . . all I can say to readers of the Gazette about South Africa is that it should be high on the list of potential places to visit, if they can, sometime in the future."

Is there much wildlife over there?

CHRIS: "In the urban areas, obviously not - but the second time I went there I did actually go do a game reserve, which was wonderful. There are a lot of game reserves now that you can go to. With that in mind, I suppose one of the problems with the tour was that we did the 21 shows I mentioned in 26 days, including a lot of travelling, so there was so such thing as a day off. It was just work, work, work. But we did a river trip outside of Johannesburg, which was great. All in all, I think South Africa is a wonderful country and I sincerely hope its problems are solved and that things run smoothly for the foreseeable future. The other thing I'd like to mention about South Africa is the fact that the reviews we received from the media for the shows we did our there were just staggering - and our 100th show of our World Tour was our last show in Johannesburg. I wanted to go out with a bang and, originally, I wanted to do a free concert in Ellis Park, which is a 70,000-seat stadium, but that proved to be extremely difficult - although the people at Ellis Park were tremendously helpful. However, it was basically a problem of short notice so, in the event, what happened was that we did a live television transmission of that last concert in Johannesburg. It was done along the lines of a telethon to raise money for a black charity called Operation Hunger, which is self-explanatory; it's for starving black children. That had a tremendous response. The cameras picked us up live for about the last hour and three-quarters of the concert - and even went straight through another programme to cover the end of the show. For them, it was an important thing. It was difficult for me being down there in the sense that I didn't have privacy the way I like to; I like to walk around the shops, for example, I did manage it to a certain degree but, being so well-known down there, it didn't make it that easy. Nevertheless, we all had a fantastic time and I'm really looking forward to going back."

"After South Africa and the rest of the touring, I got home obviously in a state of shock - and then took a short holiday in one of my favourite places, Barbados. I went there with the family in March - and I needed that because after 100 concerts in a big, long project with the Power Of Ten album. . . you're pretty exhausted. Also, I have to say, the tour was successful in a time where a lot of acts were doing very bad business. I think that is a remarkable thing to achieve, not only from my point of view - but also because of the loyalty from the fans and the fact that they've actually increased in numbers in some territories. I think Genesis was about the only other band during last year, in Europe, to achieve the same kind of success as we did. And I really would like to thank all those people that came to the concerts because, obviously, without them the whole event would not have been so exciting and memorable. It's a tremendous feeling to know that they love the concerts so much, and the lights, the music, the atmosphere and the production. Because, as you know, with every show I do, I actually do two shows; one for now, and one for next time. Because I think if you compromise at all - anywhere - then people spot it, and they just won't come back. So you can never cheat the public, because they will always catch you at it."

Have you given any thought to why acts like yourself and Genesis, for example, are still doing well at a time when so many other acts are not doing well at all?

CHRIS: "Yes, I have. Obviously, we put on a terrific show, we spend a lot of money on our sound and light production; value for money, I think that's the key. My show was between two hours and 15 minutes in duration on average, and I think the longest performance was two hours and 40 minutes. Very few people are doing that kind of duration of concert. Furthermore, I love to have a really tremendous rapport with my audience, it's very important to have that. Also, like Genesis, I have built up an enormous body of work. So, people have favourites and, I imagine, they come to hear their favourites - and they know that they're going to get a good show, based on previous ones they've been to or on what they may have heard from friends. They know they're going to get a

good show, they're not going to get ripped off and that I definitely go the distance - and further, every night. Anyway, we side-tracked; I'm back from Barbados now, having had a very pleasant break there. This brings me into April. April was just home time, really. After you've been away for so long, you need that. For most of 1992, I was away, basically; either recording, or doing promotion all over the place, or touring. Interestingly enough, I took a view on promotion - which is television, radio and press - on the last album that, instead of ducking out of it, and saying 'Oh, I'm a big-shot star, I don't need to do that', I did the exact opposite. In fact, I did more promotion for the Power Of Ten album than probably for any other album since the late '70s. I really worked hard, and I guess that helped, as well. So, looking through my diary, there's all sorts of stuff here. . . I went to quite a few of the Republic of Ireland soccer matches - who look like they're going to qualify for the World Cup. I just did things that I like to do when I get home; play a little golf, and so on."

Any signs of any new music?

CHRIS: "Yes, and that falls in with my view of the current music business situation - which is that there is no point spending a year writing an album, no point spending six months recording it because the media now are accepting that record, and it's over in a week. There's no longer that public excitement, like 'Here comes a new album!' You can disappear, almost without trace, very fast. So I think that it's very hard on the people who put in all that work. With that in mind, I figured that what I wanted to do with my next album is make it light-hearted in the approach, inasmuch as it's going to be fun to write, fun to record. That element means quick, it's got to be quick, so I've decided to make a quick record next time in the sense of bringing in other writers."

Such as?

CHRIS: "Graham Lyle, for one. He was originally from the Gallagher and Lyle Band, and he's a brilliant songwriter. As you know, he's co-written with Terry Britton stuff for Tina Turner, for example What's Love Got To Do With It and Simply The Best. He's an old friend, and we've been writing together a little bit. I've also been writing with another guy called Steve Duberry, who's a new writer, but it's really inspired me and I've already got about five or six tunes for the next album - and that's basically what I was doing during May. Just returning to the point about making a quick album, I wouldn't want people to think that I don't care too much about the next record. Of course, I do - the point is simply that I want to enjoy making the next album, that's so important. I think that, once you get into the grind of making a record, you spend so long at it. . . that it's just no fun any more. It's terribly important to have fun at it. When are we looking at the new album being released? Well, I'd like to have another album out next spring. That might sound like a long time away, but there's still a lot to be done. We've recently decided on a producer, however, and we should be actually recording stuff before the year is out."

So, more from the dairy, please. . .

CHRIS: "Let's see. I went up to Gleneagles, along with Jackie Stewart, Sean Connery and Prince Andrew for the opening of the new Jack Nicklaus golf course up there. That was great fun, and I think it's been seen on television subsequently. It was bloody cold up there, mind you, but it was a very, very nice weekend and, on the second night, there was a big banquet. The actor Gene Hackman was sitting at our table, which was nice, and I'd said to Jackie Stewart that I wanted to put something back in; I'd had such a wonderful weekend. So we got a piano in there and set up, with Jackie's sons, a sound system - and I played for these people. I played for about half an hour before an audience which included Princess Anne. I enjoyed that very much. So, what else? I did quite a number of interviews for the concert I did in Tipperary during this time, and I also went to see Gallagher & Lyle. They did a 're-formed' concert, which was nice. I got up on stage and sang a song with them. I went to a Bruce Springsteen concert and, to my complete amazement, half way through, as I was wandering around the crowd at this big, 30,000-seat stadium - because the sound where I was given a seat was just dreadful so I thought, well, it must be better down on the field - a guy from the promoter came running up to me and said 'Bruce wants to see you.' So I was surprised, to say the least. 'Oh, pull the other one,' I told the guy - but he said 'No - it's true.' Anyway, I got pulled round to the backstage area, pulled round to a caravan, with all these huge American heavies going 'Hello, Chris' and I went in - and there was the great man himself. And. . . he wanted to see me! We talked a lot about my music and his music, and I was very chuffed. I think he's terrific and I was very pleased to meet him. I spent about 15 minutes with him, just in the interval of his concert. Anyway. . . on the 24th of May, I had my fourth annual Chris de Burgh Golf Classic in Dublin. Leading golfers like Mark James, who was a Ryder Cup player this year, and David Feherty - who was in the last Ryder Cup - came over along with a lot of celebrities, and we raised a lot of money for a children's hospital in Crumlin, including funds for the music therapy unit which I'm involved with. That was great fun, I really enjoyed that. I saw Peter Gabriel in concert later that week, and he's an old friend of mine. His show is something else, stunning, and I saw him afterwards, too. He's such a mild-mannered guy, but when he gets on a stage he becomes something completely different! Anyway, to continue flicking through the diary. . . I'm seeing wine club meetings here and there. . . also, I'm a governor of the school that my daughter goes to, so I get involved with the school, its direction and future, which is interesting. . . but, basically, through all this time, I was just enjoying being at home."

Where are we now, time-wise?

CHRIS: "Now we're into June, when I started writing again with Steve Duberry. I spent a few days down at the Irish Open golf tournament, which was the big one that Nick Faldo won. I decided to splurge and I rented a helicopter for a week, which was just brilliant! We flew all over the country, and I enjoyed that very much. I went to Galway and I dropped in at my parents' castle in Wexford for lunch. All but landed on the porch. Great fun. Then I went over to Koln in Germany to do some press and publicity for the big shows during the summer. That really brings me to the second week in July, the 11th of July, when the children and myself and Diane, together with a girl who had been babysitting for us, who I'd offered a summer job, went to Ireland for a few days break. On Thursday the 15th of July, I brought with me a fax from my management office in connection with a young man called Stephen Barry, who had fallen in a mountaineering accident and broken his back. He was paralysed, 22-years-old and I was given a number to call. I hadn't called him the previous week, because I just really didn't get the time, but on that Thursday I called him in the afternoon, rang the hospital, and found that he'd been transferred to another. He was now in the National Medical Rehabilitation Centre, and I spoke to him there for about 20 minutes. I was extremely impressed by his courage and his determination, and how he was taking his accident. It was a pleasure talking to him and, in fact, I mentioned it that evening over dinner to my wife and my parents; we were talking about spinal injuries and so on. The next morning, Diana had a ride booked with Rosanna for 10 o'clock but, for some reason, they couldn't make it so she rang up to cancel. It was a lovely day, and I said to Diane 'Why don't you go riding? Go on - ring up again. Book up another time.' She said 'OK, 11 o'clock, we'll go out riding.' So, I was down, playing with my two little boys, on a nearby beach. About 12.45am I was walking back for lunch, and I saw somebody coming towards me who worked on the farm - and, in the

distance, I saw my mother and my father, who was walking with a stick. And... as they say in all the best books, I knew something had happened. This guy came running up the beach and he said 'There's been an accident.' Immediately, I knew it was Diane. You just know. I said 'What happened?' He said 'Well, we don't know. She's been thrown off a horse, we don't know how bad it is but they've called the ambulance'. So, of course, this put me in a state of shock - from which I'm only just about recovering. I immediately went back to the castle and rang the riding stables who told me she'd just been taken away in an ambulance, but they didn't know how serious it was. I actually caught up with the ambulance on the main road and went to the hospital and saw Diane. She was quite cheerful, lying on her back, and said that she was on a horse, a big horse, that she'd been riding the day before. She'd felt a bit wary of it, as it seemed to take fright at things. Anyway, it was galloping down the beach, suddenly took fright at something else - and set off for home. At full gallop. This is a big horse, now; we're talking something like 16 hands. The horse was heading right into a thicket of low trees, and beyond that was a caravan park with children - so Diane chose her spot, and bailed out. As she hit the ground, she heard a snap in her neck. She fell on the ground awkwardly, on her side, and rolled on her back. She said that, as she lay on her back, she suddenly remembered the conversation that we'd had the night before about the young man Stephen Barry who'd been paralysed. And she said to herself 'I'm not moving. I don't care how long it takes, but I'm not moving because I heard something in my neck - and I don't know what happened, but I'm not moving.' And she just lay there. Rosanna saw it all happening, the girl from the riding stable also saw it happen and she said 'Look, why don't you sit up and put your head between your knees?' Diane said 'Nope. I'm not moving. . . . About 15 minutes later, she was beginning to feel a bit silly; thinking 'Maybe there's nothing wrong. There's no pain or anything. . . . But one of the early people on the scene was a woman who was a registered nurse, and Diane said 'Look, I think I may have done something.' And the lady said 'Don't move. If you don't want to move, don't move.' So, those two incidents together really saved her life - plus the emergency services, which were brilliant. They brought her an ambulance and a helicopter, and brought her to the same unit, the same spinal injuries unit, that I'd spoken to the day before where the young man Stephen Barry had originally been taken. Of course, I was in complete shock and I drove to Dublin and spent the evening there. The doctor then confirmed what had happened - and what they had in fact suspected in the Wexford Hospital, but they hadn't told me, because otherwise it would have been a dreadful two-hour drive knowing that anything could have happened - but they confirmed it was what's called a hangman's fracture. Any lateral movement whatsoever would have severed the spinal cord - and Diane would have died from choking to death within about 30 seconds. . . . Then, two days later she was transferred to the National Medical Rehabilitation Centre where, surprise, surprise, the guy in the bed beside her was. . . . Stephen Barry. There you go. That's the full story."

What does all of that tell you about life? This series of strange coincidences and the fact that, in one brief moment, so much could have been stolen from you.

CHRIS: "Well, if Diane had died, I would have never made another record. I doubt if I would have ever performed again - no, I wouldn't have done. I would have really knocked me back for years. My little children, two, five and nine, would not have had a mother. Of such things are generations made, basically. But fate, destiny intervened. And what the entire experience tells me is that you cannot take anything for granted. It really has changed my perception, although I was a fairly stable viewer of life in any case. It's changed my perspective; you must live one day at a time - and mortality is a reality. You've got to make an even bigger effort to love other people and care for them and get on with them, and give as much of yourself to others as you can."

And what do you make of the bizarre incidents involving Stephen Barry?

CHRIS: "I make of that that you make of your luck what you can. There are little urges to do things or not to do things, going on in your head, that may or may not be your spirit friends or the people that guide you through life - it just might be your own intuition. Well, follow the intuition, is my advice. Always, follow your intuition about what you think is a good move or not a good move - and don't just steam on. Listen more carefully to what your inner heart is saying. That's what it probably has come down to."

How did you cope with the media following the accident?

CHRIS: "When the news became known, it became hard news and just a massive story. I have no idea how I got through the first week. The lady working for us really was an enormous help, the children were great - but I had to take and make around 200 phonecalls in the first three days. All of them wanted the same story and, as you know, it made the front page of the Mail, Express, Mirror. . . . it was on the BBC news, ITV news - people have heard about it in New Zealand, South Africa, Japan, Spain, South America. It was covered by the New York Herald Tribune. Because of the connection with The Lady In Red, which was a worldwide hit and a love song, the accident became a love story because of the fact that Diane survived by her own quick thinking. This was just a major story - and it still is. People are on at me now for Diane's story, they want to run it in all sorts of places. Of course, at that exact time, the band all turned up to do two weeks' rehearsal. So not only was I staying with the children - I'd determined to stay as close to the children as I possibly could to try and protect them from the effects of what had happened. This meant soaking up all of the pressure myself, without really showing it to them - and it was an immense pressure, I can assure you. I was doing things like not only driving around places and cooking their meals, you know, all the things that housewives do - and I don't complain about that, it's just a tough job - but, nevertheless, trying to do six hours of rehearsal as well, everyday, was just proving to be extremely difficult. . . . plus two hospital visits a day. It was a time I will never forget, and I hope I never have to go through again. I needed it all like a hole in the head - and I could have cancelled those shows we were rehearsing for just like that. But I spoke with Diane about it and she said 'No. What's the point? Go for it.' But, emotionally, it was an extremely distressing time and I barely remember anything about the first week. It was just terrible. In fact, I would say even for the first three weeks, I was still extremely nervous that anything could happen to cause the fracture to go the whole way. Because Diane was horizontal, in traction, couldn't move her head - at all - and it was awful for her. They put pins inside of her head which became seriously infected; to this day, she's having serious problems with her jaw muscles where these pins went into her head. But she's an extremely brave woman, and I said to her 'What you should do is send all the energies of your body, concentrate all of your mental and physical energies on going to the point which needs healing - and just keep on repeating "heal". It's a self-healing process which I believe in, and she's out of hospital three weeks earlier than anybody predicted. Obviously, that worked."

I should point out at this stage that many cards and messages of well-wishing have been sent in for Diane and yourself by club members.

CHRIS: "Yes, I know, and I'd like to take this opportunity through the newsletter to thank all those hundreds of people who wrote and sent flowers - although I've got back to most of those people who sent flowers and presents - or who

sent letters and cards. They would be amazed at how important they were to us all. A lot of people also wrote in with a shared experience; about 30 people wrote in saying that they had broken their necks in accidents. All in all, it was a tremendous out-pouring of affection for her and, I presume, for myself to a small extent. It was highly appreciated and of enormous importance".

How is Diane now?

CHRIS: "Well, she's been home since the beginning of September, walking, talking, waving her arms around. No problem. All she's got as an obvious reminder of the accident is a thing called a Minerva necklace, which goes across the forehead, as well, very high up the neck. But she's going out; I've taken her out to restaurants and stuff. Although the children stare at her as though she's something out of a horror movie, she just serenely walks around the streets and doesn't pay any attention."

OUT IN THE OPEN

"So, that brings us to the concert in Tipperary. Some of you may have read about this in the newspapers and, in particular, about an incident involving a stripper - which I'll come to in a moment - but, to be blunt, that says more about the dreadful behaviour of certain sections of the media in this country than it does about anything else. This was a three-day festival, and I have performed at about 50 of them worldwide - but I've never seen such appalling scenes of drunkenness, of 12-year-old girls lying in pools of their own vomit, of the main street of Thurles just a river of urine, stories of people openly fornicating. . . . It was just an excuse for three days of complete alcoholic blindness. Now, why people don't blow the whistle on that, I don't know, but instead of any of that, the thing that got all of the headlines was a 60-second dance by a girl, who just took her top off - that's all - during my performance of Patricia. It's the kind of thing you can see on any beach in Europe at any time. In fact, if you watch the BBC or ITV or any of the satellite TV stations, you see that stuff all the time. All this was was a pretty girl who danced, amusingly. She started off in an Irish traditional costume which, because she couldn't unzip it herself, I unzipped the back of. And this was in the papers as 'Chris de Burgh rips off her clothes!' I unzipped the back of it to facilitate that she could get out of the thing! I'll tell you, I was just disgusted by the media and how they concentrated on that without paying any attention to anything else. There were two rapes at the festival, amongst other things, and an enormous amount of drugs being consumed. The thing should be closed down, in my opinion. There's one more year to go, but it is a disgrace. But, put in complete contrast to that, then there was the five shows that I did in Germany later on - which were also three-day festivals. They were much, much more well attended - five times as many people, in some cases - than the event in Thurles, but people were far better behaved. It's just down to the attitude to alcohol in Ireland, which really needs a good look at. But, just to put the Irish thing into perspective, my mother and my aunt were sitting at the side of the stage that night and found this dancer hilarious. In fact, they found her great and charming company in the caravan after the show. All in all, it was a hoot - and the concert was damn good, in spite of the fact that there were, I think created by the drunkenness, quite a lot of pockets of die-hard fans of other bands who were yelling and shouting. It was a tough gig for me, but I showed them why I'm one of the top concert attractions in the world, and people were extremely impressed, by all accounts. Oh, the other quite amusing thing about the stripper is that people even suggested that by bringing her on stage I was trying to do something about my image - you know, this sort of middle-aged, middle class image - well I've been using dancers and strippers since 1978! I've had them from Vancouver to the Royal Albert Hall. I've had two at a time in 1983 on big open-air shows. I had a woman who came with me right across Canada, because she loved the music so much, and she was a professional stripper. She danced just about every night for us. Nobody said boo. The only country that said boo about it was this country of Ireland - and it's what I call selective moral blindness. They completely ignored the outrageous behaviour of a large number of people down there, alcohol being a large part of it. I actually had about ten or 12 letters from people, 'outraged from. . . somewhere or other', and I had great pleasure in writing on the back of their same letters 'How dare you ignore. . . all of the things I've just pointed out, and I sent them back again. Which no doubt outraged them even more! But you've got to put things into perspective; a beautiful lady dancing with her shirt off weighed up against heavy alcohol abuse. I can't see that they even exist on the same planet, not as far as I'm concerned. So, anyway, that was a bit of excitement, and I was heavily critical of the way that the media picked up on it. But, obviously, a lot of people enjoyed it. . . .

The event in Thurles was at the beginning of August and, later that month, I went to Stuttgart for the opening of the World Athletics Championships - and, in front of an estimated viewing audience of 500 million, I closed the opening ceremony with a live performance of Borderline with the 12 best cellists in the world from the Berlin Philharmonic. It was absolutely, wonderful to do it, and then I did High On Emotion with the band and got the stadium, 65,000 people, just going nuts at the end. It was very exciting. I then went to the South of France with my children. During this period, one of the big problems that I had - it sounds stupid - was that every day, along with everything else, I had to plan their meals and, most of the time, cook them. And I thought 'I've got to take these kids away', so we went off for a few days to a nice hotel in Ireland and then down to the South of France - just so that I could relax a bit, to be honest. I returned to Germany later on in August to continue with the run of open-air shows. The first one was in Monchengladbach, which was sort of a tester for our show. Of course, the one in Tipperary was not only a chance to play outside of Dublin but also a good warm up for the big shows in Germany. Of them all, the one that was outstanding for me was probably Munich. There were, I think, close to 100,000 people at that one. I had my children at the side of the stage for that one, and they thought it was wonderful. It had been raining like hell on the Friday and Saturday of the festival, for Tina Turner, Rod Stewart and Prince, but it miraculously cleared up on the Sunday, a full moon came out - and it was just one of those shows that you'll never forget. I was on, all the lights were on in me, and I gave it absolutely everything. I very much enjoyed the show in Bielefeld, and the show in Frankfurt. The last show was up in Luneberg, again to an estimated 100,000. Apart from Bielefeld, which was at a football stadium, all of these German shows were held on disused airfields. It was a brilliant concept to actually do concerts there, and I just had a ball doing them. I was really loose and, at every show, I went down the front with a radio mike and I sang Elvis songs and bits and pieces that people yelled up. On two occasions we had dancers to come out for us, and, all in all, it was a spectacular end to the world tour. I guess that makes it 106 shows."

That brings us pretty much up to date, does it not?

CHRIS: "It brings us very much up to date. Other than that, I was in London a few days ago to pick up an ASCAP Award for Lady In Red as one of the 12 most performed songs in America last year - which is the fifth time in a row I've received one. So, it's a huge song in America and it's obviously receiving a tremendous amount of airplay still. Looking immediately ahead, I'll be going to the Ryder Cup golf tournament in Birmingham, and I'm going to do a rare solo performance to the two teams, plus guests, as I did in 1989."

Can you sketch in your plans for the rest of year?

CHRIS: "OK. I'm planning to settle down now and really write into the next

album. I'm hoping to get together with a couple of other writers, possibly Albert Hammond - who wrote songs like *The Air That I Breathe* and *One Moment In Time*. He's a very good ballad writer - a very good writer, full stop. I hope to be in the studio at the end of November or early December, trying to record four or five songs before Christmas. For Christmas itself, I'd like to get away to the sun - I always like to try and do that. Hopefully, by then, Diane will be out of her neck brace - and she deserves a good holiday, as well. With that in mind, Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year to all Gazette readers and, as ever, many thanks for your continued support."

PERSON TO PERSON

In an earlier Gazette, you mentioned an idea about making films around some of your songs, do you still intend to do this? (Ines & Bert Aschkowski, Germany). CHRIS: "Of course, I'm very interested in doing this but, you know, finance is the key to it. I have been approached a number of times in this respect, but it really hasn't come to anything. However, a good story is a good story, I always write very visually and I'd love to see some of my songs made into short cartoons, even. If there's a cheap way of doing cartoons, I'd love to."

Have you ever thought about visiting any of the Arab countries? (Hazim Haddad, Jordan). CHRIS: "Oh, yes. I have no preconceptions whatsoever about the middle east; I go where the music goes, basically. In fact, I have been to Dubai and, as people will know, I have mentioned places like Jerusalem and Bethlehem in my songs. Those places are just potent symbols of Christianity, but that does not preclude, obviously, visiting countries where there is a different culture or a different religion. After all, that's what makes the world interesting. In fact, one of the songs I'm working on is called *Up Here In Heaven*, which is a perspective of the spirits of the dead, particularly soldiers, looking down on people who are reading war memorials - particularly people from different sides, all of whom thought God was on their side. They're just saying 'This is totally ridiculous; there's only one God up here in heaven.' That's the general idea."

Have you ever considered releasing a 'best of' video collection? I've hardly seen any of them. (Silvia Paoletti, Canada). CHRIS: "I think it's a damn good idea. A lot of people do this - and I have no idea why we haven't come up with it so far."

Do you know the Swedish group Army Of Lovers, and what do you think of their music? (Morten Rose, Denmark). CHRIS: "Yes, I've seen this group on MTV around Europe and I like what they do. It's interesting; melodic pop music with a twist."

Do you collect anything? (Nicola Bond, England). CHRIS: "Yes, I do. I collect wine, Persian rugs, golf clubs, golf courses. I like collecting sculpture, antique furniture - just things that make the home a more pleasant place to be."

In your biography, From A Spark To A Flame, there's a photograph of you looking for Halley's Comet. Did you actually find it - and were you able to observe it? (Ursula Hohmann, Germany). CHRIS: "Well, the outfit that I was wearing in the photograph was my full clothes plus a heavy dressing gown, plus a balaclava, plus gloves and, yes, I did observe a faint smudge in the distance which I alleged to be - and sincerely hoped to be - Halley's Comet. In fact, I took a mobile phone with me up there and talked to someone who knew the stars better than I, and we talked our way right round the constellations - and I found Halley's Comet. I think..."

Why don't you consider doing a 'Barry Manilow' and inviting a fan on to the stage with you to do a duet? (June Brannan, England). CHRIS: "I didn't know he did that and, if he does it, maybe I shouldn't! No, that's rude... Well, yeah, that's actually worth considering. I've often thought about it, but you take a bit of a risk if somebody gets up there and... freezes. I'm always very interested in pace and dynamics in a concert, and I wouldn't like anything that would alter that. It takes a lot to put together a show that works correctly."

When you're touring Europe, for each country you sing in several towns. Why in France do you only sing in Paris? (Jean-Marie Le Dru, France). CHRIS: "The fact is, I've toured around France in the past, but since there was a fairly strong cultural ban on radio play for foreign acts, non-French acts, it meant that it became a lot more difficult to get your radio play for your new records - and, obviously, your profile started slipping. So, until that changes, I can't really do much about it. As a result, generally speaking, I just play the capital city."

How did you get together with Martyn Joseph, who supported you on the Power Of Ten Tour? (Jo Sherriff, England). CHRIS: "I was sent a number of records from people who were keen on opening the concerts for me, and, of course, it was a dream ticket because it would have meant playing in front of 20 to 40,000 people in the UK and a lot more - half a million - in Europe. When I heard Martyn's *Dolphins Make Me Cry* and saw the video, I was just amazed. I thought he was terrific, and he's become a very solid friend. I think he's a very talented guy, and I was delighted to offer him the job."

What do you think of Irish folk music, and what kind of groups playing it do you like? (Harry Embling, USA). CHRIS: "I don't like what I would describe as tourist folk music, but I like traditional music like *The Chieftains*."

When are you coming to America? I've been hearing about how energetic and phenomenal your concerts are and I would like to experience this first-hand. (Jeannine G. Williams, USA). CHRIS: "Well, I'd like to give America a shot next tour. I did a lot of stuff out there in the late '70s and early '80s, but it's a very expensive place to tour. It's also a huge place and you could spend a lot of time there. But I should be able to go in there on the next world tour and do some showcase concerts in New York, Los Angeles and so on. I know people have also been asking why I've not toured in Canada with this latest album. Well, the story there is that we were strongly advised that it would be an extremely expensive exercise, when we mooted a Canadian concert tour, as Canada was in the grips of a really dreadful recession. You have to take these things into consideration, particularly when you're on a world tour and you've employed 50 people on a yearly basis. I know and love Canada, I've been there many times and I've got a lot of fans there - but it just wouldn't have made sense on that particular occasion. I think things have changed and turned round now, so it's more possible, but right now I'm concentrating on other projects. I'd just like to apologise to my friends and fans in Canada, but we just couldn't make it this time - mainly for the reasons just outlined."

Do you like Shakespeare, and have his works been an inspiration in your writing? (Martina Stammer, Germany). CHRIS: "Yes, I do like Shakespeare but I wouldn't necessarily say I've been influenced by him. I was obviously brought up reading *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet* and so on, so I'm a great admirer. And, I suppose, his use of language is an inspiration."

Does playing so many concerts affect your sense of hearing? (Sven

Peterssen, Sweden). CHRIS: "No, it doesn't. I have an audiogram done on my ears on a fairly regular basis and, apart from an accident I had in 1982, I've had no problems. The accident wasn't even through loud music, it was loud singing. It hurt my ear and I lost my balance for two weeks, and I caused something to happen in my inner ear which, in turn, caused a loss of hearing. Generally speaking, I haven't got a problem because, you see, up on stage I'm very careful about not making it too loud."

In your songs and your singing, you put yourself over as being very emotional - are you like that in real life? (Carol Medcalf, England). CHRIS: "Yes, I am. When I sing, I wear the song like a coat. I don't think you can sing a song and be genuine about believing in it unless you really mentally picture what you're singing about and get into it. In real life I am sensitive and emotional, but I'm also tough as well. I don't think you get to where I've got in this business, or get to do it for so long, without being tough. Most people never see it, and I keep my teeth and my claws fairly well concealed but, I can assure you, times happen when I have to stand up for myself and make my opinions known. But when it comes to sensitive issues, particularly involving children, then yes, I'm very emotional." If you have a question you'd like to ask Chris, then send it along to the fan club address marked 'Person To Person.' As you've just read, we put your queries to Chris each time we conduct an interview for the Gazette and, space allowing, we will always print as many of his replies as we possibly can. So, it's over to you. . . .

PEN PALS

As ever, here's the latest list of club members seeking correspondents from other C de B followers around the world:

Mrs Carol Williams, 12 Aber Court, Prestatyn, Clwyd, LL19 8BY, Wales. (Aged 42).

Donna Hibbert, 67 Holland Street, Radcliffe Hall, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 9RE, England. (Aged 22).

Nicola Bond, 22 Park Road, Lower Compton, Plymouth, PL3 5DR, England. (Aged 20).

Marjo Karppanen, Satulakuja 4.C.13, 01200 Vantaa, Finland. (Aged 17).

Arif Rahman, P.O.Box 271, Famagusta, North Cyprus, Via Mersin 10, Turkey. (Aged 22).

Pauline Vogel, Weteringdreef 20, 2724 HA, Zoetermeer, Holland. (Aged 20).

Francois Buchler, 37 Iveson Approach, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS16 6NT, England (Aged 15).

Debra Swain, 4 Glynde Avenue, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 9QE, England. (Aged 28).

Denis J Farrell, 35 Rushton House, Springfield Estate, Albion Avenue, London, SW8 2SE, England. (Aged 29).

Vicky Martin, 360 Anglesey Road, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, DE14 3NN, England (Aged 17).

Jean-Marie Le Dru, 11 Bis Avenue De Paris, Bonneuil Sur Marne, 94380, France. (Aged 25).

Morten Rose, Arn. blv. 31 s.t.v., 2650 Hvidovre, Denmark. (Aged 18).

Joanne Raczowska, UL. Kochanowskiego 55, 62-100 Wagrowiec, Poland. (Aged 20).

Sandra Edith Jadur, Avda Alvarez Jonte 5140 1op dto '17', (1407) Capital Federal, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Remember, if you would like your details included in future lists of pen pals, then please write your name and address CLEARLY and in BLOCK CAPITALS - specifying your age only if you wish - and send to the club address. If we can't understand your writing, we can't pass the information on. . . .

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Following the idea in the last Gazette of a section which members could use to buy, sell, swap or borrow items of C de B memorabilia - here is the first batch of hopefuls.

Martina Stammer, Florastr.60, 13187 Berlin, Germany. Seeks a recording of the *This Is Your Life* TV programme featuring Chris, and the BBC Radio 2 series *High On Emotion*. Has material for exchange, but will also pay.

Anne Foster, 877 Spring Bank West, Hull, North Humberside, HU5 5BE, England. Seeks a copy of *This Is Your Life*, and is happy to send a blank video cassette and return postage. Also offers to copy the BBC Radio 2 series *High On Emotion* for anyone sending three blank c60 cassettes and postage.

Stephanny Breitauch, Parkstr. 19, 2940 Wilhelmshaven, Germany. Seeks copy of *This Is Your Life* and BBC Radio 2 series. Offers colour photographs from the *Power Of Ten* tour for 50p each.

Moir Livingston, 7 Tilston Road, Westvale, Kirkby, Liverpool, L32 0UH, England. Seeks a copy of *Chris de Burgh - The Video* (A&M Sound Pictures, No. AM825). Will buy or swap.

Kevin Klimowski, 910 31st Street, West Des Moines, Iowa 50265, USA. Seeks *This Is Your Life* and BBC Radio 2 series. Happy to pay postage, etc.

Rob Dandy, 32 Ennerdale Crescent, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV11 6HZ, England. Seeks *This Is Your Life* and BBC 2 series.

T.Jonathan Lewis, 22 Brandy Way, Pontyberem, Llanelli, Dyfed, South Wales, SA15 5DG. Has all three parts of the BBC Radio 2 series. Happy to provide copies.

Nicola Connell, Airmount, Slieverue, Co.Kilkenny, Ireland. Seeks *This Is Your Life* and the BBC Radio 2 series.

Earlene Mathew, 31 Louis Road, Bordeaux, 2194 South Africa. Seeks *This Is Your Life*.

Nicola Bond, 22 Park Road, Lower Compton, Plymouth, PL3 5DR, England. Seeks Part 2 of the BBC Radio 2 series.

Matthias Oeschger, Furkastrasse 86, CH-8203 Schaffhausen, Switzerland. Seeks C de B video/radio tapes and newspaper articles from all over the world. Will swap for other tapes and articles.

Morten Rose, Arn.blv 31 s.t.v., 2650 Hvidovre, Denmark. Has a 30-minute video of an interview with Chris for Danish TV which he is offering for sale for £5. Seeks photographs, a copy of *The Very Best Of Chris de Burgh* (the record), *Chris de Burgh - The Video*, posters and C de B interviews, either written or recorded.

If you would like details entered in the next edition of the Gazette, send to the club address, marking your letter Collector's Corner.

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME. . .

That just about brings this issue to a close. In the next edition, due early in the New Year, we'll have more details from Chris about how the new album is shaping up - plus the usual information concerning what else he's been up to. So, until the next time, please remember to send any pen pal addresses, Person To Person questions or entries for Collector's Corner - along with any ideas or criticisms about the club or newsletter - to me, Mike, at: The New Chris De Burgh Club, P.O.Box 276, London, E2 7BW. As ever, thanks for waiting so patiently and, again, Happy Christmas!