

THE NEW *Chris de Burgh* CLUB

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THE GETAWAY
GAZETTE

Hello and welcome to the first Gazette of 1995. As usual, it's been a long time coming, but we would hope you'd realise by now that we only publish when there's something worth writing about - assuming that we are then able to contact Chris to talk about it! That said, this issue features exclusive details about something which Chris has been considering for the best part of a decade; a solo acoustic tour. Better still, that tour will be prelude by...a solo acoustic album. Much more about both projects later but now, in true Gazette style, we'll begin by picking up the C de B story where we last left it in the previous newsletter - way back in November, 1994...!

CHRIS: "Glancing back at my own copy of the Gazette, I see that when we last spoke I was just about to go into rehearsals for the This Way Up world tour. Wow! That was a while ago... Well, after the rehearsals we set off for Istanbul and the beginning of, I guess, the Eastern Mediterranean and European legs of the tour. The first show was in this extraordinary 12th Century fortress with massive, high walls; these walls must have been about 60 feet high. It was just a huge fortress inside, an amazing place to start the tour and the show went very well. That was in Istanbul and, from there, we moved on down to Izmir, which was in an outdoor arena. Of course, the weather was absolutely fantastic - because this would have been in late August/early September. In fact, it was very hot - so I could top up my Irish tan! Not that I had much of one..."

Just stopping you there for a moment, I know you'd played in Turkey on the previous tour and that you'd made a conscious decision to start this tour there - why?

CHRIS: "I think we took the view that, wherever you start, it always takes a while to get the thing into solid gear. But, that said, the show itself was extremely well received - you know, sell-out crowds throughout the Eastern Mediterranean - and it was a strong response to what the audiences obviously felt was a fantastic show. Last tour, two years earlier, we started off in Athens. This time it was Istanbul, which is a terrific city, a very exciting place. There's great food, good wines and good people. In answer to your question, we started the tour there because it was as good a place as any - plus it gave us all a chance to enjoy some nice weather before we moved into the cold winter ahead on the rest of the tour. So, from Turkey we went to Athens again and a show at the Lycabettus Theatre - which is beneath the Acropolis. It's just a stunning venue cut out of the rock; a real Greek amphitheatre. That was a wonderful show, I really enjoyed it. The next day we flew to Thessalonika, which is to the north of Greece. I'd never been there before and, again, it was a big outdoor show and a wonderful response. It was also very, very warm - and I was amazed by how much the people knew about my music and me. The fifth show was in Beirut which, in itself, was really one of the most outstanding memories I've ever had of not only a visit, but also a live performance. We arrived in Beirut as the first major international act to really perform there since before the war, 20 years ago. I'd heard that people down there had been listening to my music for many years - and we'd been invited there many times, but it just hadn't seemed right, or things had seemed fairly troubled...so we hadn't gone. But, finally, we arrived - and I had my first experience of Lebanese security. Which meant travelling in an armed convoy, very fast, through extraordinary back streets and dual carriageways. I think their premise was never to have the vehicle that I was in secured at a standstill at any point. Now, as you can imagine, that's pretty difficult to achieve - but they did it by simply keeping going on the opposite side of the road! And if you go down the on-coming fast lane of a dual carriageway in a convoy of about nine jeeps, trucks, Mercedes and guys with guns then, believe me, all the on-coming traffic has to screech to a halt and stop as this thing roars up the fast lane the wrong way. I'll tell you what, I was more freaked out by that than anything! You know, I would have thought that if you're going to go to a place like that high profile, the best thing to do would be to keep a low profile. But, anyway, they did very well, those guys, and I had very good 24-hours-a-day armed guards around me. These guys just slept in the corridor or just sat there outside while I slept - and they were never more than a few paces away for the entire time that I was in Beirut. Travelling through the city, I had a chance to see the whole city. Going through the tricky areas, there were still a lot of police checkpoints. The venue itself was up on a hill outside of Beirut, and it was quite something to see the city light up at night - with vast sections with no lights at all, because it had just been bombed into oblivion. A lot of the bombed buildings were still there, just gutted. The concerts themselves, I did two, were probably the most exciting ones I've ever performed anywhere, not only emotionally - for the reasons I explained before; being the first performer there for such a long time - but the crowd sang every single word of every single song. Old and new; they knew everything. The whole thing was filmed, for local TV - and I haven't seen the footage yet, but I'm really looking forward to doing so. What else can I tell you about it? Well, for one thing, it was amazing to be backstage with guys walking around carrying machine guns. That's off-putting, to say the least, but nevertheless the warmth of the reception from the 10,000-a-night crowd was just absolutely outstanding - and I can't wait to go back there, basically. There are obviously still problems there, though; I thought the immigration procedures were off-putting. To the occasional tourist, having your passport checked about ten times on the way out - to make sure you are who you say you are - was a bit of a culture shock. But, as I said, the people are very kind and, again, the food was amazing. The hotel was lovely, and I think everybody agreed that this was just one of those outstanding experiences that you'll never forget."

Moving back to the security arrangements you mentioned. I, personally, have seen you wandering along public streets - at large - on your own, and with not a 'minder' in sight. In view of that, did you feel that the security put around you in Beirut was necessary or unwarranted?

CHRIS: "I left that up to them. Subsequently, when we went to Moscow, I had a similar security arrangement - although not quite so...wild, if that's the correct word. Because the convoys involved the police, everywhere we went the traffic was stopped by armed policemen - and we just carried through. Personally, I got used to it but, initially, I was pretty uptight about it. I just thought that it was unnecessary, but I took the view that I was there as a guest of the Lebanese nation - and that they knew better than I whether it was likely for anybody to have the wrong idea or not. Was it frightening in any way? I wouldn't say frightening...but it's certainly off-putting. I wasn't used to it; I'm not a great fan of having guns everywhere around me. But I got used to it. You had to get used to travelling in a convoy which the first people would see anything of was a jeep with about six armed soldiers in it, waving and shouting and yelling. And these guys were...fairly excitable, all in all. I guess it didn't add much to one's enjoyment of the tourist vistas - until we spoke to them and said "Look - can we just cool this a bit..."

And were you then able to go about your business in a more low profile way?

CHRIS: "No. I couldn't go anywhere without high profile security. No way. If we went to a restaurant it involved about six or seven vehicles, with sirens wailing and horns sounding. Oh, yeah; the whole thing. By the time you got to the restaurant you were just a limp rag! The thing is, with the history of Beirut anything is possible - abduction, people taking a potshot at you - so I took the view that these people knew their church better than I and that they were in a position to advise me to accept this kind of security. So I did."

What was your next stop, following Beirut?

CHRIS: "First of all I went home for a few days, and then we had the Audley End show. That was brilliant, I really enjoyed that. What a superb venue, what a great place to play a concert - with that

stunning Jacobean house in the background. I think people really enjoyed the show - I certainly did. After that, we had another few days off. It was nice to get home, and then we started again with two shows in Birmingham at the NEC. It was great to finally get indoors, to be honest, because the nights were cooling. At those gigs we were using our fully prepared light show - and the people who saw it just thought it was absolutely outstanding. It involved a lot of visuals that Andy Doig had put together. I talked to him, Kenny talked to him and we all decided what sort of visuals we were looking for. I thought the results were excellent. Next came Sheffield - brilliant - followed by Cardiff. Now that was a memorable night because the sound system failed, and I jumped off the stage, walked through the audience saying 'hi' to everybody, got up to the sound desk and had a word with the sound man. He said there was a problem, but by the time I walked back through the audience and jumped back on the stage - the sound came back on again! So that was a great night. I really enjoyed Cardiff; great people. When was the last time that something like the sound going down happened to me? I honestly can't remember - but just about everything that could go wrong on stage has gone wrong, over the years. So I'm always wary, half-expecting something - waiting for it to happen. Some people just walk off the stage when something goes wrong, and say 'I can't handle that...' And I did walk off the stage...but I walked straight into the audience. It was quite funny and it was well-covered in the newspapers the following day. For a change, there was a nice piece about how I'd handled the situation. Then there was Bournemouth, followed by the Albert Hall, of course."

Prior to the This Way Up tour, when had you last played at the Albert Hall? For many people it's the perfect venue to showcase a performance like yours.

CHRIS: "I think it was in about 1982. Certainly, there's a sense of history about the place, which I really love, and I really enjoyed playing the Albert Hall, I have to say. We did five shows there, and a load of people - friends of mine - came along. People like Joan Collins were there, and other celebs. There's just a real touch of class about the place. When and if...well, when, basically, at this stage, I do the solo tour - hopefully with orchestra - then that would be the venue to play, no doubt about it. I think the acoustics of the venue would really suit the show. So...after the English tour we moved on, if my memory serves me well, to Belfast. Well, there was a stunning reception there and, then, on my birthday (October 15) a stunning reception in Dublin. I think from the way that the Irish media had treated me the previous year I had something to prove - and I not only knocked them out, I flattened them because it was an outstanding show. I felt that that was my statement; this is what I do. That Dublin show was really proof that it worked. Then, the following morning, we flew to Moscow. Arrived there on the evening of the 16th to be greeted by just...mayhem! Hundreds of people, photographers, flowers, press interviews. And it dawned on me that since the previous trip, where it was fairly low key - I'd gone there to just check it out and do some TV - this trip was not low key. It dawned on me that I was a major star in Russia, and so it proved to be. This visit was high profile, and there was a tremendous amount of goodwill. I was really amazed - and I had four very tall, very tough, very fit young men constantly within arm's length of me, any time I was out of my hotel room. And it was unnerving standing in an elevator with these guys, one with his nose pressed against the door. If anybody got in, they just got out again! I think their other job was guarding the chairman of the Russian bank - so they were pretty serious guys, these, and I would not have liked to tangle with them. The convoy situation with these guys was fun, too. Like one day I wanted to go out to the museum in the Kremlin - which is absolutely stunning. That museum and another in St Petersburg called the Hermitage are the two most beautiful and extraordinary museums I've ever been in. The artifacts they've collected down the centuries made me realise just how powerful a cultural centre and force the Soviet Union had been. It was all the treasures of the tsars; coaches and jewellery and gold. I mean, one piece from the Kremlin museum would have been the centrepiece of any other museum - but there was thousands of them. Absolutely staggering. I actually visited twice, because I was just amazed. But to go there, it was a police car front and back, a Mercedes in front, armed guards, me in the middle - another car behind, KGB guy in another one. How many is that? (Counts) Six! Six cars, just to go to a museum for an hour. I just thought it was over the top. And, of course, in Moscow the politicians had made for themselves roadways down the centre, so they wouldn't have to hang around in traffic. As a result, all the central reservations of the roads are for big shots to drive up and down, and police cars and stuff."

What were your impressions of Moscow?

CHRIS: "It's an extraordinary city. A bit tatty - and there's plenty of crime there. They're obviously struggling into capitalism there. Some people are making a lot of money, and some are not making any money. I was surprised that there weren't lots and lots of queues - in fact, the only queue that I saw was to change money, from dollars - which is the black market. Everybody just uses dollars; nobody had roubles, that I could see. There was plenty of activity in the shopping malls, and just generally around the place. There wasn't much begging - and there was the bizarre sight of ladies in lines, selling off things from their own homes, like shirts. They'd hold up a skirt or a pair of shoes...and just stand there. I felt the police presence was very powerful and, at night...well, that was a different story. At night we went to clubs and stuff, and the Mafia are very much involved. You'd go to a nightclub and, outside, there'd be about 20 guys in combat uniform, standing about and making sure that the wrong people don't get in. So you'd be body-searched going in, to make sure you haven't got guns. It was pretty bizarre!"

How did the Moscow shows go?

CHRIS: "The concerts were in the Kremlin itself - the first time that a rock act, or pop act, had been in there; it's usually reserved for Pavarotti and so on. The concerts were amazing, and they have this tradition of handing you flowers - which I wasn't aware of. So, during the first black-out between songs there were two or three women who came up to me, kissing me and giving me roses. And this went on...all night! Dozens and dozens of roses, and more beautiful girls than I could shake a stick at. As you can imagine, it was awful! Anyway, I got my interpreter on to the stage, because I didn't have much Russian, and I asked him to join me dancing. Everybody looked at each other as if it had never been done before which, of course, it hadn't. But then they all rushed up to the front and danced. The Russian audiences were very warm, but didn't quite know how to react - until I told them - to the dancing stuff. Everybody was on their feet, though. On the second night, the security tried to stop people dancing - but amongst the audience that night were the two daughters of Boris Yeltsin - so the security guys stayed away. On the third night, they placed security guards to prevent people coming down in front of the more expensive seats so, again, I had to jump off the stage and pull people down through the expensive seats so that they'd come and dance at the front. But it was wonderful; really exceptional concerts, and tremendous fun to do. During the day, of course, it was just wandering around the sights like Red Square. Lenin's tomb was closed, but I got to go to a lot of the orthodox churches and look at the icons. Beautiful places. And I saw something which no tourists ever see; the coffin of Ivan The Terrible and his two sons. It's in a small church inside the Kremlin, but we talked to the lady there, the babooshka, on duty. She recognised me from the television and she took us to a tiny little room in the back where Ivan The Terrible had been buried. He'd actually killed his eldest son, I think, in a rage - and he's buried there as well."

The Kremlin is the seat of parliament - where on earth do they put on a concert inside it?

CHRIS: "Oh, there was a beautiful theatre inside, a stunning place, which seats about 5000 people, I think. It has red, plush seats - I mean, this is opera country. The Kremlin is not just a building, like the Houses of Parliament in London, for instance. It's a huge area, in the centre of Moscow, with huge high walls around it - and to get in is God's own difficulty. It's real hard trouble to get in; you've got to through all sorts of searches and provide the right kind of identity card. They do allow tourists in, to a certain extent. The Queen was there, incidentally, at the same time, so there was lots of to-ing and fro-ing - and on the night of my third show the director of the theatre came down to me, and he was white. He said to me (adopts excellent Russian accent) 'Boris Yeltsin just rang, on the phone. He said that he wanted to go to the concert last night but the Queen was in Moscow - and he wants poster, and maybe a compact disc of you. Big fan.' And this got reported in one of the newspapers over in the UK. Anyway, from Moscow I went to St Petersburg. Now, there's one beautiful city. I had a chance to walk around it a couple of times, and it's absolutely gorgeous. But don't forget; I still had my guards with me, so everywhere I walked - these guys walked! The show itself was held in a hockey arena-type place, and there was about 8000 people in there. Again, it was a tremendous reception, although I think the crowd was a little uncertain of how to react - because there was an unruly element. The police had to wade in halfway through with their riot batons and eject 15 soldiers who were so drunk they could hardly stand up, and they'd started a fight. But I ignored all of that, and just carried on singing - and it was fun. I didn't enjoy it as much as Moscow but, nevertheless, it was a beautiful city to go to and the Hermitage is just outstanding. I can hardly describe it...it's got more art treasures, I think, than just about anywhere in the world. It's a highly regarded museum. In fact, it was the people from there who recently found all those French impressionists' paintings, left after the Second World War. I went to the impressionists section, because I only had time for a short visit; Renoir, Monet, Manet, Degas and Van Gogh. It was beautiful; absolutely stunning. Another thing which impressed me about it is that the actual museum is housed in the former summer or winter palace of the tsars. It's a fantastic building, on a big square; it's not made to be a museum. It's very much a people's place, too; the place was crowded with people - on a week day. Children, school groups - they're very appreciative of their culture, and that impressed me, too."

Do you plan to return to Russia in the future?

CHRIS: "I'd love to. You see, the hospitality over there was exceptional, as well. In fact, one night I was challenged to a vodka drinking competition - but I was smarter than to be suckered in by that one. So, every single glass of vodka I was given - I managed to switch to water. And these two hefty Russians who challenged me were getting glassy-eyed and wondering why I wasn't falling over. The whole thing had been observed by these security guards, who just couldn't stop giggling. At the end of it, I got up and walked out - while my two challengers could hardly stand up! Anyway, after Russia our next stop was Zurich. I walked off the plane at Zurich - and I kissed the tarmac, because actually, in a way, it was like freedom. From not having guards around me all the time, because that makes you feel pretty uptight. You recognise the freedom when you leave. So, Zurich was good - and then we were into the bulk of the European tour."

Now, I don't expect you to go through the itinerary show by show, so what were the stand-out moments which you can immediately recall?

CHRIS: "Rostock, in the former Eastern part of Germany, comes to mind. A beautiful city, and we had a hotel right on the beach. It was getting pretty cold by now, but it was an absolutely stunning place; I loved it. We went to a local restaurant at night, which was fun. It was also very windy! Yes, I enjoyed Rostock; I liked it. Hadn't been there before. Now, for quite a lot of the German dates, I was zipping back home in between shows. If there was a day off, I'd go home to see the family. Quite often, I was flying in on the day of a show. It was great to get back into Germany, in general. At the end of the day, I think we played to around 250,000 people. Under the current climate and circumstances of the economic difficulties that are being faced by Germany in regards to the East, and the fact that the music business is taking a bit of a battering at the moment, it was a highly successful tour. We were very pleased about the outcome. Broadly speaking, all of the shows on this leg of the tour were highly enjoyable. The warmth and the reception of the audiences was just outstanding - even in a big place like the Festhalle. It seemed that the German people were happy to hear anything I played, new or old. So I hold up great hope for the next project that I have, which I'll speak about shortly."

How did you feel the songs from This Way Up were received on tour?

CHRIS: "Extremely well. It was a very powerful album, and the songs worked great live. For example, The Snows Of New York - with all the beautiful visuals behind it was just amazing. And at the end of the song, I spotted little children and I used to invite up a couple of four or five-year-olds, tiny little children. I invited them to come up, because I could see them on their father's shoulders, and I'd say at a given point 'Any small children in the audience, just come to the front', and they sat inside the barrier. Which was lovely for them, and they came up on to the stage and waved to everybody at the end of the song. Also, and I don't know if this came through, I started doing new things like, in the solo section if someone in the audience yelled for a song - I'd say 'You sing it.' I gave them the microphone, and I played. That went down a storm, because there were people singing out of the audience every night. In fact, the last few weeks of the tour were excellent. The big memory I have is of the last week; two shows in Munich, one in Augsburg and two in Dortmund. That was a big week for me - that's five big shows in six days, and thousands of people every night. It left us on such a high. People were saying these were the best shows we've ever done. I was performing on stage for over three hours a night - and I felt fantastic."

What did you do after you got home from Dortmund and the last show of the tour?

CHRIS: "I was exhausted, as you can imagine, and a few days after Christmas we all went to Argentina for two weeks. We went to the old family home, which I hadn't seen for a long time. It was beautiful weather, and I saw my mum and dad and various other old friends there and stuff. People said 'Oh, I haven't seen you since you were this high...' Great. It's a beautiful country, and the place that we went to is just miles from anywhere. It's 500 kilometres north-east of Buenos Aires and six to seven hours on the road when you get there."

With no other way of getting there?

CHRIS: "Well...there is another way; charter a small aeroplane! And travelling in it was the noisiest experience. The whole thing sounded like it was falling apart - it was very, very noisy - but it got us there, anyway, and got us back again to join the British Airways flight. But it was, again, amazing to me to see how many people knew me. When I arrived at the little place where I was born, I was on the radio all the time and on the television. So, all in all, it was an amazing visit - and very emotional for me, because I hadn't seen it since I was a kid."

PERSON TO PERSON

Could we please hear Chris's comments on the role of the disc jockey? (Carol Williams, Prestatyn).

CHRIS: "Well, disc jockeys are very important as a part of the medium of getting artists from their records on to the radio. They and their producers on radio programmes are critical to whether or not people get

to hear you. I have a preference for the laid-back style, like the FM-style, of disc jockey - who lets the music speak. I have little time for the guy who makes himself out to be the major star, and not the artist whose records he's playing. Why disc jockeys think of themselves as stars is quite beyond me. The ones I admire are the ones who really are quite quiet about who they are and what they do. After all, all they do is put on records and talk between them - anyone can do that. I've done it. But the really good ones are outstanding because you hardly notice them; they're really just seamless along with the music."

Have you ever considered the release of a 'Greatest Hits' or 'Singles' video to include Lady In Red, Missing You, etc? (Rob Dandy, Warwickshire). **CHRIS:** "It is being mooted, but I'm not quite sure what is going to be done about it. I must admit, I'd like to have all the videos that I've made on one tape, because you kind of forget what you've done. I made a video for Crusader, for example, way back in '78..."

What do you think of fellow Irishmen U2 and about a tour concept like Zoo TV? (Claire Paterson, Hampshire). **CHRIS:** "Well, I must admit; I make it a principle not to talk about fellow artists in any kind of derogatory way - or possibly the opposite, unless I really admire them. U2 are a fantastically popular band. It may not be my type of music, necessarily, but I've certainly admired a lot of what they've done. I went out on tour with Supertramp years ago, and I think that they were definitive in the way that they presented their live shows - and I don't think anyone has ever done better than that."

Do you believe in reincarnation? (Nil Akasya, Turkey). **CHRIS:** ".....yes, I do. Would I care to expand on that? Not really, no!..."

What's the strangest thing you've ever read about yourself? (Ozdem Onal, Turkey). **CHRIS:** "Dear readers, I read so much rubbish about myself, so many lies, that it's almost impossible to know where to start. Quite simply, the word 'integrity' does not appear in journalists' dictionaries - and the word 'truth' is very hard to find. So, when it comes to stuff I read about myself, I just hope people don't take the view that it's all true. That is really the answer to the question; I wouldn't know where to start."

What is your favourite song (not one of your own)? (Arzu Dagci, Turkey). **CHRIS:** "Impossible! I couldn't answer that; I have dozens of great favourites, but to pin it down to one song would be very difficult. My favourite artist would be The Beatles."

Which of the songs from your new album do you feel was received best by the audience overall during the tour? (Sarah Smith, March). **CHRIS:** "Blonde Hair Blue Jeans was extremely well received. Also, Here Is Your Paradise; that got a great reception everywhere, as did Oh My Brave Hearts. Up Here In Heaven also got a fantastic response - as did The Snows Of New York!"

Do you take your wife and children on tour with you these days? (Sarah Smith). **CHRIS:** "With schooling, it's becoming harder and harder to do all of that but, where possible..."

Is there a possibility that you will be writing an autobiography in the future? (Sarah Smith - again!). **CHRIS:** "To some degree, the idea appeals to me; when somebody tells you, repeatedly, that you've sold 38 million records - there's a story to tell there. That's why it would be nice to have it on record, as it were, how incredibly difficult the opening years were. You just don't get to that stature, worldwide, without having had to put in a lot of graft. Funnily enough, a book is being prepared at the moment. It's not an autobiography, but I am closely involved with the writing of this book. It's a more serious look at my career than the previous book, From A Spark To A Flame, and it's interesting because once a week I get together with the writer, Tony Clayton-Lee, and it's almost like therapy as I dig really deep into my memory to try and remember things that have happened. There's a lot of other people who have been interviewed about it, so it looks like it's going to be interesting. I've no idea when it's due for publication, but I'd guess it will be later this year or early next."

Do you sit down intentionally and write your songs with a theme in mind, or do they just come as divine inspiration - tune first, and then lyrics? (Sarah...Smith). **CHRIS:** "The first thing I need when writing a song is the right environment; somewhere quiet and somewhere I can have peace of mind and thoughts that jump from nowhere in particular. I've always thought that songwriting is teasing the subconscious to release its ideas and, to do that, you have to almost sometimes go into a state of near sleep - because sometimes great ideas jump up out of that particular condition. Melodies and lyrics don't come in any particular order but, hopefully, they do arrive!"

Do you intend to tour South Africa again soon? (Mandy Hunsdale, South Africa). **CHRIS:** "I hope very much to. The slight difficulty with that, though, is that Glenn Morrow isn't very well at the present time - and we haven't seen much of Danny recently. Don't know where the hell he's got to! But I'm also concentrating on more solo projects for the next few months... So the answer is 'Yes - I'd love to tour in South Africa but, on a band basis, it looks fairly unlikely'. Certainly in the first few months of 1995."

I haven't heard much about your brother Richard. Does he look like you - and what career did he choose? (Mandy Hunsdale). **CHRIS:** "He chose to be a solicitor in London, and he works with the National Research & Development Council - which is a very interesting organisation in the area of patents. Basically, if anyone comes up with an idea to patent, they go through him, on a worldwide basis. So it's pretty interesting. He doesn't look a lot like me, no; he's taller, he's got a moustache - but he's got the same dark hair, dark eyebrows and brown eyes. Is he musical at all? Yes, he is - but he's more keyboard-orientated. He plays the church organ quite well, and the piano."

What do you think of Cliff Richard's music? (Mandy Hunsdale). **CHRIS:** "I think it's terrific. I think Cliff Richard is a tremendous interpreter of songs. I haven't noticed, particularly, anything he's written himself - but, as a singer, I rate him very highly. A lot of my favourite songs are with him, but I loved 'We Don't Talk Any More' and Miss You Nights'. Great songs, well sung."

In the video for Here Is Your Paradise, is the little boy Hubie? It looks like him. (Angie Dowdeswell, South Wirral). **CHRIS:** "No, it isn't!"

Have you been inspired by The Beatles to write any of your songs? (Leonardo Kanoore Edul, Argentina). **CHRIS:** "Oh, yeah; loads of them. In fact, just this minute I've come back from my studio where I was working on a Beatles song, which is part of something I'm doing for future plans. I'm doing a Beatles song, and what I said to the record company gent that I was talking to about it was 'If I was going to record a song by somebody else, what I'd like to do is add something of my own to it. Something completely different at the end of the song that identifies it as me doing something different.' And I just came up with a great line, melodic line, and words to the end of their song 'Girl', which might sound very good when it's recorded."

Do you plan on doing some more open air festivals in Germany during 1995? (Carol Medcalf, London). **CHRIS:** "Well, I would very like to, yes, indeed. I love doing them but, for reasons indicated earlier, it's not likely."

I heard a rumour that you had, or were going to, write or perform in a musical about a little dragon called 'Tabaluga and Lily'. Is this true? (Name and address not supplied). **CHRIS:** "No, it's not true. Tabaluga is written by a guy in Germany called Peter Maffay, and it's like a children's play with music. It's very, very clever. I've seen it on television but, unfortunately, I haven't actually been to one of his shows; he's also a rock artist, and a big one, too. Tabaluga is very good, but I have no plans to be in it."

Does Chris decide what music is played in the concert venues before the support act comes on stage? (Carole Sterckx, London). CHRIS: "Most of the time, the answer is 'yes'. I also decide what is played after the show. I like people to arrive and hear nice music - and then leave with a smile on their face."

In the BBC Radio 2 series about you, you played a beautiful tune called 'When Winter Comes' - will this ever be recorded in the studio? (Steve Bennett, Cheshire). CHRIS: "Well, it never has been so far. It's a piano instrumental piece, and I think it would very much suit an orchestral version - and I also think it would work very well in a movie, as a piece of music in the background. No plans to record it just yet, but maybe at some point in the future."

Chris mentioned his love of language on 'This Is Your Life' - does he still manage to read much and, if so, who are his favourite authors? (Mandy, Derby). CHRIS: "Well, I like to read a fairly wide spread of stuff. For example, I like to read thrillers - really good rollicking adventure stuff - as well as slightly more serious books. For example, I'm reading a book called *The Way Of A Healer* at the moment, which is about something that I'm absolutely fascinated about; healing with hands. When I get time, I'm going to see if I can develop this any further - because I have the healer's touch; I've often taken away pain from people. It's remarkable; when I run my hands over people where there are pain areas - like an inch or two off the body, you don't actually have to touch anybody - they feel this vibration happening. It's something that people think you're a bit of a crank about, but I certainly believe it fully. My sister-in-law was here recently, and she's as cynical as anybody, but she had a pain in her hand - and I just ran my hands over it. She felt a fizzing sensation all over her hand while I did this and, within minutes, the pain had gone. So... I've also got *The Life And Works Of Oscar Wilde* by my bedside, and I dip into that from time to time."

This is a question from me, now; I'm intrigued about this healing business. Could you actually feel where pain was, without first being told where it might be? CHRIS: "Yes I can. I can identify where it is."

Do you think that has anything to do with a person's natural electricity? CHRIS: "Yes...but it's very hard to know. People will talk about aura, and they will talk about natural electricity being given off around the body. I think if you could identify that... You see, pain expresses itself as heat - and it's all very well to say 'Oh, I can identify heat' - but I can even do it through clothing. You can find the point of pain. Now, some of the time there's nothing you can do, particularly - obviously - with fractures, but what I can do is take away pain. Dramatically, last year, I came across a woman who had been in pain from a spinal problem for 12 years. I just touched her back for a few minutes - and she just burst into tears. She said 'That is the first time I've had no pain for virtually 12 years.' It wasn't like a long-term remedy, I think that probably the pain came back within about 48 hours, but nevertheless, whatever it was that I did...it took it away."

Do you know any German groups of singers and, if so, what do you think of their music? (Marion Bressel, Germany). CHRIS: "I admire many German artists, but I don't want to specifically name any particular one. When I'm on tour in Germany, I get the opportunity to listen to radio - and I hear a lot of good stuff."

What do most of the fans in the audience want you to play when your offer to play a song? (Marion Bressel). CHRIS: "I think it's generally a selection of things. As I explained, during the last tour I said 'What do you want now?', in the solo section - and people would yell 'Carry Me!' or 'Fatal Hesitation' and I'd let them have a bash at it; give them the microphone and they'd sing. So, it tends to be a very wide range of stuff."

When you went to school, was there any subject you completely hated? (Marion Bressel). CHRIS: "I wasn't particularly good at mathematics, but I got the gist of it by the end. My good subjects were English and French, which is what I finally studied in university, and I also enjoyed history. I wasn't mad about divinity and religious studies...but that would be about it."

Is there a song you have written that you don't like to play any more? (Marion Bressel). CHRIS: "Ha-ha! There's a few..."

Why did you translate 'The Lady In Red' into 'La Dama De Ayer' - which means 'The Lady of Yesterday'? (Marion Bressel - who has some very good questions!). CHRIS: "Well, I didn't do the translation, firstly, and secondly, I was asked by the Spanish record company whether I would do a version in Spanish, and if I would approve the lyrics. And I approved the lyrics because, quite simply, you can't do a direct translation; *Lady In Red* into Spanish is not particularly easy to sing. For example 'Rojo' (pronounced 'Rocho'), which means 'red' in Spanish, is just not a nice word to sing. You've got to keep all of these things in mind when you do translated lyrics. You're not trying to re-create what's in English; you're trying to create something faintly similar that works with the music. If that means you have to change a few words, then that's what you must do."

How do you react when fans want to visit you? (Marion Bressel). CHRIS: "I probably react the same way as most colleagues of mine do; I'm polite, but firm, that at my front gate, or at Bargy Castle...that is my refuge, and my haven. Similarly, I'm sure that most people wouldn't like complete strangers knocking on their door and expecting to be invited in. So, if people do turn up, the most they're likely to get is an autograph and a smile and a photograph - but some of the time I just can't go out because I'm busy; I'm doing stuff. I feel that I'm kind of available when I'm out in public, but when I'm at home - it's private. And I like to keep it that way."

Why did you choose the glass, arrows and umbrella as the new logo for This Way Up? (John Webb, Portsmouth). CHRIS: "If you look on millions of boxes, all over the world, which have 'This Way Up' stamped on them, you'll get a better idea. The glass means 'fragile', and the other two are international symbols for people who are handling these objects. For example, if you see a TV packed in a box, you'll notice it's stamped 'This Way Up', with the three symbols."

What is the unreleased song 'Hot Barrel Hannah' about? (Last question from Marion Bressel!). CHRIS: "Hot Barrel Hannah! It's a dreadful song, which is why it's unreleased! It's a bit of fun, I wrote it years and years ago, about a very pushy woman in the Wild West who 'would make a horseshoe curl any time that she smiled'. You know, it's just about a really ugly woman who tended to get her own way with all the men."

Remember, if you have a burning question which you would like to ask Chris about his career or life, simply send it in - with your name and address - and age if you wish - to the club P.O. Box.

FORTHCOMING IN 1995

Now, and as promised, more details about what Chris has in store for the year.

CHRIS: "I should set this off by mentioning the fact that I travelled to Sofia in Bulgaria earlier in the year. Now, the reason I went there was because I wanted to see how a solo show would do in a place where they wouldn't necessarily be familiar with all of the material. I made a bit of a blunder there - because they knew everything! The audience were fantastic, and they were really aware of the material that I sang. There was stuff I didn't do, like the wordy, difficult English stuff like *Spanish Train*, *Spaceman* and *Patricia*,

but nevertheless I managed to sing, for nearly an hour-and-a-half, a selection of stuff of my own which went down very well. That was just to see how viable a solo concert would be, as I said, and it was very encouraging. If I do a solo tour, hopefully I won't do it completely alone; maybe I'll bring a string section or another player along. That kind of gets away from the idea of a solo tour, I know, but nevertheless it adds an extra texture to a concert performance. Anyway...the plan for this year, quite simply, is that I want to make a record, mainly with orchestra - to give it some cohesion all through, of this kind of make-up: two or three new songs - of which I already have two, about four of five old songs of mine which I would like to re-record in a completely different way (like *Missing You*, *Lady In Red* - and maybe three more obscure ones) and then I would also like to record four or five real personal favourites, from *The Beatles* or *Roy Orbison* or whatever. Again, I'd like to do those in a personal kind of a way. Hopefully, we'll have this record available by about the end of October."

Although we've spoken for years about the idea of a solo tour, what intrigues me about this project is the fact that, after so many years in the business, you still have something new and exciting and different to sink your teeth into.

CHRIS: "Well, I'm particularly excited by this project because it's going to be favourites, basically. I'm trying to think of a title that sums it all up... But it's great to be able to do something in a slightly different way - and there's going to be a couple of songs in there that I felt got away, from the past. One of them, which I'm dying to do, is actually from the new album; *The Snows Of New York*. I'd love to sing that with a complete gospel choir. In concert, it just sounded so much stronger than it did on the record, and I felt that it was just probably recorded the wrong way, in the final analysis. So, to have an opportunity to re-record that in an orchestral and choral way is, for me, very exciting."

I know you've used orchestras in the past, but I also know how very excited you were about the power of orchestra, going into the recording of This Way Up - was that the thing that finally sparked off this long-felt intention to strip things down to a solo level?

CHRIS: "Initially, it was working with George Martin on that song for the Gershwin album, *Do What You Do*. I just thought that was amazing; to walk in, having done my homework and preparation, to have one run-through, to get all the balances - and the second take is the one on the record. With nothing added. And I thought 'This is incredible!' Instead of spending a week on a track, you can walk in with an orchestra and do one in 20 minutes. That's it; you've got an album track. The idea of doing an entire album in two or three days, for me, is very appealing - instead of two or three months."

So we might call this acoustic album 'Chris de Burgh Unplugged', but after it there's the prospect of an album which you plug back in to...

CHRIS: "Oh, gosh yes - but I wouldn't refer to this new album as 'Unplugged'. I would say it's more 'Reinterpretations', basically. And if I can come up with a cleverer word than 'Reinterpretations', that's what it'll be called. You see, working with an orchestra brings out the best in a singer; it makes you really try hard. And I feel that the way I was recorded on *The Son And The Father*, *You Are The Reason* and *Here Is Your Paradise* was as good as I've ever sung. It really lifted me - and I just felt great about it."

Looking forward to the next few months, what's on the scorecard?

CHRIS: "Obviously, I'll be planning for the album and, on a personal basis, finding plenty of time and fun to be out with the kids. Apart from that, I've nothing really to add... I'll take each day as it comes, and get my teeth into this new project. But it is a turning point; I feel very strongly that I am at a crossroads, professionally speaking, but my light is undimmed and now that I have got something that I really feel strongly about I'm quite certain that I'll throw myself into it 150%..."

Finally, how are you feeling within yourself?

CHRIS: "Excellent!"

THE C de B HOTLINE

This is the premium rate phonenumber service set up by the club in addition to the one indicated on the reverse of your membership card. The service enables us to up-date information about Chris at a much faster rate than normal - but calls will be more expensive. The charges are 39p per minute cheap rate, and 49p at all other times. Unfortunately, this service cannot receive calls from outside of the UK - the telephone system has not quite mastered this yet - but we will be maintaining our original line, purely for members from abroad. Messages will only be put on either service when relevant, and the date the message was recorded will always be mentioned first to enable callers who have already heard it to hang up immediately, should they choose. The number to call is:

0891 334 225

PEN PALS

There's only room for a few pen pals in this issue, as follows, but if you would like to be included in a future list of C de B correspondents, send your name and address (with your age, if you wish) into the club P.O. Box address.

Karen Szollosi, Hvidovrevej 117, st.th., 2650 Hvidovre, Denmark. (Aged 48).

Paul Forrester, 3 Elm Avenue, Cleethorpes, South Humberside, England. (Aged 16).

Verity Wright, 220 Shelbourne Road, Charminster, Bournemouth, Dorset, England. (Aged 25).

Sarah Smith, Lavender Cottage, Chain Bridge, March, Cambs, PE15 0BH, England. (Aged 18).

Mrs Cigdem Onal, Kayisdagi Cad. Hamle Sok. No:9/5 81080 Goztepe, Istanbul, Turkey. (Aged 20).

Mrs Arzu Dagci, Sahra Araligi Sok, Durust Apt. No:16/1, Daire:14, 80310 Goztepe, Istanbul, Turkey. (Aged 20).

Mrs Nil Akasya, Soysop Sok. Sema Apt. 1/5 Uskudar, Istanbul, Turkey. (Aged 24).

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME...

That brings another issue to a close, but the next edition of the Gazette - featuring the latest information about Chris's acoustic album and concerts - will be with you towards the end of the summer, or before if the need dictates. In the meantime, just a few words about the postcard concerning back catalogue albums from Chris included in this issue; if you're already a member of the club - don't fill out the part of the card containing the application form! Obviously, there's no need to; you're already a member...

So, until the next time, all that remains to be said is 'Thanks, as ever, for your continued patience while waiting for the 'latest' edition of the Gazette to arrive (!), and for your loyal support for Chris and the fan club.' If you have any comments or criticisms about the club or the newsletter, address them to me, Mike.

The New Chris de Burgh Club, P.O. Box 276, London, E2 7BW.

PS: For anyone into 'surfing The Net', it might be of interest to note that there is a Web Page about Chris on computer. The address is: <http://www.cecer.army.mil/cgi-bin/artist.ph?DeBurgh-Chris>. Many thanks to our member Amro A Hassanin for informing us about this.