

BIG COUNTRY



Issue 4
CROSSING THE COUNTRY
EDITION



RECORDING UPDATE

BIG COUNTRY'S debut album **THE CROSSING** is released by Phonogram on July 15. It was recorded partly at The Manor Studios in Oxfordshire and partly at RAK in London. It was produced by Steve Lillywhite (see page 5) and engineered by Bill Gosling. Most of you will already have bought the single or 12 inch of In A Big Country, and the album will include a new mix of that track and Fields of Fire. It features many of your favourite live songs, such as Lost Petrol and Inwards, and also some numbers you won't have heard before - at least in their recorded form. We naturally think it's a masterpiece, but we'd be very interested to hear your views and criticisms. It took about five weeks to record in all, which isn't bad going these days. We hope you all enjoy it...

On the subject of records, a double A side single of Fields of Fire and In A Big Country is being released on the Continent in a few weeks time. We are trying to arrange for copies of it to be available through the fan club for those of you who would like to keep a complete collection of Big Country vinyl.

News .. news .. news .. news .. news

FUTURE plans for the lads include a further tour of major venues in Britain in September to promote the album. Another single will probably be recorded in August. In October they'll be heading off for a European tour, and may be back in America at the end of the year. There is talk of them going out to the Far East and Australia in the New Year, but no definite plans as yet...

For any of you collecting video recordings of the band, they have recorded a session for the German show 'Vorsicht Musik' so you'd better get on to your Deutsche penpals if you want a copy of that. They've also done one track on the Three of a Kind TV show which will be shown when the new series starts in October. For the record they have appeared recently on the Old Grey Whistle Test, The Switch, Cheggers Plays Pop, No. 73, TVAR, and of course, Top of the Pops. If any of you have missed some of these, or if you have recordings you'd be willing to lend out, perhaps you could get together through the magazine - see Country Postbag. The same applies to any of the radio sessions they've done - Peter Powell, Kid Jensen, John Peel, for instance.

THERE'S some new merchandise available on the tour or through the magazine, see page 19.

Also in this issue you'll find interviews with Peter Powell, Janice Long and Steve Lillywhite; stories from the last tour; a feature on acoustic duo Second Thoughts; lots of new photos; letters from fans; gossip and a competition. HAPPY READING...

BIG COUNTRY OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

The Country Club, 123 Edgware Road, London, W2 2HX

Edited and designed by JACKIE WHITBURN

Published by BIG COUNTRY CLUB

Thanks to Tony, Mark, Stuart and Bruce, Ian Grant, Alan Edwards and Beri Chadwick at Cairo, Martin Somers at the Country Club, Chris Bates.

Please send all correspondence to the above address. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome.

Tour dates . . .

BIG COUNTRY begin an extensive nationwide tour on Friday June 17. For the first time they will be playing dates in Northern and Southern Ireland and Wales, as well as England and Scotland. The full date list is as follows:

JUNE

- 17: LEICESTER University
- 18: MANCHESTER Polytechnic
- 19: LIVERPOOL, Royal Court Theatre
- 20: READING, Hexagon
- 21: BRISTOL, Locarno
- 22: CARDIFF, Top Rank
- 24: BIRMINGHAM University
- 25: AYLESBURY, Friars
- 26: BRIGHTON, Top Rank
- 27: LONDON, Hammersmith Palais
- 28: SOUTHEND, Westcliff Pavilion
- 29: NOTTINGHAM, Rock City

JULY

- 1: SHEFFIELD University
- 3: ABERDEEN, Fusion
- 4: GLASGOW, Tiffany's
- 5: AIR, Pavilion
- 7: BELFAST, Queen's University
- 8: DUBLIN, TV Club
- 9: GALWAY, Seapoint Ballroom
- 10: CORK, Savoy Ballroom
- 12: SWANSEA, Brangwyn Hall

- 13: BATH, Pavilion
- 14: ST AUSTELL, Coliseum
- 15: SALISBURY, City Hall
- 16: DUNSTABLE, Queensway Hall
- 17: POOLE, Arts Centre
- 19: GUERNSEY, The Beausejour
- 20: JERSEY, Fort Regent Leisure Centre
- 22: LLANDUDNO, Astra Theatre
- 23: REDCAR, Coatham Bowl
- 24: HULL, City Hall
- 25: LEEDS, Town Hall
- 26: OLDHAM, Queen Elizabeth Hall
- 27: MANSFIELD, Leisure Centre

TOUR PERSONNEL

Tour manager: CHARLIE HERBERT
Sound engineer: SHEDS
Monitor engineer: LITTLE JOHN
Backline: LES and BOB
Lighting: CHAMELEON
P.A.: ENTTEC

IN A BIG COUNTRY

I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LOOK LIKE THIS
WITHOUT A REASON
ANOTHER PROMISE FALLEN THROUGH
ANOTHER SEASON PASSES BY YOU

NEVER TOOK THE SMILE AWAY
FROM ANYBODY'S FACE
AND THAT'S A DESPERATE WAY TO LOOK
FOR SOMEONE WHO IS STILL A CHILD

CHORUS
IN A BIG COUNTRY
DREAMS STAY WITH YOU
LIKE A LOVER'S VOICE
FRIES THE MOUNTAINSIDE
STAY ALIVE

I THOUGHT THAT PAIN AND TRUTH
WERE THINGS THAT REALLY MATTERED
BUT YOU CAN'T STAY HERE WITH
EVERY SINGLE HOPE YOU HAD SHATTERED

I'M NOT EXPECTING TO
GROW FLOWERS IN A DESERT
BUT I CAN LIVE AND BREATHE
AND SEE THE SUN IN WINTERTIME

REPEAT CHORUS TWICE

SO TAKE THAT LOOK OUT OF HERE
IT DOESN'T FIT YOU
BECAUSE IT'S HAPPENED DOESN'T MEAN
YOU'VE BEEN FORGOTTEN
PULL UP YOUR HEAD OFF THE FLOOR
COME BY SCREAMING

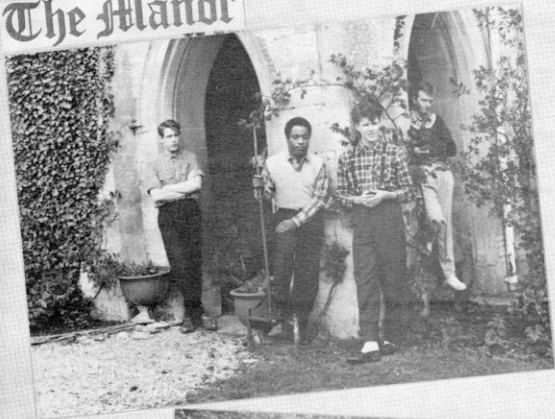
CRY OUT FOR EVERYTHING
YOU EVER MIGHT HAVE WASTED
I THOUGHT THAT PAIN AND TRUTH
WERE THINGS THAT REALLY MATTERED
BUT YOU CAN'T STAY HERE WITH
EVERY SINGLE HOPE
THAT YOU HAD SHATTERED

I'M NOT EXPECTING TO
GROW FLOWERS IN A DESERT
BUT I CAN LIVE AND BREATHE
AND SEE THE SUN IN WINTERTIME

REPEAT CHORUS TO FADE

WORDS AND MUSIC BY BIG COUNTRY
REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION
VIRGIN MUSIC PUBLISHING LTD. BIG
COUNTRY MUSIC
ON PHONOGRAM RECORDS

The Manor



JACKIE WHITEBURN meets
STEVE LILLYWHITE - the
brains behind the
production of Fields of
Fire, In A Big Country,
and the band's debut
album The Crossing.



THE MAN BEHIND THE MIXING DESK

FOR a young man with just a few years experience in the music business, Steve Lillywhite has an astounding track record. This fresh-faced, friendly and modest producer has gained the respect and recognition of the very best in the field. With over 20 albums under his belt, work now chases him, rather than the other way round, and he has the privilege of selecting the bands he would like to produce. But his is no overnight success story - it's the result of a hard slog which began when he left school at 17. Steve, now 28, recalled: "I'd played bass in the school band and I knew I really wanted to make music my career. I was quite prepared to try making it as a musician, but I was lucky enough to get a job in a recording studio."

It took five years working as a tape operator and general dogsbody before Steve even got a chance to engineer. Eventually he was allowed to use the studio for his own projects if there was any spare time going. He had made friends with a young band called Ultravox, so he helped them make some demo tapes to take round to record companies. Before long they were signed up by Island, and so was Steve.

During his time there he produced acts like Steel Pulse, Eddie and the Hot Rods and of course, Ultravox. But he found being tied to one record company and one set of bands restricting and negotiated a freelance contract, which allowed him to work with non-Island bands like Siouxsie and the Banshees, XTC and The Members. Since then he has not looked back. Now a completely free agent, he is best known for his work with U2 and Joan Armatrading, and hopefully will soon receive the acclaim he deserves for his production of Big Country.

Steve takes his work extremely seriously, although it's not always obvious to watch him. He laughs and jokes and drinks with the lads, but at the same time he's not frightened of voicing his opinions, or making unpopular decisions. He explained: "I'm not a dictator and I like quite a loose atmosphere in the studio. If people are enjoying themselves they are going to perform better. I have to make sure I'm able to get on with a band before I work with them, because I want to make a good job of it. My job is to bring out what is inside them, and when I first meet a band I'll go through each member individually and work out their weak points. It may not be anything to do with music - one person might be nervous and unsure of themselves, and another may have a lot of good ideas but find it hard to express them. In that way I'm a bit like a psychiatrist because I have to decide how best to treat the individual."

When he was first approached to produce Big Country Steve admits he was dubious about the strength of Stuart's voice, but he's now convinced he's a good front man. Steve said: "I did like the experience of the rhythm section. A lot of Tony and Mark's expertise is lost at a gig, so I was keen to work with them. And I'm very much into guitars at the moment. I reckon a lot of bands have overdone on synthesisers. Big Country prove that guitars can be modern and vital to the music scene." He first worked on the Fields of Fire single and built up a good relationship with the band. Steve added: "The single went well so I suggested we go in and make a killer of an album together." Now *The Crossing* is complete, Steve probably won't listen to it for months. "I do tend to get paranoid after finishing an album - I can't listen to it without picking holes," he admitted.



Picture by CHRIS BATES



Sketch by PAUL McDONALD

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK

HAVING been an ardent supporter of Tottenham Hotspur FC since 1967, it was an honour and a pleasure to be invited to watch them play Manchester United towards the end of last season. So along with Stuart, who is a Utd supporter when in England, I went along to White Hart Lane. Jim couldn't have fixed it better. First we were taken onto the pitch which was nervewracking enough, but then into the players' changing rooms, first Spurs, then United. We were introduced to both teams and managers and posed for photos. And then the big event. Much to my satisfaction and Stuart's despair, Spurs beat Utd 2-0. This was an afternoon that we'll never forget. Our sincerest thanks to John Moseley and Ralph Coates for a great afternoon. On the right you can see me with Spurs striker Steve Archibald, and below, as a consolation, is Stuart with some of the Manchester United team.



TONY BUTLER



FIRST it was Marks and Sparks with their bread rolls - now it's good old Wagon Wheels naming their products after the faithful four. Thanks to Gavin Woollard for sending in the label, although we had to go out and buy some ourselves just to have a taste... Apparently they're one of the most fattening things you can eat, so don't go scoffing too many.

STUART did pretty well on Pop Quiz the other week when he was on Cliff Richard's team with Cheryl from Bucks Fizz. Funny how a Skids' song came up as the answer to one of the questions... Tony was a guest on Kid Jensen's Sunday programme in the Collector's Choice spot. He chose to play Cuban Slide, the B side of the Pretenders single Talk of the Town as a thank you to Chrissie Hynde and Martin Chambers for asking him to play on Back On The Chain Gang, and as a tribute to sadly-missed guitarist James Honeyman Scott... Don't know how Mark can be so chirpy first thing in the morning. He was full of wise cracks when he, Stuart and Tony were interviewed on TVAM. Hope he gets an iron soon... Bruce has been keeping a bit quiet recently, but fortunately he hasn't had much time to go out shooting small furry animals with his air rifle. He's sticking to gentler past-times, like drinking pints of lager and eating curry till it comes out of his ears - and hiding behind a pair of very dark glasses...

JOHN
BLAKE'S



BIZARRE

BIG COUNTRY IN TOGA NUDE ROMP

THREE IN A BED
'SEX CHANGE'
Centurion tells all.
the wine, the women,
the Willy's,
I've seen them all
exclusivé

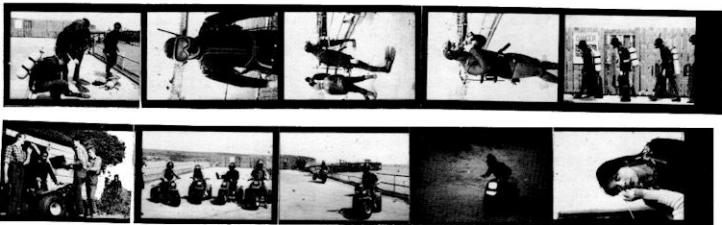
YOU can't believe everything you read in the papers, now can you...

Location: Swanage

Purpose: To make a promo video for In A Big Country

Incident: An unfortunate mistake in the early hours of the morning in a cheap hotel. Certain members of Big Country, after an evening of merriment and drink, knocked on the wrong door by mistake, which led to a complaint and the nationally-reported eviction. What some hotels will do for publicity...

The actual filming was as adventurous as the story line. There weren't many casualties apart from a case of sea sickness and a damaged knee ligament, both sustained by me. I thought Swanage was great - but you can keep the hotel. Cheers, TONY



Sketch by PAUL McDONALD



Picture by CHRIS HATERS



Two unusual fans talk about their work

PETER Powell bubbles over with the kind of enthusiasm usually employed by a small child with a new toy. Each new day brings fresh excitement, fresh challenges and fresh hopes for this champion of the talented musical underdog. Some people accuse him of being a fake, but he swears that the morning he wakes up without feeling the special spark that spurs him on, he'll give up for good. He explained: "If it goes against the grain for someone to enthuse and enjoy what they are doing it's hard luck. That's just the way I am. But the minute I stop being a target for criticism is the minute I am no longer doing my job as well as I could. I reckon the majority of people enjoy my enthusiasm."

He puts it all down to still being a fan, yet having the enviable privilege of being able to promote the bands he believes have potential. He also describes himself as an incurable optimist, deriving enormous pleasure from seeing bands become successful after a few plugs on his show.

He started his daily programme about three years ago, and since then has listened to literally thousands of demo tapes and debut singles sent in by young hopefuls. A handful have gone on to become household names, but the majority simply got the consideration they deserved and a pointer in the right direction. Write some new material...put

JACKIE WHITBURN meets

Radio One DJ Peter

Powell. Cartoon by

MARK BRZEZICKI



in some more melody...change your bass player.

Peter explained: "Most of my time is spent seeing new bands and listening to new music. I get about 50 to 60 tapes in a week and I just plough through them, playing them in the car, at home, or wherever I can have a quiet listen. It's a bit like being in the A and R department at a record company. I just keep my ears open for a sound I like. Most of the bands I have got involved with now have record deals. But it's no good trying to help a band that's not ready for promotion. I generally make sure they've got some kind of management and something that will carry them visually as well as the music. Then I get them to record about four tracks for the show. If they come up

... and



JANICE Long's rise to success as a national radio DJ happened literally overnight, in the tradition of every good fairy story. One day she was broadcasting to a small local audience from Radio Merseyside in Liverpool and the next she was introducing herself to millions of listeners all over Britain on her own Radio One show. And she brought with her the freshness of true music fan, anxious to provide an entertaining show for a young audience. At Merseyside she was hosting her own show called Street Life which was heavily linked to the local music scene, and particularly to the Warehouse where many now successful Liverpool bands got their first airing. Janice, a 27-year-old former air hostess, loved her work. In her own words: "I was genuinely interested in music so it was a hobby which became a job."

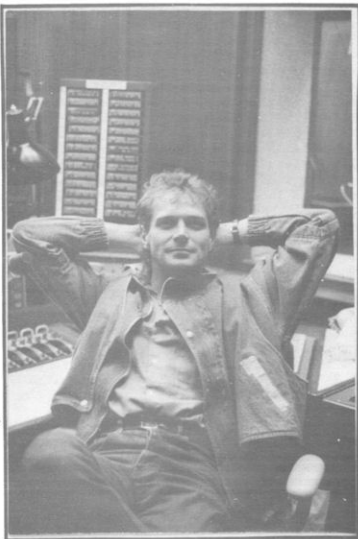
When two of the top men from Radio One came up to Liverpool and asked her out to lunch she thought it was simply to milk her know

k . . .

to scratch then I'll play them, but sometimes I have to turn round and explain that they're just not good enough. That's the way it goes."

But it's not just the unsigned, brand new, acts he can help. Even with a record deal bends rely heavily on radio airplay to reach a wider audience and sell their singles. In previous years it was Spandau Ballet and Duran Duran who sparked Powell's interest. This year he has consciously championed Big Country after hearing a demo tape sent by Phonogram before the release of Harvest Home. Peter was the first DJ to ask them to record a session for radio, which went out just before the debut single.

Peter said: "Big Country sounded so refreshing. I was up to my ears in synthesiser sounds and I just loved the guitars they used. I was a big Skids fan and I was particularly interested to find out what Stuart was doing after 18 months without a peep out of him. And I was keen to check out the rest of the band. When I heard the tape it was really like a breath of fresh air. This band are so extraordinarily tight, with such an instantly recognisable sound. I'm a fan of their whole determination and drive." In spite of that he found Harvest Home disappointing when the single came out. CONTINUES OVER THE PAGE →



their appreciation of Big Country

JACKIE WHITBURN finds out more about Radio One newcomer Janice Long...

ledge of the local scene for the planned Radio One on Merseyside series. Janice said: "The next thing I knew they rang up and offered me a job. I said 'Don't be stupid', but they said they were looking for some new DJs and would I like the job. It was totally out of the blue." Janice strongly believes in fate. She originally applied to drama school after nursing an ambition to be an actress since childhood, but failed to get a grant and settled for air hostessing instead. Later she got an interview with Merseyside and was taken on to train as a station assistant. She explained: "Everything was very staid and boring on local radio at the time. One day someone went off sick and I ended up on the air. After that I was allowed to develop my own ideas for a contemporary music show, concentrating on all sorts of new

stuff, but particularly local bands. Then the record companies actually started sending us new releases for the first time."

When Janice arrived at Radio One last December, she was not only a new voice and a new face - she was also the first woman DJ to be taken on since Annie Nightingale ??? years ago. And while she doesn't personally believe there is any difference between male and female ability on the air, she does think people take a different attitude towards her because of her sex.

"It has always been men spouting on about music, and there are still people who are guilty of treating girls as 'silly women'. You always get this thing about whether you're fat or thin, pretty or ugly. What on earth does that matter? Being female I do think I'm open to more criticism, but I believe I'm getting through to listeners because I have a genuine interest in the music scene."

CONTINUES OVER THE PAGE →

But Fields of Fire renewed his faith and he played it at every opportunity, as well as arranging a performance for the band on the Oxford Road Show. His next task was to see the band play live, and he managed to catch them at the Lyceum in London on the last tour - the night they had no less than four support bands.

Peter said: "It was a long haul and we were all knackered by the time Big Country came on, but it was worth the wait in the end. Their sound is just incredible." He was eagerly awaiting their debut album: "I am delighted they have taken their time to make the album, and that they've got Steve Lillywhite producing. I really do admire his work, and I love what he's done with the current single. But the pressure is on the band now. I did my bit with Fields of Fire, but from now on they really do have to prove themselves - and I reckon they can do it."

The Oxford Road Show is Peter's other major interest. Before he actually became involved in the programme he suggested to producer Peter Hamilton that young people had probably had enough depression, recession and unemployment in their own lives and it was time to bring back a show concentrating on entertainment and, again, the promotion of new bands.

Peter said: "The audience figures doubled with the last series. Before it had a very definite format which was not in keeping with what was going on. We've seen a difference in the way youngsters are reacting to their circumstances and we needed to reflect that. Everybody I would have liked to watch the show has watched it, and been constructive about how it could be improved. We had a great deal to prove because it was the first time Radio One and BBC TV have had such a major link-up. The next series has, of course, to be even better."

Isn't the whole business of being a radio and TV presenter something of a giant ego trip? "I suppose there is some ego involved in it, but when it comes down to it, a DJ away from music is really bog standard - as low as you can get. We thrive on the music as much as it does on us. I reckon it is the fans who really dictate what is happening, and we just have to reflect that. The creativity is definitely on the street, not in the hands of the media."

That interest extends to going to see bands play live if she is impressed by their demo tapes or records. Then if she still thinks they have potential she might ask them to do a session for her show. A lot of the time she relies on her own judgement and taste to decide which bands get airplay, but she does take into account the opinions of friends and the other people working on her show.

Janice explained: "Others can often hear something in a record that just doesn't strike me at all, so I do listen to their views. But if there is a record that I think is particularly good, then I'll play it, no matter what."

One such record was Fields of Fire by, of course, Big Country. She was sitting in for Peter Powell on his early evening show and played it religiously every day.

Janice said: "I remember reviewing it on Round Table and it got a unanimous hit vote. I wonder if it would have done so well if we'd all said we didn't like it." Her first impressions of the band's sound have remained: "The energy is the thing that struck me, and I made myself get up to go and see their gig at the Liverpool Warehouse, even though I wasn't feeling too good. Their performance was so vibrant and exciting and they had such a rapport with the audience. The sound was excellent and everyone really enjoyed themselves. A friend of mine who saw them in Manchester said the same thing." Janice would still prefer to see a band playing live than see them on TV. She said: "It's the atmosphere and the music that matter in most cases. For instance I think Stuart Adamson is pretty good looking, but it wouldn't matter at all if he wasn't. There are bands, of course, who build a following by creating an image, like Culture Club."

Janice still lives in Liverpool, commuting by British Rail (her pet hate) to do shows in London and Manchester. She says she spends more time travelling than she does working, lives out of suitcases, and feels like a tourist half the time. But she's keen to hang on to her Liverpool roots, even though she would like to host her own daytime show on Radio One. She said: "One of the best bits of advice I got in my first week was from Peter Powell who told me never to forget my friends and I don't intend to." She also hasn't forgotten her first ambition and wants to act professionally just once in her life. And, finally, she'd love to have a go at making a record. "It must be a great feeling," she said.

TALES OF SPRING ON THE ROAD

Tour manager CHARLIE HERBERT talks about the band's April tour, which coincided with the success of Fields of Fire...

One car, one three-tonner, two Luton vans, four musicians and six crew - put them together and you've got the Big Country Spring Tour of England and Scotland 1983.

The band arrive at their first gig at Manchester Hacienda by light aircraft. Nerves are tense, not only because it's the first night of the tour but also because of Stuart's sworn hatred of flying. Strange things happen on tour, but none stranger than Stuart arriving declaring a new found enjoyment - FLYING.

The tour proceeds through Hull and the day of the Grand National, which involved crew, band, hotel residents, a wedding and several barrels of lager. On to Redcar. The stage slopes forward, the backline rolls forward, the drum riser wobbles, but all goes well.

Next, Edinburgh and Dundee. We add an extra gig in the afternoon at Edinburgh and get sent halfway round Dundee looking for the hotel by a crazy Cambridge University don. Where did he come from? The stage at the Dundee Dance Factory was small, but with a lot of work we thought it was playable. Everything went fine until Tony disappeared thigh-deep into the flooring halfway through the set, gashing his leg open. The rest of the gig was played with a gaping hole in the stage. Nottingham Rock City follows, the equipment is overhauled and the band confirm Nottingham's hall, last heard with U2 at the Theatre Royal not long before.

Up two flights of stairs and we're in the dingy Liverpool Warehouse. The venue is packed and the atmosphere is "electric", probably something to do with the later gutting of the Warehouse...

The band steam through Sheffield on to the London Lyceum. There are tickets on sale outside for £35 each and together with an amazing "Martian" lighting rig Big Country play their largest headline gig to date (SOLD OUT).

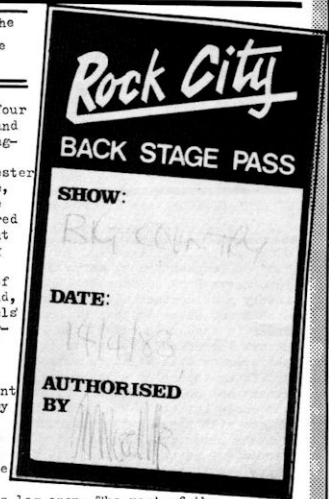
We turn south to play Guildford, supported by Tony and Mark's ex band leader Simon Townshend and his band Shea Rahmah, then on to another total sellout at Portsmouth Polytechnic.

For the last leg of the tour we head north again. Sunderland Poly is the next stop. The crowd goes mad. The encores start and go on and on. Up to Glasgow, the tour is climaxing, another sell-out, more encores - four or is it five?

Definitely a gig to remember, with Stuart's brother-in-law's band White China supporting, it's a home gig for a home crowd.

The last night of the tour, Bradford Caesar's - and where are the fans? The support band Second Thoughts play their set - where are the fans? Time is running out before Big Country come on stage. They run on, look out and see a mass

of black heads emerging from the walls. The hall explodes and the band deliver their all to an enthusiastic audience. Again the encores start. Second Thoughts join them to play Tracks of My Tears. The stage is full, everyone is happy, the encores go on - is it five or six? Finally Big Country have finished, the end of a gig, the end of the tour. They will be back and are already on their way to bigger and better things...



(CONTINUED OVER PAGE)

I'd like to thank everyone concerned with the tour, especially Stuart Clumpus and his roadies, Bob, Les, John, Lentil, Ron, Woodstock, Sue, and the chefs at the Central Hotel, Glasgow for cooking, if not the best certainly the most filling breakfast of the tour...

Cherly



TIMOTHY DICKSON from Grimsby reviews Big Country at Caesars in BRADFORD on the last night of their spring tour...

CROWD packed in, light and sound check done, the audience abruptly went quiet. "GO" On bounded Bruce, Mark, Stuart and finally Tony. Big Country flew straight into Angle Park and the brilliant live version of Harvest Home. This immediately made contact with the full venue. After a few words from Stuart they dished out Close Action, Balcony and Lost Patrol. Then came the highlight - Stuart's favourite track, and I don't blame him. Guitars changed, Bruce and Stuart introduced it, the track being Porroh Man. This was a really glorious performance with Stuart's extraordinarily distinctive guitar playing with the uplifting interplay with Bruce, and Tony and Mark providing the BIG beat. As Stuart sat on the edge of the stage, still playing and talking to the audience, the whole bar queue was diminished to nothing. Then came the lovers' song Chance with the glowing audience participation chorus line, which held the crowd's attention. Then Country dealt out Heart and Soul and finally Fields of Fire - but no way was that it. They came back on with the amazing Thousand Stars and Inwards. Then support band Second Thoughts, the audience and Big Country joined together to sing Smokey Robinson's Tracks of My Tears. Big Country restored the passion, vigour and emotion with ALL-ACTION replays of Fields of Fire, Harvest Home and Angle Park. During the last three songs some of the fans got on stage and danced and sang with their heroes. It's good when a group of the calibre of Big Country stick with their fans. It was by far the best concert I have had the pleasure to see.

MIKE and PADDY alias SECOND THOUGHTS talk about supporting Big Country on tour

DUNDEE - the Forth Bridge heralded the approach of a home fixture for some and an away game for others. Dunfermline passed us by and seemed to whisper good luck. The Barracuda - the fish tank. Would we sink or swim? With Fields of Fire travelling northwards up the charts as fast as we were up the motorway, we knew Stuart and the lads were in for a hearty reception from the massed clans. We were proved right. We opened the show as usual and received generous attention and applause from the now fanatical Big C fans. Some familiar faces were reappearing from previous north of the border gigs. We felt especially pleased that potentially the most difficult gig, so far from home, went so well. White China came on next and furthered the excitement and anticipation, milking their fair share of well deserved reaction. Feeling like foreigners no more, we joined the audience in welcoming Big Country on stage. Hearing the songs in the set for the fifth time we were not surprised at the enthusiasm and growing number of their audience. Big Country warmed many a 'heart and soul' that night. After twice as many gigs again and a marathon show at the Lyceum in London we were all anticipating the final show at Bradford Caesars. It was going to be a big night. By now a rapport had built up between ourselves and Stuart, Bruce Mark and Tony and we were really pleased when Stuart asked us to join them on stage for an encore. After a harmonious dressing room rehearsal we found ourselves joining the lads on stage to sing that great Smokey Robinson hit, Tracks of My Tears. Big Country had reached the end of a successful tour that had been rewarding for all. Our thanks to the band, the crew - and the fans.



On Second
Thoughts . . .

. . .introducing
Mike and Paddy

Some of you may remember Second Thoughts from the Big Country tour. Find out more about them below...

SECOND THOUGHTS are MIKE COTTON and PADDY O'TOOLE, an acoustic duo from the South Coast, with a great ear for melody.

SECONDS OUT: Paddy and Mike started playing in 1976, skiving off school to learn new chords. They started writing songs together and worked with various local bands in the Bournemouth area.

SECOND HAND: Early in 1980 they joined the Jags for an American tour, Paddy on bass and Mike on keyboards. The Jags split early in 1981 and the melodic duo ensconced themselves in a Clapham bedsit, pen in one hand, paper in the other.

SECOND COMING: A distinct lack of cash and a deluge of new songs forced them down into the tube stations. Their full-sounding acoustic guitars, coupled with a classic use of dual harmony, led to a nationwide support tour with Big Country.

SECOND TIME AROUND: Mike and Paddy's future is in their own hands (literally) this time - their lessons have been learned. Their survival has depended on the strength of their material and songs such as You Don't Love Me and Your Boyfriend Says You Don't Swing reflect this. Supports with The Alarm, a string of shows and an adventurous tour of cinemas are lined up for the duo.

Country Postbag

AND so it came to pass that Big Country had a Top Ten hit with Fields of Fire. Young trendy people danced a square dance on Top of the Pops and a good time was had by all. Popularity boosted by TV appearances on TOPP, Riverside, ORS, Whatever You Want and Cheggers Plays Pop; credibility strengthened on the U2 tour; things look rosy for the best band in the land.

Today I heard a new single, In A Big Country, the finest song yet to come from this brilliant group. The production is beautifully understated and, although not as catchy as Fields of Fire and lacking the cruising drive of Harvest Home, the song is complete, carrying an unusual melody and startling guitar fills. I must compliment the band on creating a sound which identifies them and sets them on a level far above all but a few I have ever heard.

Reaction to the band around Wednesfield has been favourable. Because Harvest Home failed, any mention of Big Country prompted chanting of the theme from the Virginian TV programme. I was relieved when Fields of Fire silenced the critics with its deserved success and now the critics are fans of the Big Country sound.

Congratulations also to the record company for the issue of the Scotland-shaped vinyl picture disc of Fields of Fire. This has been framed and hangs proudly on the wall of my room.

DONALD MITCHELL, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton.

IS there any possibility of contacting club members who would be willing to sell or loan recordings of radio sessions and interviews, plus videos of Big Country's TV appearances? Living in Brighton, I have been unable to see any appearances on Channel 4, except last week's Switch, as we are finally able to pick it up. I was able to see the Old Grey Whistle Test, which was excellent. I don't want to engage in bootleg trading, but as many of the recordings, for both TV and radio, are unlikely to be repeated, particularly with new material being produced all the time, certain songs may simply 'disappear'. This could well happen if some of the old songs are rejected in favour of the new on the forthcoming album. I do hope someone can help.

SIMON JONES,

UNFORTUNATELY I have a complaint to make about the gig at Strathclyde University. I contacted the university and was told that students only would be admitted - surely unfair to non-students like myself. Also I was told it would cost £2.50 on the door. On the Saturday I chanced my hand and tried to get in, only to find that it was not £2.50 on the door, but tickets which were sold out the day before. To add fuel to the fire, the person on the door was letting in friends without tickets. When I approached him he told me to get lost, or words to that effect. So please, when you next play Glasgow, please play Night Moves, the Appollo or Tiffany's for me and roughly 200 other non-students who were turned away. Tell the lads to keep up the good work and let's see some more of White China who are also very good.

KENNY GUY, Glasgow.

I WENT to see the band play in Glasgow. The concert itself was really good. The band gave their all for over an hour and played no less than 5 encores. Just one complaint though. Because the concert was at the university it meant non-students like me had to get a student to sign them into the hall, and as there is only one student in my group of friends, only two of us got in and three others had to console themselves in the local pub. So when the band play in Glasgow again, here's hoping they find a venue which doesn't hold such a restriction.

IAN McLEAN, Glasgow.

(Apologies to all non-students who had problems getting in at Strathclyde. The band hope to see you all at Tiffany's in Glasgow on Monday July 4th).

FIRST of all I'd like to say thanks to the band for April 10 at Redcar. The concert was fantastic. My friend, Sandra and I were the first ones to be taken backstage and I'd also like to thank you all for being so friendly when we met you. When I watched you on video today, I could hardly believe that I had actually met you. I know you all said that you're just ordinary people, but it was really great to meet you. It's made you seem more like real people than some of the really big groups who you only ever see on TV, or at a distance on stage. Thanks again for the concert and also to the support groups who were excellent.

ALISON TAYLOR, Ormesby, Middlesbrough.

WHO says Big Country will change? If having a massive hit in the British charts with Fields of Fire doesn't change the band what will? The answer is NOTHING. This statement is made in reply to a letter from a fan club member in Barnsley who hoped the band did not make it BIG. The so called 'loyal fan' who wrote this need only be in the presence of the band for a few minutes to realise that this band will not change in its attitude towards its fans, or its music. I can say this having been in the fortunate position of talking to the band before they played the Sunderland Poly. Just as an example of the band's regard and respect for their fans, they invited a few of us to go into the Poly with them for their sound check before they played their

gig. If the songs were not exactly perfect they would be done again and again as was shown with Inwards, which did not sound quite right in the sound check but when it came to the actual gig, it was perfect. The total dedication to their music required and received much deserved acclaim from their fans, who persuaded the band to return for a total of five encores. If the current single In A Big Country is given the acclaim it should get, it will again be a smash hit in Britain, which may not please the 'fan' in Barnsley, but will delight me. So WHEN Big Country become the massive band they will, I would like to see the face of the doubter in question when he realises they won't have changed at all.

BARRY BOAT, Tynemouth.

FIRST of all I'd like to thanks to Big Country for some great concerts. I first saw them at Night Moves in Glasgow, which was a great concert, and then at Crystals Disco in East Kilbride. Unfortunately there were some technical problems that night, but the band carried on regardless and still put in a fine set. I spoke to the band in the hotel afterwards - they're a really nice bunch of guys. None of this 'I'm a star. You should be grateful I'm speaking to you' stuff. We had a chat and then the band were kind enough to sign my Big Country magazine. They even offered me a beer and a bite to eat, but I had to go as my girlfriend was waiting on me. I thanked the band and said I would try and make it to the next gig at Strathclyde University. My girlfriend and I managed to get signed in by a couple of students at the uni. Margaret is now a Big Country fan also. On the way out, after the band's set, I spoke to Stuart and couldn't have agreed more when he said: "That's whit ye call a f-----g gig man, eh?" (Scotts talk, ha ha). The audience loved the band and the music and it was really good to see the band enjoying themselves so much on stage. I really hope they get the success and recognition they deserve, because they are working hard and earning it. I also hope they come back up to Glasgow soon as the word has spread and there are loads of new fans wanting to see the band live.

ALLAN URQUHART, Glasgow.

I THOUGHT I'd write to say how much I enjoyed Big Country at the Lyceum. It was the first time I had seen them live and was really knocked out at how enthusiastic they were. I was standing right in front of the amplifiers and so got the full pelt of the sound. The band came across really well, and seemed to keep in touch with the audience, which is always a good thing. So many bands act as if the audience isn't there at all, but Big Country were different. I was at the Lyceum from the beginning at 7.30pm and after waiting for hours I was beginning to wonder whether it was worth it. However, as soon as the band walked, or should I say 'bounced', on stage, I realised it was definitely worth the wait. I know four other people who were at the gig and they all agree with me when I say "Big Country are the brightest, most enthusiastic band I've seen in a long time, and I hope they get the fame and fortune they deserve."

JULIE KENNEDY, Harlow, Essex.

I HEARD the new single on the Peter Powell show the other night and it's just brilliant. As he said he was going to play it about half an hour before he actually did, I managed to get ready and tape it. The following morning I went straight out and ordered a copy. I must admit I was half expecting a song I already knew, like Heart and Soul or A Thousand Stars, but it's good to know the band has so much good material.

PAUL WEBB, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.

AT THE moment the music scene is at an all time low in my opinion and there are only two bands I'd rate other than the greatest of the lot (Big Country) and that's the Banshees and Rudi. I look forward to the day Big Country replace the shit currently at the top ie Kajagoogoo, Duran Duran, etc. My biggest hope is that Big Country play a gig on July 3 because there's nothing I'd like better than to celebrate my 21st birthday at a Big Country gig.

CHRIS JAMESON, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

COMPETITION TIME

THERE are six prizes up for grabs in this issue's competition. Each winner will receive a signed copy of the 12inch version of In A Big Country, plus an exclusive poster of the band. All you have to do is name the six music business characters doodled below and the bands they belong to, using the clues provided. Send entries on a postcard by July 30 to Cartoon competition, Country Club, 123 Edgware Road, London W2

- 1) Which person could this be ?
- 2) A vague dream
- 3) Society for the sophisticated
- 4) Mushy room in jail
- 5) Posh person's animal home
- 6) Not a triplet



WINNERS of the last issue's competition were David Wright of Chesterfield, Michael Flynn of Dartford, and Keith Hurcombe of Woodford Green. They each receive signed 12 inch versions of Harvest Home and Fields of Fire.



A day at The Tube

SUZANNE ROWLES and LOUISE HANCOCK from Bristol talk about their visit to The Tube the day Big Country appeared on the show...

THANKS to a competition in the Daily Mirror, we were invited to travel to Newcastle to see the last edition of The Tube go out. Arriving at the studios soon after 3pm, 'press' passes in hand, we ventured into our very first taste of the Big Time. We soon came to appreciate the presence of our Daily Mirror hosts and the PR man from Tyne Tees as more and more people appeared, waving camera cues and running orders. The Tube itself has no scripts and for a 1½ hour live programme it was surprising to see how little panic there was, especially when the time drew closer to 5.15pm.

It was difficult to decide from which part of the building to watch the items as the interviews, VTRs, live bands etc came from all over the place - in fact we spent a lot of our time running from room to room. The programme allows 350 people into the studio where they see the bands warming up and playing live - it was good to see the members of the bands coming and watching with the kids.

Big Country came on just before the first break to a very responsive audience who gave them just as much credit as they gave the two better-known bands - U2 and The Undertones. If the energy they packed into their 8-minute set is any indication of their show on tour, then we reckon they're set to go a long way.

The second part of the programme was mainly a VTR on Irish bands. This gave us time to catch our breath and plan our next strategy. We decided to catch the Bono/Mike Everitt interview and then make our way back to the studio to see the Undertones play three numbers. We didn't get to see any David Bowie - it must have been while we were in the loo! U2 closed the show and for a group we knew little about they were fantastic. The audience obviously thought so too as they over-ran the stage at the end. So many groups you see live are a let-down to their records - we're glad to say all three live bands were as good, if not better live.

We had an unforgettable time at The Tube and at the party afterwards when we met an incredibly friendly and likeable Jools Holland. People were very considerate and genuine, and made you feel like part of the gang. Thanks to Mark and Tony for taking time to speak to us and for showing us that the people you see on telly are as human as the rest of us.

Here's how you can join the club

This is a club for all Big Country enthusiasts. Membership is growing daily. We aim to provide as much information about the band as possible, plus badges, sweatshirts and posters at rock bottom prices, available only to club members. For just £4.50 you can join the club, and receive the next six issues of the magazine through the post as soon as they are published. You will also be entitled to discount on the merchandise detailed below. Fill in the coupon at the bottom of the page, and send to Big Country Club, 123 Edgware Road, London W2 2HX.

Merchandise marketplace

NEW merchandise, including a new-design sweatshirt and T-shirt, will be available on the Crossing The Country tour. Unfortunately details were not available as we went to press, but we hope to forward them on to club members. Items still available are listed below. Please quote your membership number when placing your order.

- STRIP PATCH - beige with Big Country logo in black. 50p (40p members) plus 20p post/packing.
- SQUARE SCARF - beige, 20" square, with dark brown logo in corner. £1.50 (£1.25 members) plus 25p post/packing
- PHOTOGRAPH - Black and white 10 x 8 photo. 50p plus 20p post/packing
- BUTTON BADGES - Set of two, one inch diameter badges. Big Country logo in white on red AND dark brown compass on green background. 50p per set (40p members) plus 20p post/packing
- T-SHIRTS - A) Bright red USA made, short-sleeve T-shirt. Big Country logo in white across the front. Medium or large
- B) White USA made, short-sleeve T-shirt. Design front and back in three colours, including Big Country map, Fields of Fire single sleeve design, logo and compass. Medium or large
- £4 each (£3.50 members) plus 35p post/packing. State A or B design.

Please write all orders clearly, including your name and address. Send separately from any other correspondence. Make cheques payable to Big Country Club. Allow 28 days for delivery.

Name ----- Age -----

Address -----

I want to join the Country Club and enclose a cheque/PO for £4.50 (made payable to Big Country Club).

