

The Big Country Fanzine

Issue 9 - APRIL/MAY '91

WE SAVE NO SOULS - ISSUE 9 APRIL 1991

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Douglas Johnson

"We Save no Souls" - in tests 8 out of 10 fans said their cats preferred it !

Next issue on sale mid-July.

FROM THE ED.

Hello and welcome to Issue 9 of "We Save no Souls" Those of you who received my "Country News" sheet dated 20th February will know that the band have started recording their 5th studio album at Rockfield Studios in Wales. Pat Moran, who has previously worked with Edie Brickell & Lou Gramm amongst others, is producing. Mark Brzezicki is drumming on the album and will be touring with the band, but no final decision has yet been made as to him re-joining on a permanent basis. Hopefully the album will be finished by May and a July/August release date looks the most likely. Still no news of concerts, though I would suspect that with a possible album release in July/August, dates will probably follow on from that. As soon as I have any definite news, anyone with "Country News" envelopes will know, so don't forget to send them in.

Some of you may have seen a new BC fanzine called "Inwards", written by Andy Maule & Jason Allen from Bristol. It's very difficult for me to be objective about it, so you will find an independant review elsewhere in this issue. Parts of it I found quite good, some not so. Anyway, best of luck for the future lads.

Those of you who are members of Country Club will no doubt have seen WSNS get a mention in the latest issue of the Club magazine. I don't agree with their comments about "continually slagging off the band and management" I agree that I have, in the past, heavily criticised Country Club and perhaps, to a lesser degree, their management, but I don't recollect criticising the band for the failures of Country Club. I know from talking to Stuart that the band were concerned about the "temporary" collapse of the organisation and that members weren't getting any information about the group. Having said that, I think the organisation that now runs Country Club ARE doing a good job and

given the bands rapidly increasing levels of activity, will no doubt have a bit more meat to "flesh out" the bare bones of the last couple of issues. I did mention in Issue 8 that I was hoping to receive a letter from Country Club in defense of some of the criticisms levelled against it, but although it is "on the way", it hasn't arrived yet. Hopefully I will be able to include it in Issue 10. By the same token, I hope Country Club will give me a right of reply in their next issue.

I had hoped to include an interview with the band in this issue, but as they are very busy in the studio at the moment, this has not proved possible. I have spoken to Ian Grant and he has told me that something can be arranged once the main bulk of the recording has been finished. With a bit of luck, this will be nicely in time for the next issue of WSNS and (hopefully) the release of the new album. Anyway, that's about your lot for the time being, Issue 10 will be out in mid-July with loads of interesting goodies for your delectation. I can't tell you what yet as some of it has still to be finalised, but it'll definately be worth the wait.

So until then

STAY ALIVE !

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Douglas". The signature is written in black ink and features a large, looping initial 'D' followed by the name 'ouglas' in a more fluid, connected script. A long, sweeping underline extends from the end of the signature.

Stuart Adamson - BIG COUNTRY

I WAS about eight years old when I first fell in love. Her name was Diana Rigg, or Emma Peel as she was known in the television series, 'The Avengers.' I didn't actually care much for the programme itself but I thought Diana Rigg was fantastic and I used to cut out any picture of her that I came across in magazines and stick them all into a special scrap-book.

"I remember telling my mother that I wished Diana Rigg was my mum. I got a slap round the ear for saying that!

"Anyway, I eventually got over that 'love affair' and started taking an interest in girls of my own age. There was a girl called Jacqueline who was in my class during my first year at high school, and I spent a lot of my time worshipping her from afar.

"My chance finally came to get to know her when we had a disco at school, but I was too shy to say anything to her and, at the end of the evening, she was taken home by an older boy.

"I was fourteen before I finally plucked up enough courage to ask a girl to come out with me. That was at a school disco too. The funny thing is that I was too nervous to ask a girl to have a dance with me, but I did manage to steel myself to ask a girl called Ann if she'd like to see me on another evening. To my surprise she said she would!

"I decided to take her for a walk. I reckoned that if we could find somewhere with a bit of peace and quiet, maybe I'd be able to kiss her. So we went up to the local quarry, but, like a fool, I slipped and ripped my trousers on a rock. Ann ran away. And that was the last we saw of one another!

"If I had to try to say what it is about a girl that first attracts me to her, I think I'd say it's normally a nice face, which I think is much more important than a nice figure, and then her character — I like strong-willed, single-minded girls who argue a lot. I've had some quite memorable arguments in my time!

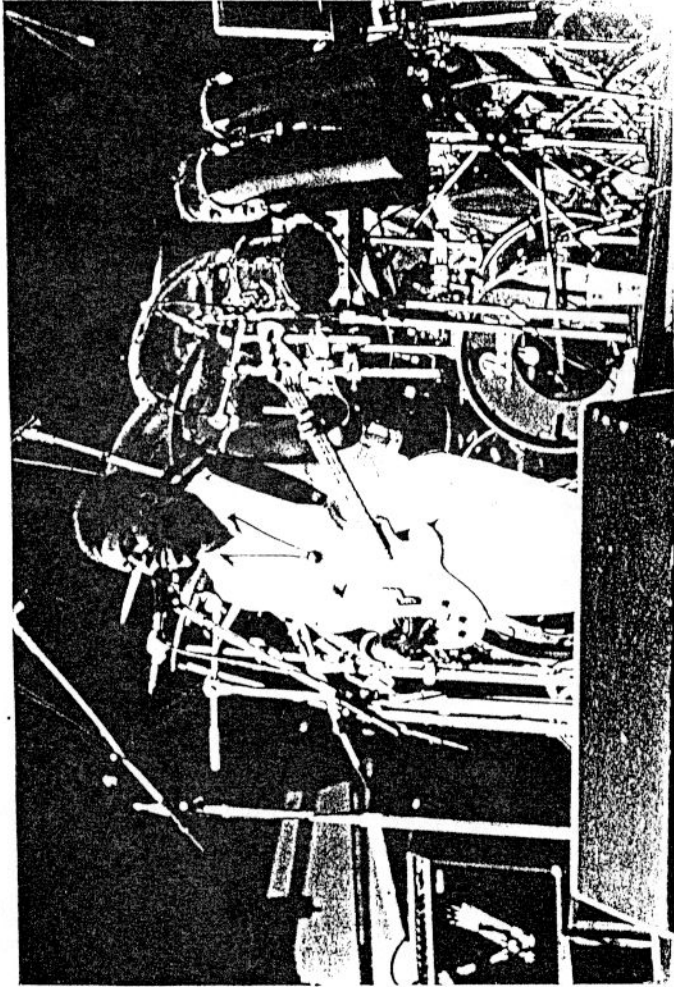
"As for what girls find attractive in me, I've got no idea! I've never thought of myself as being particularly attractive, though when I first started going out with girls I used to try to look as good as I possibly could.

"In my early teens I normally wore Sta-press trousers and a Ben Sherman shirt when I went out with a girl. It was always a big problem to try to get enough money to buy nice clothes, though.

"My mother was very good about my going out with girls at that time. She never pried or made a fuss about it, or criticised me. She was just very easy going about it all.

"My dad was away from home most of the time, as he worked in the Merchant Navy, but when he came home he always took an interest in the latest developments in my 'love life' — and probably had a good laugh on the quiet!

"It took me a long time to learn how to be at ease and confident with girls, though I did manage it eventually, when I met a girl called Sandra — I married her!"



TONY, KNEBWORTH 1986

ALAN GIBSON

BIG COUNTRY

Wembley Arena

THE cab driver appeared to be a man with his finger on the pulse. The magic words "Wembley Arena" were muttered through the rain-spattered window, and he was away, full of golden memories of people with names like Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, The Rolling Stones, Peter Frampton, and God, knows who else. Never heard of these ones tonight, mind you, but I bet they're just the same as all that lot, big crowds, big posters, big time, Big Country. And don't forget to mention, I had that Robert Plant in the back of the cab once.

It just so happens that quite a few other observers of the Big Country phenomenon currently share the same rather disturbing sense of *deja vu*, and the news that the band are now playing places like the hideous Arena doesn't help any. Hadn't "Steeltown" veered dangerously close to the edge of the mid-Seventies heavy rock, saved only by the sheer emotion of the mighty Stuart Adamson? And does all this not prove that essentially Big Country are the near-perfect living proof of the theory that nothing ever changes and we really are taking a pathetic trip down memory lane? The answers, friends, on the strength of tonight's performance, must be yes, and no.

Yes, because at times all the less attractive aspects of "Steeltown" were trotted out for all to see, embarrassingly exposed by the naturally exaggerated live environment. And yes, about 15 minutes before the end, I was convinced that I had come an awful long way just to see Status Quo rockin' out in the distance while all around me people waved their scarves and punched their fists in the air.

But ultimately no, because, quite simply, Big Country are invested with something special, something that manages to cut through all these important qualifications, something that proves that honesty and the human touch will always triumph over the most garish of rock trappings.

You'll find evidence in a song as old and yet as fresh as "In A Big Country", possibly the central part of the Adamson faith. Or in the sheer pathos of "Where The Rose Is Sown", a song that will always send a tingle down the back, no matter where in the world it's performed. Or in the climatic passion of "The Storm", building up into a frenzy yet somehow managing to avoid sounding like a Rod Stewart anthem. Or just about anywhere else you care to look in a repertoire consisting of the finest debut album the world has seen and the fragmented beauty of its successor.

That is why the ghosts of people such as Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin were effectively banished from a venue that should now be handed over to their memory while the going is still this good.

And that is why Big Country, a band who rely so much on the meeting of hearts and minds, should never again think of playing here again.

● **BARRY McILHENEY**

INWARDS - The "Other" Big Country Fanzine.

Due to the continued success of WSNS and the fact that Big Country are such a fab band, a new fanzine is being published by two fans, Andy Maule and Jason Allen from Bristol. Priced at £1.50 per issue, it comprises 40 pages of news, reviews, press cuttings and opinions about our favourite band.

Is it any good? Well, yes and no. The best bits are undoubtedly the features about why exactly Mark left the band and the favourable reviews of "Save Me" and "Heart of the World". Another feature entitled "Wild in the Country" is an entertaining "piss-take" at Country Club's expense, the sentiment of which will be shared by most readers of WSNS. However "Inwards" is spoilt by several childish features, the worst of which is a "Viz" like comic strip of a football game between Big Country and New Kids on the Block (guess who wins) Perhaps in Issue 2, Big Country will face stiffer opposition - a local derby with Simple Minds for instance!

There is also a spoof interview with Pat Ahern which is neither funny or understandable and a review of Robert Plants latest (!) album. However, they do redeem themselves with a list of "15 things you never knew about Big Country" which is both imaginative and hilarious.

All in all, "Inwards" is a noble, if somewhat flawed attempt to match the high standards set by WSNS. However, as with WSNS it is also a labour of love to those who prepare it and is a million light years better than anything recently published by Country Club.

Stuart Ovington, North Shields

A number of people have asked for the occasional article on "non Big Country" topics that would appeal to the majority of fans. As we haven't had any gig reviews for a while, I am including a review of a concert by The Alarm, who I know are liked by a great many Big Country fans.

THE ALARM NEWCASTLE MAYFAIR 3 APRIL 1991

The lads from Rhyl went back to basics. The smaller night club venue with no fixed seating, a basic stage set, no keyboards and seemingly no set play list - back to the "raw" as the title of the new single and album suggests.

A surprisingly small crowd enjoyed a spontaneous show, playing what was either requested or seemed appropriate on the night. The sound was a little disappointing and Twists' drum kit seemed beset with problems, not that this stopped the concert. While running repairs were going on, the rest of the band played down-tempo versions of "The Chant has just Begun" and "The Stand".

All of the hits were rattled off together with a large proportion of tracks from "Declaration" and 3 songs from the forthcoming album, Mike Peters never putting less than 100% into each of the songs. Despite the technical problems, nobody could complain about the performance. A terrific show rounded off in the encore with a request, "Deeside" Those who snubbed the concert really missed out. The Alarm set an example for other bands to follow. Surely a lot of bands, Big Country included, have the talent and musical ability to play spontaneous sets, then at least you could really say you saw a unique concert.

Neil Rutherford

SHOULD YOU arrive in Dunfermline on the sort of day which greeted us when we stepped off the Edinburgh shuttle flight from cold and drizzle-bound Heathrow, you'd have little difficulty in understanding why Stuart Adamson prefers his home town in Scotland to the English capital city.

The sun shines birds sing and the smell of nearby pig farms hangs heavily on the hot, still air... it's a far cry from the diesel and kerosene cocktail airports that usually serve the weary traveller.

Stuart has come wife-and-kid-handed to the airport to meet us — a necessity since he's only licensed to drive his motorbike and somehow I just can't see a journalist, photographer and press officer all riding pillion through the streets of Edinburgh even if it is festival — and therefore loony-time in that fair city.

We pile into the little red Volkswagen and Sandra Adamson takes the wheel for the short but invigorating ride across the Forth Road Bridge and through green countryside under a sky growing ever more blue. This is Stuart Adamson in a light I've never seen him before — family man.

Previously guitarist and prime musical motivator of the legendary Skids, he's now the complete frontman with his new band Big Country, who have emerged after a year-and-a-half of dedicated preparation to offer bright new hope for those who were touched by the Skid's power, and surely for many more besides.

But today that side of his personality seems distant and it's very obvious that he thoroughly enjoys being a dad.

A few weeks previously I'd witnessed the side of him that's more familiar to most of us, in action at the Brunell Centre in Swindon.

With guitarist Bruce Watson, bassist Tony Butler and drummer Mark Brzezicki, he pounded out his songs like 'Harvest Home' with a passion which had obviously been waiting a long time for release.

Yes, there were elements of tunes and chord structures, aspects of delivery familiar from the glorious days of yore, but with Adamson writing and singing his own words there were vital differences which should save Big Country from being packaged and labelled merely as the new Skids.

Although I always enjoyed Jobson's performances, his energy and his way with words, and will always swear that the Skids could not have been the Skids without him, what Big Country are doing now seems right, and full, and complete — more complete in a way for the very fact that Adamson is now both singing and playing.

I sensed *his* sense of fulfilment, being out there in front, doing it all, stretching himself, reaching beyond that rewarding and yet ultimately unsatisfying function of *just* guitarist.

Guitarists may write the tunes but it's the singer who *calls* them, out there, in front of people. The passion of singing *and* playing always beats the passion of playing alone.

And it was his feeling that the passion had gone out of the playing which contributed to Stuart's decision to leave the Skids.

"I don't like looking at things with the benefit of hindsight," he says.

"For me, 'what should have been' is the dirtiest lie of all. But playing live is very important to me, being able to create emotion and evoke it in the people watching you is what appeals to me, and in the end it wasn't happening with the Skids. When I think about it seriously, I can't give one reason why I left, but I suppose I didn't find it honest any more. Not that I'm perfect, but I like to lie less to people, particularly to myself."

OUR ULTIMATE destination on this particular day is the Adamson flat, a small but homely first floor residence in a house built from good solid local stone.

First, however, comes a brief guided tour of the home town so that lenslady Nicola can take full advantage of the abundance of natural light.

We head for the park, a lush undulating acreage where old ladies tempt grey squirrels with nuts and children safely play.

The park was one of countless amenities donated to the town by the great engineer Carnegie, who built the Carnegie Hall in New York as well as the somewhat less grand Carnegie Hall in Dunfermline and numerous libraries throughout the world. These facts are proudly conveyed by Adamson.

The heritage of the town obviously means as much to him as it did to Carnegie and I wouldn't be surprised if, given the wherewithal, he'd like to build Adamson Hall there too, one day.

He certainly wouldn't want to build it in New York, whence he's just returned after a couple of concerts.

"I enjoyed the gigs," he says, "but I felt really scared by the place. You can see what this place is like — imagine the difference going to New York. I mean, there were 17 murders there the first night we were there."

"The last time I went it was winter and I really enjoyed it but this time it was summer and the whole world seemed to be out on the streets."

"It's not that I don't enjoy travelling. I like seeing other places, other people, seeing how they go about doing things, but I don't like flying at all. I hate it — it's the most unnatural feeling ever. Yet my dad treats it like it was nothing at all — 'Oh I'm off to Shanghai tomorrow' sort of thing."

In fact his father currently is in Shanghai, where he's an engineer working on a four-year contract. He's only allowed two return visits during that time and I enquire if Stuart has considered going to see him, maybe to get a whole new angle on things, that could be useful in his music.

"I'd like to go but I haven't got the time. It might be a good place to go for inspiration but if you're that desperate for inspiration, you're really struggling! It's a rather expensive way to do it."

But can he really be that content staying North of the Border in a town where it probably makes front page news if someone falls off a bicycle?

"Well it's like a family thing," he explains.

"I like working in London, but it's good to know you have somewhere to go, a real home — not just a place that you live in — and security, people you can feel comfortable with..."

And is that a good formula for creativity?

"Yes. When you're relaxed, you don't worry about

business affairs, you don't worry about how to hype yourself and you can concentrate on doing what you do best."

When does inspiration hit him?

"Most of my ideas come to me at night when I'm reading or lying in bed."

"You can say that again!" pipes up Sandra.

"Do you know for months after I started living with him he was always getting up in the middle of the night and I thought he was suffering from diarrhoeal!"

And what does he find himself writing about during these outpourings in the small hours?

"I tend to flit about. Writing lyrics is the hardest area for me. I have to be absolutely sure about what I'm saying, what I'm doing. Most of the songs don't have a particular message — they're more concerned with feelings, reactions to certain situations. That's the whole Big Country idea — it's a place for me to discover and explore."

ONE IMPORTANT aspect of the route he's taking on this voyage of discovery is his very conscious decision that Big Country is an all-guitar band.

On the coach back to London from the Swindon gig, an entire bottle of wine consumed by this normally rather reserved Scot loosened his tongue sufficiently for him to take me to task for my admission that I didn't get so excited about guitars these days, and that my voyage of discovery was currently very much in the realm of electronic music.

"How can you say that?" he'd demanded.

"How can you be disillusioned with the guitar? That's a terrible thing to say."

I tried to explain that it wasn't so much guitar playing as new guitars that I was talking about.

"I never get excited about new models," he says, "just the guitar. The feeling of having it in my hands. I mean, I never go into shops to try guitars out or anything. For me there's still a helluva lot more to do with a guitar. For me it's an immediate instrument, it feels right straight away. It's a far more personal instrument than the synthesiser."

Nevertheless the lad hasn't completely eschewed keyboards. In fact the initial line-up of Big Country included a keyboard player.

"He was an absolute genius," says Stuart, "but it didn't work out on stage."

Synths in future will thus be restricted to what he calls his "arty periods". It's just for the studio, he says. He'll never use it live, he says. But isn't that what they all say?

"Well, aren't I allowed to change my mind five or six weeks later?" he laughs.

"In the Skids, that's why I tended to shy away from doing interviews. There's such a tendency to contradict yourself. You become totally blinkered, you start telling people this is the true way, I am the guiding light, then later on you look back on it and think you've made a complete prat of yourself."

"I feel very strongly about my music — don't get me wrong — but I don't see myself as the new hope of guitar music or anything like that."

Isn't he worried, however, that the very originality of Big Country's music is going to hold him back at the moment because of the current obsession with glossy, superficial pop and throwaway cover versions?

Is there any room in the charts at the moment for a band with true passion?

"We're probably just as glossy and superficial as anybody else," comes the reply.

"As much as I personally believe in what I'm doing, I have to admit that it will never have any great stake in people's lives. On the other hand, there might be a lot of depressing stuff around at the moment but it's not my fault!

"We could easily bring in synthesisers, get the right producer, do cover versions, get in the charts that way... that's okay if that's really what you want. I'm scared of sounding precious here, but the fact is I'm doing what I really feel. I'm being dogmatic. I'm saying this is the way I feel a group should be.

"Now there's not any point in having a group if you're not gonna have hit records. Hit records are great — but it's a question of what you're prepared to do to have hit records" — he pauses, searching for the words to convey exactly the point he wants to make — "Having a group that plays music which is not currently popular means the only way it'll become popular is by staying out on the limb you want to be on. It's like Dexy's — what they're doing now has no relation to what was in the charts before. You have to believe your vision of things, you have to stand by it.

"I've spent a year and a half in the doldrums, but if people pick up on it I'll be well pleased. It'll mean that we see things in a certain way and other people see things the same way."

BEING OUT on a limb is fine, of course, as long as someone's picking up the tab, and it plainly irks Stuart that business people ultimately have control over whether the public has access to his music and vice versa.

"But that," he concludes, "is a matter of finding the right record company."

The right record company presumably is not the one that suddenly, out of the blue, gave Stuart just two weeks to write a whole new album when he was with the Skids.

The effect that had on his health is not something he cares to go into too much detail about but it was plainly a harrowing experience.

"I had to work all hours of the day, round the clock," he recalls.

"By the end of it I was in a complete daze — I didn't know who I was or where I was."

"For a while it looked like he was going to need a lot of treatment," adds Sandra, who has steered us round to the topic in the first place, "but fortunately it turned out that he just needed a lot of sleep. It was nervous exhaustion and he slept for days when it was all over."

"It was a terrible experience," adds Adamson, vaguely embarrassed by these revelations. "I never want to go through it again."

Appropriately, the timetable for recording Big Country's debut album is considerably more leisurely. It's being produced by venerable whizz-person Chris Thomas, and, explains Stuart, "We just do it when Chris is free."

So far the band have enjoyed a fairly gentle launch period. Phonogram, their label, have not tried to foist them on an unsuspecting press/public in a blaze of tacky publicity, and their low key approach was exemplified by the trip

to the Swindon concert which was a showcase but strictly not for review.

"There's no reason why we should be hyped," claims Stuart. "I'd rather have it the way it's happened."

But at least the Skids had a 'movement' with which they were associated, and the same feeling but a different movement certainly played its part in getting bands like Spandau Ballet into the charts; won't it be much harder for Big Country without such a vociferous 'underground' following?

"I never felt like part of a movement," is Stuart's answer. "I don't honestly know if movements are really of any use to bands, but they are of use to young people. It's important to feel you belong to something, especially when you begin to feel independent from your parents. I still feel like that too."

Undoubtedly in his case these feelings are tempered by the choice to live in his home town, close to what he knows and a long, long way from the big city lights.

Like the economic recession which is only now really hitting the record business, decentralisation is another factor of modern life which has made any impression on the music scene only in recent years.

But if people like Stuart Adamson stick to their guns, the stigma which still attaches to musicians who dare hope to be successful without quitting their roots and resettling in the metropolis may eventually disappear.

The quiet Scot who likes to play husband and father as much as guitar pours the last drop of *Ira Bru* from the bottle which has lubricated our conversation (such nectar should be available on the National Health!) and we're soon heading down the steps past the motorbike he was going to pose on out didn't, and out to the little red car which will speed us back to Edinburgh airport with moments to spare before the last shuttle.

Midway through the flight, Kenny Everett appears from somewhere up ahead and saunters down the aisle to sit behind us but even this can't detract from the pleasures of the day past.



★ *HERE'S good news for all Big Country fans - they're back together.*

The original Scots band line-up of Stuart Adamson, Bruce Watson, Tony Butler and Mark Brzezicki are about to start work on their fifth LP.



ADAMSON

SUNDAY MAIL 17/2/91

Stuart's back on song!

★ **BIG COUNTRY** lead singer Stuart Adamson just can't stay away from East End Park.

He threatened never to return after Dunfermline axed boss Jim Leishman in the summer.

Back

He was one of the prime movers in trying to get Jim back into the East End Park hot seat.

However, Stuart has forgiven, if not forgotten, the Dunfermline Board and is now back supporting the Pars again.

COMPETITION

Yes folks, it's competition time again. Not for us dreary old crosswords or questions that you need an "A" level in Big Country to answer. Time to put on your thinking caps and come up with an amusing caption for the photograph on the following page. The photo shows Stuart and I at Doncaster last year before the concert at The Dome Sports Centre. Just in case the photo doesn't reproduce too well, in Stuart's left hand is a copy of Issue 6 of "WSNS" and I am holding my 1989 BBC Transcription Disc which Stuart has just signed.

The person who, in the opinion of the judges, comes up with the funniest/original caption, will win a copy of Big Country's next album, currently being recorded, in the format of their choice (LP, CD or cassette). In addition, there will be two runners up prizes of copies of the next single, whenever it is released. Answers should be sent to me by Friday 21st June at the latest and the results will be in Issue 10, due mid July.

P.S. Any comments like..."who's that fat bastard" will be disqualified on the grounds of "stoutism"

Photo; Ace lensman Ray "Spender" Robson.



The following is a transcription of an interview with Stuart made in early 1985 with Andrea Miller from Radio Clyde. It's interesting because he talks at some length about their involvement in the Restless Natives film and the soundtrack music.

AM) Do you think Big Country are a political band ?
SA) I don't think we are political with a capital P. I cannot see anything to write about other than things that I have personally lived through or are living through at that time, or after I have read about, or seen people going through things. I think to be honest about what I am doing and what I am writing, I have to write about stuff like that,, I cannot write about dodging away with some bird and this great pile of drugs, to this far away exotic island, because that's not how I live, it's not what I see. I think if music can ever be something that is smart or caring, it's got to be a reflection of the times it comes out of, it's got to be a part of peoples lives and not something that's a fantasy to be believed in. That whole fantasy about music being part of the drugs trap, people believe in that whole lifestyle and young kids are watching that and saying "I would like to be like that so I should do this and that" I am not trying to set myself up as Mr Puritanical or anything like that, which I am patently not, but I think it can be far more interesting and far more exciting if it was a mirror for the times it went through.

AM) I suppose I should explain that we are sitting in a caravan outside Park Lane Studios, because you are recording a film soundtrack for Restless Natives How much different is it, to have a certain amount of inspiration already there on film for you ?

SA) Because you are taking an outside stimulus into your own work, taking inspiration from a set of visuals rather than something that comes from inside you, it has been good for me in particular because it has allowed me to write in a way I would write in normally, but we never use in Big Country. It has been very entertaining, I must admit.

AM) This is going to be the new album, isn't it ?

SA) No, it is going to be a Restless Natives soundtrack, not a Big Country album. We are doing a new album during the summer.

AM) Is it very different from what you have been doing with Big Country ?

SA) It is I suppose, insomuch as you are writing individual pieces of music to go with certain visuals. It is something I have never really done before. I have done a few things and used a couple of things, like, I have been using a guitar synthesiser and doing a lot of accoustic work, which although I have done a bit of accoustic work with Big Country, it is something I have never really gone into in depth in recording before, so in that respect it is. I think it has changed the way I have been thinking about the electric guitar for a wee while - it has been good for me.

AM) Are you concerned about what people make of Big Country, peoples reaction tends to split into staunch fans and...

SA) ...people who hate us...

AM) ...people who think the sound is very stereo-typed and very over the top.

SA) If it is a stereo-type, then it is a stereo-type of us, which you cannot have, you cannot stereo-type yourself, it is other people who stereo type you. I think that the way Bruce and I play guitar and the way we sound has always been an intrinsic part of Big Country. I don't think "Just a Shadow" sounds anything like "East of Eden" sounds anything like "Fields of Fire" and I really

cannot understand why people say they are stereotypes, stereo-types of what ? We made the mould. If I made a major change in the way I write songs and music, I would be being false to myself. I have got to let things happen naturally and change as I see fit. I refuse to do things because they may be seen as a good career move or a good way of maintaining a certain level of success. I just want to write songs about things I care about and maybe make a connection with people in the stuff that I write.

AM) How did you get involved with Restless Natives. This is not the first film score you have been offered, is it ?

SA) No, I gave two tracks to Jimmy Iovine who was working on a couple of soundtracks, one for "Against All Odds" and one for a film called "Streets of Fire" (see Issue 8) and through doing that I started getting various scripts to write for and I had a few through but nothing really came to anything. Then Ninian (Dunnett) who actually wrote Restless Natives sent me a script for it. I read it and thought it was great right away and I said I would love to do it. Then I met Mike (Hoffman) and Rick (Stevenson) the two American guys producing and directing the film. I really wanted to do it. It has just been a matter of looking at rough cuts and rough edits and stuff like that.

AM) What attracted you about it ?

SA) I just thought the script was great, really funny, amusing and really well written. I thought the characters were great. Apparently, because EMI were behind the film, they wanted the music to come through them, so there was a bit of struggle for us to have the chance to do it. Mike Hoffman, the producer, went to Ninian to say he had a good idea for the music, but Ninian said he had a better one, to get Big Country to do it. I am just pleased that people have taken note of what we have done

musically and want us to tell a straight visual story.

AM) Out of any other band that has come from Scotland, you are the most "Scottish". For so many young people in Scotland, being Scottish is like, Andy Cameron and Sidney Devine. Then suddenly, Big Country come along.

SA) I think it is a shame, it's the whole "Harry Lauder" type-casting, which I don't think Andy Cameron set out to do, it was just a humourous play on Scottish nature, but he has found himself being trapped and becoming a stereo-typed Scotsman. It is a shame, but it does happen a lot. But what would really make it crap would be if we studiously did take it from the heritage and put it into modern day music, that is not the way we do it, it is just something that has happened naturally and something I am pleased people have picked up on. I can honestly say it was never really meant and it is just part of the way I write.

WANTS/SWAPS

James Fairbairn

wants to get hold of guitar music for any Big Country songs - he already has the "Peace" songbook, but wants some more.

Kitt Curry

in Eire would like to get some photos of the band at Slane Castle in 1987 when they supported David Bowie, or at any of their Irish gigs.

Please write to me if there is anything you'd like me to put in the Wants/Swaps column, entries are absolutely free and you may just get that thing that you've been after for ages.

The Long And The Shirt Of It

At last, the *real* reason why Big Country wear checked shirts!

"Checked shirts just look smart when they're worn in a certain way," Tony Butler said, and then the truth came out.

"Actually, the reason we wore them to begin with was because we knew this little shop where we could get them really cheaply!"

Ah well, and we thought it was just because big, baggy checked shirts made Stuart Adamson's hunky body look even hunkier!

6 "Stuart had worn tartan shirts for ages and came along with the trousers. We adopted them because they're really functional. They're great to wear onstage because we leap around a lot and if you wear tight trousers you sweat too much!"

Tony Butler, Big Country

"One of the most frightening things that anybody ever said to me was this guy who said, 'I heard one of your songs on the radio and it made me want to go to war'."

Stuart Adamson

COUNTRY LOVERS!

Big Country have some very important fans — Duran Duran!

"We really respect their music," says Nick Rhodes. "In fact, they know that we're fans of theirs because we admitted it on American television.

"Actually, I reckon they should pay us some commission because after that 'plug' from us — sales of their album, 'The Crossing' rocketed in the States!"

"We're gonna play tomorrow night, three white guys and a black guy in a city that over the past week has been torn apart by racial violence, and I'm shit scared to play there but I know there's no way that we can get out of it now. I'm scared because all it takes is one lunatic to get in there with a hand gun 50 yards away from the stage and... well, what does Callum and Sandra say to that? ... That counts. Don't ever tell me that doesn't count!"

STUART ADAMSON

STEW ART, LET'S DANCE!

Big Country were on their tour busy in Glasgow last week when they noticed a car beside them whose driver was playing their so-called 'Greatest Hits' album at full blast. Whereas most bands would have been pleasantly pleased, BC's Stuart Adamson became hysterical with pleasure and leapt out at the lights to praise the chap. Unfortunately you fan was so taken aback that he stalled his car completely and had to be towed away by the RAC. That'll teach him.

"I backed Paul Daniels once — it's weird when you see someone doing their magic tricks from behind because you can see how it's all done."

— Mark Brzezicki

UK and US Promos

by Dominic Williams

Welcome to the first of what should be a regular column on collecting Big Country records. I know from the number of you who write to me, that record collecting is a big hobby with many of you. This issue we are looking at promotional items from the UK and USA. There is a problem with these items as they are given different terms which are often used interchangeably, such as promo, advance copy, DJ edition, demo, test pressing...the list is endless. Technically a test pressing is just that, but as they always seem to find their way onto the market and into record shops I shall treat them as promos. I have left out promo tapes that are simply blank tapes with a typed label. I have also left out studio acetates as they aren't really promotional items.

Below is a list of abbreviations I shall use.

- 1/2 - no credits or titles, just the number on the centre label to denote which side - also used are A & B.
- S/L - contains short and/or long versions
- A/S - contains both album and single version
- S/S - same both sides
- CS - custom sleeve - most promos are released in a plain or record company sleeve. Some may come the normal sleeve.
- ST - plain sleeve with sticker giving information about the tracks
- ADV - contains the word "advance", followed by either promo or DJ
- DJ - copy usually distributed to DJ's

Unless otherwise stated, the tracks are the same as on the normal UK/US release. The normal release catalogue numbers are in brackets where no details are stated on the label.

UK Releases

Format	Title	Cat No.	
12"	Harvest Home	(COUNT12)	1/2
7"	Fields of Fire	COUDJ2	
7"	Chance(radio version)	COUDJ4	
12"	Chance	(COUNT412)	1/2
12"	Wonderland	(COUNT512)	ST 1/2
12"	East of Eden	(MERX 175)	CS 1/2
12"	Look Away	BIGCXDJ1	ADV DJ
12"	Look Away (Outlaw)	(BIGCX11)	1/2
12"	One Great Thing	(BIGCX3)	1/2
12"	One Great Thing	BIGCX3DJ	ADV DJ
12"	One Great Thing (Big Baad Mix)	BIGDJCR3	ADV DJ
12"	King of Emotion	BIGCDJ512	ADV DJ
7"	Peace in our Time	BIGC7/BIGDJ7	
Side B is "radio edit", different cat no on side 2			
7"	Save Me	BIGCDJ812	1/2 ST

US Releases

12"	In a Big Country	PRO221-1	S/L ST
7"	Fields of Fire	811450-7	S/S
12"	Fields of Fire	PRO239-1	A/S ST
7"	Wonderland	818834-7DJ	S/S
7"	Where the Rose is Sown	880412-7DJ	S/S
12"	Where the Rose is Sown (Special AOR Remix)	PRO324-1	S/S C/S
12"	Just a Shadow	PRO331-1	S/L
7"	Look Away	884645-7DJ	S/S
12"	Look Away	845645-1	S/S
12"	Look Away (Outlaw)	PRO414-1	S/S
12"	One Great Thing	PRO442-1	S/S
12"	One Great Thing (Big Baad Mix)	888028-1DJ	
7"	King of Emotion (LP version)	7-27737-A	S/S
CDS	King of Emotion	PROCD 3238	C/S
CDS	Peace in our Time		C/S

Obviously the list is incomplete as I have only listed items that I have, or know about. I am sure that there are many more items around and I would be grateful if people would write to me with any additions or corrections. My address is;

. If anyone has any programmes or records they would like to swap, pleased drop me a line.

Many thanks to Dominic for the article on UK & US promo singles. In future articles, we hope to be able to mention releases outside the UK/US, as well as other, non-musical promotional items such as playing cards, carrier bags etc...yes, they do exist ! I would like anyone who has anything that could be included in future articles to send lists with full descriptions of the item in question, to either myself or Dominic.

WSNS T shirts

WSNS T shirts are now available. The shirts are plain white with the WSNS logo (see front cover) in black and red and are good quality 100% cotton. The cost is 6.50 and includes postage. Please state chest size when ordering. Cheques etc... to me in the normal way.

BITS 'N PIECES

How many of you know that there is a racehorse called Big Country ? Well, here's the list of the runners & riders of the 3.25 at Southwell on 20th February....

3.25 — CHURCH WARSOP NOVICES'	
HANDICAP HURDLE 3m £1,748	
1 00-0451	FIRST LORD (14) (C) Mrs V Aconley 5 12 0 J Corkell (7)
2 011	KING OF SHADOWS (14) (C) R Hollinshead 4 11 12 Gary Lyons (3)
3 //450-P3	VINTAGE VELVET (22) (B) K Bailey 9 11 7 J Lawrence
4 F35000	HUMDECOLA (9) B Prasco 6 11 2 Mr S Wynne (7)
5 P3305-U	OCEAN ROGUE (19) P Evans 10 10 6 Martin Jones (3)
6 P00-000	SNOWY AUTUMN (28) J Old 7 10 5 W McFarland
7 234523	ROYAL MAZI (14) C Beaver 4 10 1 D Byrne
8 00//P56	NOBLE RISE (USA) (14) J Bostock 8 10 0 Miss S Murgatroyd
9 020-00	GRAND OCCASION (6) D Thom 9 10 0 M Bowby
10 P/0//6	BIG COUNTRY (28) B McMath 8 10 0 A Carroll

10 declared
TODAY BETTING: 5-4 King of Shadows, 11-4 First Lord, 9-2 Vintage Velvet, 11-2 Royal Mazi, 10-1 Humdecola, 14-1 Others.

£7.20, CSF £13.78, Tricast £59.79.
3.25 (3mH) Big Country (A Carroll) 20-1 1; Ocean Rogue (33-1) 2; First Lord (7-2) 3. King of Shadows 8-11f. 10 ran. 3l, nk. B McMath. Tote: £16.50; £4.20, £16.80, £2.10. DF £256.30, CSF £408.43, Tricast £2569.50. 3.55 (2½mH) Sand Castle (J McLaughlin) 5-1 1; Penlyne's Pride (16-1) 2; Lead-

and guess what...it won at 20-1 ! So next time you see it in the racing pages of your daily paper, why not give it a flutter. You never know.

Mark has been drumming on a new album called "47 Summers" by a guy called Les Payne. I've not come across him before, so I can't tell you anything about him.

In Issue 8 I asked about the intro music used by the band just before they came on stage for the various dates of "The Seer" tour. I am grateful to WSNS reader S Adamson of Dunfermline for telling me it is by Vaughan Williams and is part of a piece called "Lark Ascending"

Anyone watching "Blue Peter" on 18th February would have seen an feature about the history of kilts and part of the music that accompanied it was...yes, you've guessed it, "In a Big Country". A bribe to the editor will stop me revealing in Issue 10 who it is that still watches "Blue Peter" at his age !

"Fields of Fire" was one of the records banned by Radio 1 during the recent Gulf conflict. Judging by the frequency that Big Country records get played on that station, I just thought that all their records were banned ! They didn't play "Peace in our Time" to make up for it though, did they. There were rumours floating around about a concert connected to the Gulf conflict, though I don't know whether it was to be a "benefit" type, or for the morale of the troops. Big Country were rumoured to be involved, though I have no more information on it.

A special mention to Darren McIlwrath from Northern Ireland in connection with his marriage to Colette on 5th April. Good luck to you both from everyone connected with WSNS and especially from Kitt.

Belated birthday greetings to Tony (13 Feb), Bruce (11 March) and Stuart (11 April). Also happy 21st to John McKinstry and congratulations on winning the Country Club competiton - I hope you remember your side of the bargain when it comes to getting the tickets, John !

Stuart's guest appearance at the Jerry Lee Lewis concert at the Hammersmith Odeon in November 1989 is included in a video of the event, recently out on Telstar Video Entertainment (TVE 1031) and selling for £9.99. I haven't seen the video, so I don't know what it's like, but Country Club reckon it's pretty good. If anyone does buy it, please feel free to send me a copy !

News is filtering through that the soundtrack to "Restless Natives" is definately due for release in late May/early June. Whether it will be available on vinyl as well as CD remains to be seen.

My attempt to get Channel 4 to broadcast the full length concert filmed at Dunfermline last year for the "Rock Steady" programme has unfortunately come to nothing. I wrote to them with all your letters but received a reply a couple of weeks ago, They stated that they have no plans to show it, but have passed our letters to the production company that make the programme. A great pity, as anyone who managed to get tickets for the show will know what a fab concert it was. No doubt it will gather dust on someone's shelf for the next 30 years.

Nice to hear Radio 1 play "Save Me" instead of the more usual "Chance" or "In a Big..." on Simon Bates morning show on Good Friday. Not only that, but we got the CD/12" version with the long guitar intro. (I take back all I said about Radio 1 on the last page....well, maybe not !)

Radio Luxembourg repeated an interview with Stuart and Mark from October '88 on Friday 12 April. Is there anyone out there who can supply me with a decent copy of this, as the reception for Luxy in Newcastle is less than wonderful ! I did record it, but it's pretty unintelligible in parts.

A number of people have asked me about getting a copy of the BSB showing of the Town & Country Club gig from August last year. I have one, but don't have the facility to make copies. Anyone who would be prepared to do some copies for fans, please get in touch with me.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Do you get listless every 3 months waiting for small, smudgy adverts to appear in NME and the like. Do you pace to and fro in your room, wearing holes in your carpet and your fluffy slippers wondering if the next issue of your favourite fanzine is out? If so, why not take out a 5-issue subscription to WSNS and all your cares and worries will fly out of the window. Your spanking new copy will arrive on your doorstep "hot off the press" so that you can read all about the latest goings on with Stuart Bruce, Tony... and the other one. The cost of this peace of mind, only £6.50 for 5 issues. What an incredible bargain. Don't delay, subscribe today!

BACK ISSUES

You will be delighted to know that copies of all back numbers of WSNS are now available. Those of you who have had orders outstanding for some time should now have the copies that you ordered, if not then please get in touch a.s.a.p. All back issues are available for £1.50 including postage. This price supercedes all previous prices mentioned in previous issues.

"COUNTRY NEWS" Envelopes

Don't forget to send in your s.a.e's so that if I get any news about concerts, releases etc..you will be the first to know.

WITHOUT WHOM.....

Many thanks to the following who have helped in various ways to this issue, either by contributions or ideas, or who have bought me a pint.

Kitt Curry, John McKinstry, Phil Read, Alan Gibson, Darren McIlwrath, Dominic Williams, Tahir Punnoo and especially Neil Rutherford who tells me where I'm going wrong (not that I take any notice!

