



**BIG
COUNTRY**



**COUNTRY
CLUB**

Hi everyone,

Well, what can I say? Another issue is due - this is always a difficult time for all concerned - the album is finished and now we wait for news of the release and live in hopes for news of another tour in the not too distant future.

Before I get stuck into this I have to make comment on your letters regarding the reduced number of pages and the fact that the Newsletter recently has been photo-copied. The bottom line is, that we are having to work within the limited funds available, which is not easy but, I am determined that you receive news on a regular basis from Country Club rather than send nothing out to you as I believe a Club's duty is to keep members informed, even if that does mean having to do whatever is necessary with the Newsletter. I, therefore do hope you all stick with us until better times return. So, to **Andy Lee** and others, I do understand that you would "*prefer to keep the quality we've come to expect from everything associated with Big Country*" - we, at Country Club will, just as soon as we can. Also, Andy, your comment regarding the date has been noted and acted on. (We've done a cheaty, this time, so that this issue could be printed!)

Anyway, what's occurring? As I have said, the album is finished - it was cut in New York during January and, by all accounts, if you thought "*The Buffalo Skinners*" was one of the "greats" then, this next album is going to blow your minds. Ian Grant says, "*All I can say is that the album surpasses The Buffalo Skinners*". Graham Goodall (Membership No 001511) wrote to me asking, "*Why has the album been cut in New York?*" Well, America is just the BEST place to cut a rock record - far better reproduction and depth of sound - just the best place for this to be done. Release is hoped to be in April or May but, don't hold me to that 'cos you know as well as I do how these dates ALWAYS change and Tony said to me recently, "*Release? We are hopeful for April or May but we will not do anything with it until we are completely satisfied that we have the FULL support from EVERY corner of the industry for this record - we want justice done to our best record yet!*"

Then, of course, the other question you all ask me a hundred times a week is, "*When will the band be touring?*" It's far too early to answer that - gig dates will not even be discussed until a release date is scheduled. So, however often you ask there is no answer yet but just keep me supplied with Hot News envelopes to keep abreast. On the subject of Hot News - it's no good complaining that you haven't heard from me if you don't

participate and, even if you do participate I will not use the envelopes until there is some news - during the quiet periods these envelopes are kept safely, patiently waiting to be stuffed. So, so long as you have an envelope sitting here you WILL hear when there is something to tell you.

The "Music Relief" single for Rwanda on which Stuart and Mark were mentioned as putting in a guest appearance in Issue 32 did not happen. "What's Going On", unfortunately, failed so the second was not released.

We also made mention of Big Corporation's single, which was due to be released back in October on which Mark featured on drums. Well, as it turned out this record was not released commercially but is still available via mail order from:-

Ian Grant, P O Box 107, South Godstone, Redhill, Surrey, RH9 8YS.

Cassette - £2.50 plus 75p post and packing

CD - £3.50 plus 75p post and packing

Mark has also been keeping his hand in by drumming for The Buzz Tonic (previously called Curfew). Their album "Arcade Babies" is due for release in April(ish) and the band includes Aaron Emerson (son of Keith Emerson of ELP).

Tony has also been busy recently - not playing with other bands but moving house. The Butler family moved into their self-designed house during January and, since then Tony has been up to his neck with the decorating -so much so that he is now suffering from repetitive strain syndrome and is, at the moment, unable to make his elbow work and unpack the packing cases - even his record collection is still safely packed away! Speedy recovery Tony but, I guess and hope that, even as I send this out, he is in full working order again.

What is the new album to be called, Tony" I asked. "As yet there is no title. Having been working on the album one way or another for some time now we haven't sat down to discuss the details, like a title or sleeve design etc. yet but, we have fourteen terrific songs - none of them over four minutes and they are all meat and bones, no fat with definite flavours of what Big Country used to sound like with loadza Ebow - all songs are very melodic. The only problem we have is selecting the singles because there are so many which are suitable. None of the tracks are too heavy and they should, hopefully, be radio friendly -we've done what we wanted to do. The album only took an amazing three weeks to record - everything just went so well that it was just a joy to record it."

For newer members or, for that matter, the longer standing members who do not understand THE HOT NEWS system (I am surprised at how many of you seem to be totally unaware of what this is, even though I include a paragraph in most issues of the Newsletters.) Do you want to hear news as it breaks, even when this happens between the regular Newsletters/magazines?

All you need do is lodge a stamped, self-addressed envelope here, clearly marked **Hot News**. This envelope should show your **membership number and the date of the last Hot News received**. I will then keep such envelope safely filed away waiting until there is news to tell you of release dates/tours or what-have-you. If you don't participate then, (I have to say that funds do not stretch to general mailings on each occasion as this could be a couple of times a week during the band's active times although, of course, less frequently during writing/demoeing etc.) you will not be made aware of news and could miss out on what is occurring. Overseas members should send **International Reply Coupons** - foreign stamps are useless to me so, don't waste your money.

I had hoped to be in a position to throw open a **GRAND RAFFLE** to ya'll but, I guess that the band are still busy rummaging through their attics, cellars and boxes of treasures to find some exclusive memorabilia for you. As and when I have these promised packages in my sweaty little mit and, therefore, know exactly what I have to offer I will let you all know. Basically, there will be a few simple questions for you to answer and each entry into the draw will cost a few pence (yeah, multiple entries will be permissible) so, when the time is right, be prepared to part with some hard earned cash to enter the lottery and stand a chance of owning otherwise totally unavailable items donated by the band. My money is on 'sod's law', in that, I bet as soon as I'm ready to send this Newsletter out the packages will start to arrive but, time is marching on and, not through lack of trying, this Newsletter is late, I know - sorry, but as stated before, it does take a lot of time collating all info and input etc.

Graham Goodall has also asked when the Country Club Newsletters are due out so, for future reference they are due in January, May and September but, please give me a break and leave it more than a couple of days before you complain 'cos it really does take quite a bit of time to collate all the information and input from everywhere and then type it all up etc.

Cheers.

January 1995

From Tony:- Hello, people in clubland.

In issue 32 Tony set the following questions for you so, here are the answers. **Art Love** (Membership No 003858) from Florida got the MOST questions right (he scored 8½ and will shortly be receiving a little parcel from us here at CC.

- 1) I'm currently touring with two bases, name the makes.
ESP and Fender
- 2) What make or colour was the bass used in the "Heart Of The World" video?
Blade - honey colour.
- 3) Name the make of bass I used on B.C's very first TOTP appearance (I also used it to record "The Crossing").
Aria.
- 4) The bass I used on the "Wonderland" video was confiscated at H.M. Customs in 1985. What make was it?
Aria.
- 5) Who originated the bass line to the song "Heart And Soul"?
Stuart.
- 6) Who played the bass on the recording of "Winter Sky"?
Stuart.
- 7) What amplification have I used over the past ten years?
Trace Elliot.
- 8) I used bass pedals on one track on "The Seer". Name the track.
Eiledon.
- 9) What is the name of the bass/drum roadie who went to the same school as me?
Ron Manigley.
- 10) One of the following really influenced me when I first began playing, was it:-
Paul McCartney - Beatles (wrong)
ANDY FRASER - FREE (CORRECT)
Noel Redding - Jimi Hendrix Experience (wrong)
John Paul Jones - Led Zeppelin (wrong)
- 11) My all time favourite bass player is:
Chris Squire - Yes.
- 12) The bass line on "Girl With Grey Eyes" is one of my finest moments, it also inspired me to record another bass orientated piece of music during the same recording session ("Steeltown"). What was that called?
Bass Dance.
- 13) I've used the slap technique on two BC songs (well, one song and one instrumental). Name them.
The Seer, Travellers.
- 14) What bass instrument does Mark Brzezicki play?
Bass drum.

Love

Yo
Tony

Thomas Kercheval says he received a tremendous response to his column **"THE YANKEE SPEAKS"** so, here is his second article. (By the way, if you come across a CD by the The Dissidents - it's well worth getting a copy. This is Thomas's band and you can certainly hear from where he gets his influence. Good one, Thomas.) Note Thomas's new address:-

, USA.

Well, hello there! Yes, once again, it is I, the Yankee, writing to you amidst the throes of Big Country withdrawal. You know what I mean. That period known painfully well by all B.C. fans, when even your best BC mix tape no longer satisfies, when you viciously assault the mailman daily in hopes that you will find the latest issue of Country Club somewhere on his person, when the only thought that offers any solace is the anticipation of new Big Country material. And it can't come soon enough!

Well, times like these are always good for reflection, evidenced by the tremendous amount of response I received from the "armchair manager" challenge which I posed last time. Thanks to everyone who wrote, but hey, what's with you Europeans? The bulk of the response came from America. Just because I don't take afternoon tea and crumpets doesn't mean I'm unworthy of your opinions. Besides, if it wasn't for "yankees" like me you'd all be zieg heiling at your next BC show. Shoot, they'd probably even be called "Big Motherland" or something. So, get off your asses, I'm sorry, arses and send me some correspondence! How long will you spurn my love?

Anyway, back to the point. Many of you wrote in with countless ideas on what you would do if you possessed the enviable power of Ian Grant. The responses were, for the most part, well thought out and, well, pretty darn sensible.

For example, Jennifer Johnson suggested, as did many, that the band tour the U.S. again as soon as possible. She proposed that the boys share the bill with other Celtic-tinged bands, like The Cranberries or The Proclaimers, both of whom have had a good deal of success in the U.S. Interesting. Michael Bickley sent me a copy of his twelve page response to the BC questionnaire that was sent with the last issue of Country Club (twelve pages!!) Maybe Michael should write this column! Mike made the important point tht if the band is going to break again in the States they MUST have a VIDEO released over here, preferably one that shows how untouchable the band is live. On that note, he also suggested the band attempt to retain a slot on the next Lollapalooza tour, arguing that it would be much more beneficial to be associated with the so-called 'hip' bands of the 90s, rather than boring old behemoths like Meat Loaf, for whom the band recently opened a series of shows. I tend to agree, but hey, at least BC didn't have to go on after Meat Loaf, and subsequently be forced to play in the inevitable lake of sweat that would have been spewed from the Meatman's countless pores!

Finally, Roman Mangapit proposed that, in order to drum up some cheap publicity, the band stage an "Adamson abducted by U.F.O.'s" campaign. Nice try, Roman, but in order for that to shake things up in

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Your letters:-

From Glenn Bunney (Membership No 003584)

Glenn wanted me to make sure that everyone was aware of 'Big Country - The Radio One Sessions' CD on Nightracks label. Glenn came across this as an import in a Sydney record shop so, wherever you are it should be available as an import.

Stephen Ashe (Membership No 003312) also wrote about the Radio One Sessions:- This was recorded for the Peter Powell and John Peel shows between 1982 and 1983. He was told that its a special order album only (no distributors, apparently) - Catalogue number is CDNT 007 on the Nightracks label (released on 25th July 1994).

Ralf Kirschnick (Membership No 001828)

Ralf sent me some bits of news from Germany:-

- 1) DSF (German sports television channel) used 'Seven Waves' at the end of a documentary about yachting!
- 2) There is a six track UK promo CD available called 'Tracks From Without The Aid Of A Safety Net (live)'. He doesn't have the track listing but it comes with a paper sleeve and is priced around 35 - 40 Dm.
- 3) The German TV station WDR broadcast a BC concert on 8th January at 02h55 as part of the WDR Rockpalast Classic Series.

From Kevin Wright (Membership No 003299)

Seems BC are getting a little bit of play - 'Long Way Home' was played in the background during Entertainment Tonight on Sky News.

During the last tour there was a record bin full of BC stuff and Kevin picked up a 12" of 'One Great Thing' (Big Baad mix) which had 'Look Away' (outlaw mix) on. He paid £5 but he says he's sure the value of this record is more - can anyone tell him if this record is a rarity?

Kevin also says to all BC fans - start badgering MTVs 'Most Wanted' and VH1's 'For You' for Big Country records. So, he says, pick up your phones and pens and get badgering.

Gary Nelson (Membership No 003995)

Gary wrote on behalf of his son, Stuart Thomas. *'..... he is only a week old but already a big fan We know he enjoyed the concerts because we can now put on a Big Country record and he stops crying. We've also got a Take That record and when we put that on he shits in his nappy.'*

I know the feeling Stuart!! - Jan

Jennie Dumpleton (Membership No 003962)

Jennie's a little disillusioned and wrote, *'... fan since the age of ten... born and bred in South Africa of Scottish parents, I always wanted to live in Scotland. One of the reasons I loved BC was because of their unique Scottish sound. Due to sanctions during the Apartheid years I never saw BC live, they were never 'big' in South Africa. But, I followed their music through the years, their music meant so much to me - until BC brought out 'PIOT'. They suddenly began to sound very American and each album after that sounded more American and songs for me lost their uniqueness and meaning. Their songs are still good but sound like those of any American band.'*



1994 SURVEY RESULTS

Ian Grant has analysed the completed questionnaires for us and says,

'I hope that you find this of interest. Everyone who filled out a questionnaire had something to say and, most showed a genuine concern for the future of the band and its members. The fans/Country Club members offered a lot of constructive criticism which has been digested and will be kept in mind for the future. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped us with this questionnaire. In fact, they are still being sent in - another eleven have been received since this summary was completed - their opinions pretty much reflect the earlier replies.'

SUMMARY

Total number of responses = 134

Male = 111
Female = 23

Average age = 27.8 years old

Aged 16 - 20 = 6
Aged 21 - 30 = 89
Aged 31 - 45 = 39

How many BC concerts/gigs have you seen?

Each fan has seen the band an average of twelve times although, this figure is somewhat inflated by some fans having seen the band a lot, fifty three times in one case!!

In response to the question on the band's live performances over the last ten years:

103 thought the band had improved
26 that they had stayed the same
1 thought they had deteriorated
1 thought they had always been brilliant
3 didn't know.

The majority preferred to see the band in small venues.

What about the band's image?

28 thought that the image was, at worst, not good
Some thought it old fashioned
20 thought that everything was just fine
12 thought that there wasn't one
14 didn't comment

Record sleeve artwork (average mark out of 10)

The Crossing - 7.34

NPLH - 5.62

Steeltown - 8.36

Greatest Hits - 6.95

The Seer - 7.44

The Buffalo Skinners - 6.91

PIOT - 6.56

WTAOSN - 6.41

Do you find BC products easy to obtain?

Yes - 53%

No - 22%

Average - 23%

No comment - 2%

Is the produce release-profile good?

Yes - 0%

No - 86%

Average - 0%

No comment - 14%

When do you buy a BC release?

Day of release - 69%

When affordable - 30%

No comment - 1%

General comments from questionnaire respondents:-

"The live album should have been preceded by a single."

especially for a comeback album."

"Should have been cleverer with the release date. There were ten major releases that week."

"...I think with "The Skinners" album they refound that old style."

"Not enough singles released which keeps them in the public eye and not enough live concerts."

"1984 - Simple Minds, U2, Cry Before Dawn, (mentioned many times) Frankie Goes To Hollywood, The Armoury Show."

"They should try and move with the times, musically."

1994? I've always thought Big Country belonged in a select group but still have their own identity within that group. As you can see, for me, that group has virtually disappeared."

"The band should take the Phil Collins/Genesis approach. Solo projects and BC albums inbetween. This would keep BC fresh and with different ideas."

"Big Country are in a class above all."

"I have trouble categorising Big Country because, their music is much more meaningful than similar bands such as Runrig."

"The profile of releases is so low in this area (Yateley, Hants) that, despite the fact that the music would very much appeal to my friends they were not given the chance. "Long Way Home" was played in the common room and fellow students responded well, likening the song to Pearl Jam's 'Even Flow'."

"In 1984 Big Country were like a breath of fresh air and they were hard to categorise with any other band."

"Bad choice of single releases, ie should have released "Seven Waves" and not "Alone",

"They take themselves too seriously, especially Stuart."

"Sometimes almost forget Big Country exist."

"Don't like them pretending songs such as "Chesters Farm" are good."

"No one had the video, couldn't even order."

"Aside from the postcard I can't usually find release dates anywhere else."

"Profile? Too low. Only real fans would get to know about releases."

"My biggest regrets are that they release 1 or 2 tracks then disappear and not releasing "Don't Fear The Reaper" as a proper single."

"THE YANKEE" contd

the media cesspool, many fresh new faces need to:- A) know and B) care who Stuart Adamson is!

All of these ideas were truly brilliant but the one gripe that kept creeping up, like slugs on a rotten pumpkin, was the fact that Big Country needs more publicity! "Promote the albums", you screamed. "Promote the concerts, promote Stu's new haircut, promote, promote, PROMOTE!!! I got the point.

Now, I'm sure you all are saying, "But, Mr Yankee, what would YOU do if you were BC's manager? What are YOUR formulas for their future success?" My response is, simply, BUGGER OFF!!! Where do any of you get off questioning the managerial prowess of Ian Grant? After all, the band is still together, in it's original incarnation, after almost twelve years! They're still putting out butt-kicking music and they're still ripping up the stage live! What, you think all one has to do is make a simple phone call and, "presto", Big Country is headlining the LA Forum? You think all that it takes to line up a worldwide marketing campaign is a few bucks and a good publicist? You think all

it takes for U2 to write another hit song is the same two chords and a digital delay? Okay, forget that one. But seriously, this is the music business, pal! It's a mystery, wrapped inside a riddle, wrapped inside an enigma! Who put this "armchair manager" idea into your heads, anyway? Whoever he is, string him up, because Ian Grant, you are King of the World in my book! Keep up the good work! In fact, though strictly heterosexual, I'd like to bear your children, provided medical science one day makes it possible. Sure the album covers have sucked recently, sure you have about as much chance of finding an article on BC as you do hearing the words "I did it" from O.J. Simpson, sure Meat Loaf stinks, in more ways than one, but hey, it's 1995 and Big Country is still a force, maybe not the biggest force around but a force nonetheless. Yes, new marketing strategies should be devised and I'm sure they will be but, in the meantime, I just know that their new album will destroy! I can feel it in my bones. Next time, hopefully, that's what we'll talk about. Until then, Harvest Home! (Sorry, but I wanted to be the first BC fan in history to end a letter with something other than "Stay Alive". So sue me).

PEN-PALS

Just write in to me giving your name, address, membership number and brief details of yourself and hobbies and I will add your details to the list in the next issue. If anyone wishes me to re-print their name on the penpal list, you have only to ask.

Andrea Grosso (Membership No 003891)

Italy

Year of birth:- 1970

A student of Geology at the University of Turin and looking for penpals to exchange opinions and material about the band. She would like to correspond with any BC fans world wide but, in particular, those in Italy with whom to go to future gigs. Likes soccer, basketball and all sports. All letters answered.

★★★★★★

Randall Davis (Membership No 003363)

, Australia

Year of birth:- 1967

Pen friend wanted. Female 18 to 25 years old.

★★★★★★

Neil Brown (Membership No 003503)

, Scotland

Year of birth:- 1974

Hobbies include football and supports Dundee United. Neil breeds and shows Shetland ponies and enjoys his Atari ST computer. Other musical interests are Simple Minds, Bryan Adams and INXS. He Works as a Despatch Clerk in a paper mill.

★★★★★★

Keith Lewington(Membership No 000027)

, UK

Year of birth:- 1967

Hobbies include: music, computers, hi-fi, playing the drums and collecting records. Musical interests: Big Country, It Bites and The Icicle Works but also enjoys most music styles except classical and dance. Keith says, "I've been a Country Club member since 1983 and will write to anyone because I'm a lonely ol' sod but I've got a wicked sense of humour".

★★★★★★

YOUR QUESTIONS

- Q** From **Graham Goodall** (Membership No 001511). If the album is finished why do Chrysalis say there is still no single planned?
Ask me another. There is a single planned but we just don't know what or when. So, I guess we'll have to sit back and wait and be satisfied with the multitude of past recordings for a while longer, won't we? You know the band won't leave you in this state of withdrawal longer than they can help.
- Q** From **Graham Goodall** (Membership No 001511). Can Ian give us loyal fans the up to the minute itinery. Why is everything so TOP SECRET?
No secrets here. Right now you know about as much as anyone.
- Q** From **Danny Spicer** (Membership No 003832). "I wrote a while back asking about the location for the video "In A Big Country". Was it filmed at Corfe Castle and Swanage? I don't think it was but my wife insists that it was. Please put me out of my misery."
Yeah, Danny, the vid was shot at Corfe Castle/Swanage so, you've lost your bet with your wife.

NOTICE BOARD

Heather Blandford (Membership No 003979)

USA
Heather Blandford would love to buy the available video(s) but, as they are not compatible with the American system can anyone point Heather in the direction of conversion?

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Lorraine Laidlaw (Membership No 003506)

Scotland
WANTED:- Video of the acoustic set in HMV Glasgow 6th June 1994 Lorraine says she knows there are two copies!

ON OFFER:- Video of acoustic set in HMV Edinbrugh 10th June (she has the only copy!

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Jim McConnell (Membership No 003954)

Scotland
WANTED: 7", 12", picture discs, promos, limited editions, bootlegs, videos. Anything at all.

ON OFFER; Cassette recordings of Skids material (7", B sides, albums, rarities). Big Country 'B' sides, rare tracks, bootlegs etc.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Chris Gallagher (Membership No 003779)

USA
Willing to pay good money for a copy of 7" double single "Look Away" or 12" "Peace In Our Time". Willing to pay for taped copies of either.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Carsten Telinde (Membership No 003842)

Germany
Carsten is looking to acquire a copy of "The Seer Live In New York" video. Also looking for "Restless Natives" or copies of any televised BC shows, documentaries, promo videos etc. etc.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Shea Broaders (Membership No 003980)

USA
LOOKING FOR:- "Auld Lang Syne", "Highland Scenery", "Home Came The Angels", "Restless Natives" I and II and others. Can you help?

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Steve Mullin (Membership No 003984)

Australia
LOOKING FOR: "The Crossing" CD with the extra four tracks - "In A Big Country", "Fields Of Fire", "Angle Park" and "Heart And Soul" (12 mixes. Also looking for "Wonderland" on CD.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

James Birch (Membership No 003860)

USA
James has asked that I print his letter. "... trouble trading with folk 'outside the US' - I advertised my 1993 show from Minneapolis and got MANY responses, one or two from fine, fine folk (one fellow I still trade with regularly - a GREAT guy!) but one or two responses from mediocre people and two or three folk who I sent tapes to that NEVER sent me anything in return! James does mention names but I won't. I even CALLED him to make sure he got the tapes and he said, 'Yes and that they were brilliant.' He told me that he could get the things I asked for in return 'for buttons' at the next record fair this was at least six months ago (James' letter dated November 1994). I'm pissed off that these folk have taken advantage of my trust."

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Stefan Franke (Membership No 003161)

From Germany
Stefan has written to me about the Radio One Session CD but also to tell us that he has found an US promo CD of "We're Not In Kansas" on Fox Records which features the album version and an edited (4:59) version. It comes in a jewel box with a white back cover only - Cat No: RDJ 62695-2. Stephan also mentions the US "Best Of" CD - this was, in fact released twelve to eighteen months ago.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Margaret Colhaun (Membership No 003751)

Scotland
Desperate for the Japanese CD Box Set. Is anyone willing to part with theirs?

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Dominic Williams (Membership No 000325)

UK
Thirty five rare Big Country items for sale! These include five different live radio LPs, acetates for "Look Away" and "Rose", U.S. promos of 7" and 12" singles, UK CD promos including an autographed "Alone" CD - many more. Please send a Stamped, self-addressed envelope to Dominic at the above address.

Leigh Dalgleish (Membership No 003397)

Scotland
Apologies from Leigh if anybody sent a s.a.e. to him for lists and never received a reply. Leigh moved (new address above) and, although he did get most of his mail forwarded, some, apparently, was binned and NOT forwarded!