



**BIG
COUNTRY**



Hi everyone,

The "Eclectic" video progress. Once again, I asked Ian if there had been any progress on this, *"No news on Eclectic video. Castle has just been sold so I don't expect any activity yet. We may try and release it ourselves via The Website."*

In the last issue we reported that The King of Emotion Diverse Collection release had been stopped because they did not have the rights to the "B" sides BUT, THIS HAS BEEN RELEASED, what happened to change this? Ian said, *"Kings of Emotion was released. Snapper were real jerks. We asked them to delay the release and if they did then Stuart would supply sleeve notes and a couple of unreleased tracks, effectively making it Rarities Vol 2. They took off the demos and released it anyway. I hope it sells zero. Maybe we will release the original Kings of Emotion album on the web."*

Record deal struck? *"This is not, as yet, complete. It will be in the next two weeks or so. However, the band have been in the studio with Ray Davies at Konk Studios."*

Oh, by the way, anyone interested in writing the next magazine. I think this could be really interesting for you and for me/us. So, all we are asking is whether any die-hard fans would like to be "editor" for an issue. You can include anything you have which you think would be interesting to other members, submit your articles, pictures, reviews, thoughts etc as soon as you can to give me ample time this end. Any news, penpals, notice board bits will still come from this end but the rest of the mag would be up to you to fill. Interested? Then get those pens scratching or, should I say, keyboards tapping.

I hope you all managed to get hold of your copy of the Rarities and Restless Natives double CD without any problems. Told you it would hit the shelves eventually even following yet another postponement (Released 1st June).

See elsewhere in the magazine for summer festival dates - hope you can get along to see them. After these dates the band will be writing and

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

demoing through August and September and American fans may even see the band perform a few dates in the southern States.

Cheers,

Jan

The HOT NEWS system.

How it works:- all you need do is lodge a stamped, self-addressed envelope here, clearly marked **HOT NEWS**. (Overseas members should send International Reply Coupons).

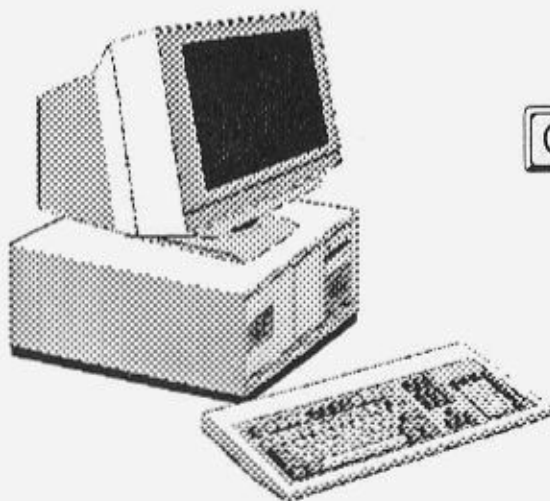
This envelope should show **YOUR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER** and the **DATE OF THE LAST HOT NEWS RECEIVED** by you.

I will then keep these envelopes here until there is news of release dates/tours or what-have-you. If you don't participate then, I have to say, you could miss out - funds do not run to a general mailing every time there is a bit of news, sorry.

To keep abreast between the newsletters/magazines **you need to participate** in the hot news System, whether by e-mail or "snail mail". If you wish to receive this news via your computer screen then just let me know your e-mail address and I will add you to the BC address group.

Country Club, P O Box 59, Ashwell, Herts SG7 5NG, England

100647.3550@CompuServe.Com



IT IS
OFFICIAL -
THE BIG
COUNTRY
OFFICIAL
WEBSITE.

Launched on 23rd May the site has already had 15,000 visits.

The address:- www.bigcountry.co.uk

There are various pages, NEWS - BIOGRAPHY (chronological and current) - DISCOGRAPHY - MERCHANDISE - LINKS TO OTHER RELATED SITES - MEMBERS' PAGE (£10.00 subscription per year) which includes LIVE CHAT ROOM, DISCOUNTED MERCHANDISE, PREFERENTIAL TICKETING TO CERTAIN BC CONCERTS, COMPETITIONS and AUCTIONS - ARCHIVE where you can DOWNLOAD VIDEO AND AUDIO CLIPS.

In time, we hope to expand in all directions. Sell old product, release specially recorded material. It is already harnessing the BC fanbase on a worldwide basis and we have had hits from Peru, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, all over the USA and Europe.

WE CAN NOW KEEP
PEOPLE INFORMED
WITHOUT HAVING TO
RELY ON
DISINTERESTED
RECORD COMPANIES
.

KINGS OF EMOTION, A DIVERSE COLLECTION
SMD CD 101 SNAPPER MUSIC
RELEASED 27TH APRIL 1998

DISC 1

Look Away (live)
Wonderland (live)
Alone (live)
Chance (live)
Fields of Fire (live)
Peace In Our Time (live)
Ships (live)
Rocking In A Free World (live)
King Of Emotion
The Buffalo Skinners
Where The Rose Is Sown
Winter Sky
River Of Hope
I'm Eighteen
Vicious
On The Road Again

DISC 2

You Dreamer
Message Of Love
I'm Not Ashamed
Sail Into Nothing
One In A Million
God's Great Mistake
Post Nuclear Talking Blues
Blue On A Green Planet
Send You
Take You To The Moon
Far From Me To You
I'm On Fire
Ruby Tuesday
The Night They Drove Old Dixie
Down
Thunder and Lightning
Come Back To Me

ONE FAN'S VIEW FROM AUSTIN, TEXAS: "I just got the KOE set in the mail. I was kind of hoping to get a "leaked" set with the original track listing but, oh well..... The sticker on the wrapping promises "informative" liner notes but they consist of just another one of those band history overview essays we've already seen too many times. The essay discusses each album, including Eclectic and Brighton Rock but somehow manages not even to mention WTLF - the album half of KOE is taken from.

This leads me to believe that the company already had liner notes based on the first track listing, with the b-sides. Then, when that fell through, they just patched together album tracks, cut and pasted the liner notes and

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

released the thing anyway. The whole thing has a ragged look - not at all like the Brighton Rock album which was on the same label but had much better looking liner notes.

I hate to be critical of any BC release but doggone it, this one is pretty lame. Oh well, at least Rarities is going to be worth the wait, right?

After listening to the two new songs on KOE, here are my reflections ... and yes I did get it from EQS Music which is where all US fans should get all of their BC imports as far as I'm concerned.

"Ships" is pretty much the standard version with a few minor wrinkles. The only real improvement is Mark's intricate cymbal work. Overall, though, I think the version on WTAOASN is just as good if not better.

"Rocking In The Free World" is ferocious (what did you expect?) but not any more so than the version on the b-side of the "Alone" single. This version has a different guitar break with some call-and-response. The best thing about this track has already been mentioned: Stu sings some of the lyrics with a really deep brogue. I wish he did this more often!

So, are these two tracks worth shelling out the money for the second CD set? If you're a hyper-obsessive BC fan like me you're going to buy it anyway. For everyone else, you might be happier to save your money.

AND ANOTHER:- Absolutely strange track list. Don't understand such a release policy at all. Smells like Polygram.... Seems the whole is a combined WTLF with Eclectic and Brighton Rock. You've to buy the two CD set to get Ships and Rockin'... (live) as the only new tracks. What a waste...

AND YET ANOTHER:- Me? I think it's the same as all greatest hits releases - the record company in question understandably trying to cash in a second time by re-releasing the same old stuff. On the other hand, if you're a 'part-time' fan and you didn't buy WTLF, Brighton Rock and Eclectic then it could be a great addition to the collection. I have to buy it for completeness sake anyway.

Remember, Remember Continued.....

Keep them coming, the more the merrier.

David Slammon from Co. Offaly, Ireland:- "I just thought that I would tell you about some of my memories of some gigs. I have seen the band fifteen times now and every time it still gives me tingles in the back of my neck but just one little story comes to mind.

It happened at midnight at the Olympia gig during the Buffalo Skinners tour. My fiancée, Liz, and I arrived early and got seats three rows from the front - excellent position. Anyway, at about 11.50 the couple who were sitting beside me said to me,

"HAS TRISHA YEARWOOD GOT A FULL BAND WITH HER?"

THEY HAD SEEN ALL THE GEAR ON THE STAGE,

I SAID *"IT'S BIG COUNTRY WHO IS PLAYING"*,

***"WHO ARE BIG COUNTRY?"* WAS THIS GIRL'S REPLY,**

she continued to tell me that they had booked the tickets by credit card and had obviously booked the wrong venue (Trisha Yearwood was playing the Gaitey that night at 8pm) so I proceeded to tell them about Big Country. One girl said the only song she knew was "Look Away" the other "King Of Emotion" but,

**LET ME TELL YOU, BY THE END OF THE NIGHT THEY WERE DANCING
IN THE AISLE**

and when it was all over they thanked me and Liz for stopping them from leaving, they loved it. One of them fell in love with Stuart and,

**AT THE LAST GIG ON THE ECLECTIC TOUR THERE THEY WERE AGAIN -
AT THE FRONT.**

**That sums up the band for me, they will never know how much
pleasure they have brought to me so here's to
another seventeen years."**

What the fans say:-

Ed Clark

11th April. "... wanted to file this report while details of the show at the Caffee Milano were still fresh in my head. Oh, what a night! You may remember my despatch following the concert at the Douglas Corner Cafe on 13th February. Well, not even in my happiest dreams would I have believed that I would have the chance to see Stuart Adamson in concert twice within two months! If this is possible, what's next? A Stuart and Elvis show? Count me a believer!

The concert experience for me begins the moment I get off work. State employees in Kentucky only have to work until noon on Good Friday I made the 40 minute commute to my home in Lexington, Kentucky. Unfortunately, Erika, my fiancée, could not attend the concert but a couple of her sisters and one sister's fiancée wanted to go to the show - we met in Nashville. On the way, I listened to a scorching BC bootleg of the Buffalo Skinners concert in Minneapolis. I strongly encourage all fans to undergo some form of sonic preconditioning before a show otherwise you run the risk of being completely overwhelmed!

We arrived at the Caffee Milano around 7pm. The Caffee was unlike any place I had ever seen before. You walk in and face the bar, beyond is the restaurant and the stage is at the back. About two and half stories separate the floor and the ceiling, so the place has some lift. There are actually four levels of seating in the restaurant. As you face the stage, to the left and up some steps off the main floor there are four or five booths and to the right of the stage there are an additional two levels with more tables. The foot tall wooden friezes with scenes from Milano decorate the wall on the right. Directly to the left of the stage there is a small balcony. The stage itself is roomy. The whole restaurant is in brick and I felt like I was in an enclosed courtyard. It could not be a more different environment than the Douglas Corner Cafe. For one, Caffee Milano is apparently smoke-free. I felt over-dressed at Douglas Corner in my "Why The Long Face" shirt. At the Caffee Milano, I felt seriously under-dressed even though I was wearing a button-down dress shirt beneath my t/shirt.

Of course, I was glad that I wore the shirt because as soon as I got there other fans started coming up to me to talk. There was a fellow named Chris who had

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8

driven from St Louis - he works in a record store and had read about the show on one of the web pages. He was sitting by himself so I asked him to join us at our table in front of the stage, which he did. When Stuart performs, anyone is welcome at my table. Just stay out of my chair!

I ordered the shrimp and pasta dish for yuppies even though I'm a bureaucrat who works in a windowless office but, what the hey. List member and friend Donna Higgs arrived and we caught up on news since the last show. At about 8.30 a guy named Rusty Miller who looks like the American soccer play Alexi Lallas (spelling?) took the stage and sang several songs about peace and justice and feeling blue. Most of it was pretty obvious material and he admitted as much saying, these were the things the Great Spirit told him to address. I liked his song "If It's Not Peace, Then What's The Plan?" but I wish the Great Spirits had told him to chop about five minutes off his epic "So Free".

When Stuart and Marcus took the stage, everyone was more than ready (as I'm sure you are by this point, patient read). They played basically the same set as at the Douglas Corner Cafe. There was a new instrumental in which the flutist, John Mach (spelling?) took the lead. Marcus' songs included "Old Country", "Blue Rose", "Life Is A Church" (which he did not play at Douglas Corner), "Supernatural", and "Broken Road" as an encore. He sounded great.

Marcus's lyrics are readily accessible and sincere in the best meaning of the word. The undercurrent of pain, perseverance and the pride that grows with hardship is absent in his music and maybe because of that I don't identify with him as readily as with Stuart. There is no question, however, that he is a great talent. His song "Broken Road" is an absolute masterpiece. I hope to go see him with his own band when Stuart is entertaining you folks across the pond.

Stuart played "Simple Man", "Shattered Cross", "The Travellers", "Private Battlefield", "Learn To Row", and "In A Big Country". When he announced 'This song is called "Simple Man,"' I started clapping. This was one of my favourites from the first show and I was so happy to hear that he was going to be playing and singing and I was so tired from the long week that clapping sounds just started leaking from my hands. In his song, "Learn To Row" Stuart sings, 'You are not alone out there' but, friends when I started to clap I was alone out there! Stuart did a kind of mock curtsy and everybody laughed. Then he said with good humour,

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

'No, I mean that', and everybody laughed some more and in the laughter you could hear the happy anticipation of the audience. Then he started playing and it was great hearing him tell us about a simple man with a complicated life, knowing that it was him and that it was also all of us. Next came "Shattered Cross" which I continue to believe has the greatest potential as a single of any of the songs he played. It's a dark tune:

*Don't bring me your tale of temptation and loss
The rags of your dreams, your shattered cross...*

It sounded great but it seemed out of place in this bright, smoke-free environment. I was surprised to notice how much the setting affected the music. The crowd loved Marcus' "Life Is A Church" which probably would have sounded strange at Douglas Corner.

The real treat for me at this concert was "Learn To Row". Stuart dedicated the song to his father, a deep sea fisherman. The lyrics are the most personal he has ever written, I believe, and the guitar playing was breathtaking. I've heard that some native people communicate with their ancestors by playing drums. Anyone who was at the concert will testify that the guitar also works. Stuart seemed to be communicating with his father as he played. It was extremely intense and personal but not self-conscious in any way.

I said it in my post from the last concert but repetition makes it no less true:

**IT WAS A PRIVILEGE TO BE AT THIS CONCERT AND
IT WAS A NIGHT I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER.**

The show ended with "In A Big Country" which Julie perfectly described in her report as gorgeous. When the song began, no one cheered. It was as if no one in the audience wanted to drown out a single note. To be honest, I was still reeling from "Learn To Row" played three songs earlier, which should say a lot about that song. After the last note was struck, Chris, the stranger from St Louis sitting at my table bolted out of his chair in applause and everyone else followed suit. Stuart flipped him his guitar pick and everybody felt happy and high.

I confess that I did not keep my promise of leaving my camera at home but I used it only to take pictures of the show and to take pictures of other fans with Stuart.

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

I did get him to sign autographs and he remembered both Donna and me by name from the previous concert. What a guy! I regret not getting to ask him the questions posed by the list. There was a crowd and I was told that he had been travelling and was tired although he was patient and gracious with everyone. I will forward the questions to the fan club and maybe Jan will have better luck.

Before I end this letter, my other friends, I must confess my selfishness. Yes, I have heard Stuart twice now in two months and yes, it is more than I deserve. All the same, I want to hear Big Country! The intimacy that comes from their years of playing together for people around the world, the ties that they have forged through all of "the parties, the funerals, the fights" all of that is in their music. The Big Country experience is different from anything else I have had and I want to share it! I enjoyed meeting Julie, Tim and Blake and I enjoyed seeing Shirley and Donna again. You are beautiful people to me! Stay Alive!" Ed

From Ian Winter - "I've just got back from Barrow-in-Furness and had to write to you about one of my best BC experiences. Thinking that BC's gig at Barrow Rocks with The Stranglers might be their only one this year, I sent off for a ticket immediately with excitement. I hadn't seen the band since the WTLF tour.

I set off in the early hours of Saturday 23rd and arrived four and a half hours later from Bristol. I sought out the football ground where the gig was to take place and nearly had kittens when I saw a notice saying the gig had been postponed until September 5th. A few seconds later, this panic was offset by the note underneath saying

**BIG COUNTRY PLAYING AT FORUM 28 (MAY 23RD) WITH
JASON ISAACS SUPPORTING.**

The relief was enormous, my anger and panic turned to joy that I would see the band (all being well) anyway in a small setting. The gig could be an even better one I felt. I found the concert venue in the town centre and posters on the windows confirmed the gig that night. Being only 8.30 am, I had to wait until 10am for the box office to open to see if I could get a ticket.

I set about seeking accommodation for the night at a hotel literally down the road and spoke to the receptionist of my near heart attack. She then said she would let

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

me into a secret - BC were staying in the hotel and were there already! Brilliant, I thought, I could end up having a beer with the lads - things were looking up! She showed me some photos of Jason Isaacs from the support band who, she said, were also staying there.

Anyway, to speed up the story, after some much needed kip, I went down to the bar hoping that the England vs Saudi Arabia game would be on, which it was - soon some guys sat near the bar and I earwigged them talking about soundchecks and Big Country and deduced they were the support band. A bit later they came over to watch the football and I soon found out I was speaking to Jason Isaacs. We spoke about the gig and music in general. Jason had been touring for a while and was starting to make an impact and supporting BC was to be one of his biggest (if not the biggest) gigs yet. All the band were from Manchester and really friendly "sound" guys. Later on their wives, partners and more roadcrew arrived and treated me like part of the group. I could have gone to the soundcheck but decided to go for a MacDonaldis with Jason's "entourage" who kindly invited me.

We had a beer before the gig with Jason and then all went, or staggered towards the venue. I was now really looking forward to seeing Jason Isaacs as well as BC, needless to say!

My expectations were fully met by both bands. What a gig! I was really impressed by Jason Isaac's set. His band play a strong, melodic guitar sound with powerful lyrics and really good vocals not a million miles away from BC's sound (as Jason even said to me earlier that day). At least a few tracks stuck out in my mind, particularly "A Girl Called Jesus" and "Man On The Moon". I recommend them highly to all BC fans.

BC of course were the business. The place was pretty packed by the time they came on and the atmosphere electric although it got even better after two or three numbers, there was a good core of die-hard fans down the front. Apparently, according to one of Jason Isaacs' band, several BC fan club members had booked into the same hotel as BC. I was pleased with the overall set and especially enjoyed "Restless Natives", "Thirteen Valleys" and "Chance" which has developed into my all time fave BC track. It would be great however if "golden oldies" such as "Angle Park" and "Close Action" were played (two classics, I'm sure BC fans would agree). The band played about five new songs and they

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

sounded impressive although it's always hard to tell on first hearing. I'm sure they'll grow to be favourites! One piece of gossip was that "IABC" was not played and I was told that some internal politics had caused this - I know no more! They always give their fans value for money! Stuart had a couple of technical hitches and had the crowd in stitches when he answered back to a person who heckled him to get on with it!

After the gig, there was some serious partying to be done in the town and hotel with Jason Isaacs. We were even invited to join a wedding reception taking place in the hotel. I managed to retire about 4am and still made it up for breakfast before setting off home at 10am. Impressive, eh?

Well, what a weekend! One of my most memorable BC adventures during twenty years of following Stuart's music (I'm now 34). With hindsight, it was great of the band to rearrange the gig at very short notice (it was only postponed on Tuesday) and a sign of how well they always treat their fans. I hope to go to the rearranged gig on 5th September. It was magic to meet Jason Isaacs and I wish them all the best in the music biz - sound guys and lasses! Please could you forward them a copy of this mag if you print this letter, they were so kind to me.

Oliver Hunter e-mailed me:- Saturday 23rd May 1998 - Barrow Forum 28 gig. Fans had flown in from far flung places and a meeting organised, to mention a few:- Markus Schoeller flew in from Germany, Martin Moehrmann also from Germany, Darren Bain and Kate McIntosh from Australia, Joe Migliore, Shari, Dara Migliore, Andy Bairley and Niels from the States plus, of course, UK fans, some of whom obviously travelled a fair distance to be in Barrow-in-Furness.

"I left St Helens at 8.45am and drove up to Barrow-in-Furness arriving at the Tally Ho 'first' at 10.55am shortly followed by Kevin and Pam. Martin Moehrmann and Markus Schoeller appeared from around the corner where they had been waiting and after the relevant introductions we went into the pub.

Kevin had a few records and CDs to sell which we were checking over as others began to arrive. I handed the sticky labels out (I had pre-printed these with everyone's names on) as people arrived and tried to guess who people were before they

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

introduced themselves. I turned out not to do too badly at that and soon most people had arrived and we started having lunches brought over.

At Forum 28 we just wandered into the hall and up to the stage where Mark was showing a young roadie how to set up his drums. We waited a few minutes before calling over to him and he asked if we could hang on for ten minutes while he set up his kit.

While we were waiting we chatted to two guys from Northern Ireland who turned up - Phil and Gary. They were very friendly and we agreed to meet them later. Eventually Mark came over and we asked about the possibility of sitting in on the sound check. He said he thought it'd be alright but we'd have to ask the Stage Manager (who said he didn't mind) and check with Ian. He said that he'd be going to pick the others up at about 4.30 so the sound check should be around 5(ish).

At 5pm we tried to wander in as before but the guy that seemed to be in charge wanted to speak to Ian Grant before he would let us in. After a few minutes the band and Ian arrived and I managed to ask him about the sound check. He said it would be fine and that he would let us know when we could come in. After only a few more minutes we were allowed in and sat or stood at the back of the hall while everything was checked. Mark's drums were particularly loud and made various internal organs vibrate ... When all the individual mikes and instruments had been tested the band played a couple of the new songs, I think "Presidents" was one.

After the sound check I asked Ian if we could see the band and he went off to ask them. It was about 6.30 pm by now and when he came back he said that the guys wanted to get changed and freshen up but if we waited behind after the gig he would arrange for us all to meet up.

A few more people had arrived including Joe and Shari and Phil and Gary from Northern Ireland.

Pelt were as good, if not better, than when I saw them at The Great Big Noise last summer. They played a seven song set - "High", "Feel", "I Wish I Was", "Hold Me Down", "Toffee Apples", "Another Day" and "Elmira". They were followed by Jason Isaacs who played an eight song set including "Man In The Moon",

Continued on page 15

Continued from page 14

"Sigh", "Who Says I Can" and "She's The One". Jason and his band were good and I would definitely watch them again.

After a surprisingly short wait BC were announced and ran onto the stage. They played "We're Not in Kansas", "You Dreamer", "President", "Broken Heart", "Sleep Till Dawn", "Wonderland", "Loserville", "I'm Not Ashamed", "Living By Memory", "I Get Hurt", "Ships", "Look Away", "Restless Natives", "Lost Patrol" - encore 1 "Alone", "Chance" - encore 2 Mark's drum solo, "Fields Of Fire".

Stuart used elbow during BH13V and the intro to "Chance" and the whole gig was really energetic with the usual bouncing in the centre section. During an early new song Stuart had something wrong with a guitar and had to stop playing after a few bars saying "It's not right." Bruce said "Remember, if it's not right, it's shite!" and Stuart told Tony to tell a joke who approached the mike and said "Funny football ground this!"

*There was the usual contingent of drunken Scotsmen shouting out crap and song titles to Stuart and the boys. Stuart and Bruce had the usual witty put downs for these occasions and one time when someone shouted out a song title he responded with "... is just one of the songs we play!" Pretty soon another song title was shouted out and he said to Bruce "This guys got a f*ckin' list of all our songs down there". The guy shut up for a bit ...*

The band left the stage before the end of "Lost Patrol", leaving the crowd singing the "ay-e-le-ay-e-ie-ay-ph, 1-2, 1-2-3-4" as is traditional at these occasions. They came back on and finished the song before doing "Alone" and "Chance" during which (I think it was) Stuart did the usual hand shaking with the crowd routine and then the band went off leaving us singing "Oh, Lord, I never felt so low, 2-3-4" This went on for a few minutes before Mark came back on. He asked if we wanted to hear him make some noise before entertaining us to a couple of drum solos making use of some intricate technical patterns which was really fascinating to watch and a treat, not just for the drummers in the audience

The rest of the band came back on and they played the traditional "FofF" (Scratch) but without any dancing girls. According to Stuart's set list they were meant to play a new song called "Grace" after "Lost Patrol". I don't have

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

this written down but it's possible that they did play it, is anyone else's memory better than mine?

After "FofF" that was really the end and we all waited patiently in the foyer and I went and got the bits out of the car. The bar was shut and the drinks machine was empty so we were all pretty thirsty. After 10-15 minutes Ian Grant came over and said we could all go backstage so, we all trooped in. The band were scattered about backstage chatting and people moved over to the person they wanted to talk to first. I went and talked to Pelt first and got my "Fuzzy" CD signed and took some pictures of them. They are really friendly and the drummer, Ben, is on the internet and should be visiting the various sites soon.

I guess we had about an hour chatting with the band and getting autographs/taking photos before they started packing up and moving out, Mark driving them back up to Scotland. I felt really pleased that those who had travelled a long way and/or hadn't see the band before got to have such an experience.

Markus, Margaret, Kevin, Pam, Claire and the guy whose name escapes me from Malta all piled in the back of my car and we drove back to Markus and Margaret's hotels. After dropping them off I took Kev, Pam and Claire back to their house and we said our goodbyes. I took the guy from Malta back down the A590 to Ulverston where he was staying before continuing on back to St Helens where I arrived, ears still ringing, just after 2.15am due to very quiet roads, lack of police and slightly heavy accelerator foot.

All in all a really great day, both for the Big Country element and meeting people from the list. I would like to say "hi" to everyone that I met during the day but especially to Kevin and Pam, Markus and Martin, Margaret, Heather and Adam, Tony and Gill, Colin and his wife, Joe and Shari from New York, Darren from Australia and Hylton Gray from Johannesburg. Also, major thanks to Kevin for organising the meeting up and meals and for keeping us all in touch with the developments before and after the postponement.

If they play "Barrow Rocks" we'll have to do it all over again." Oliver

**BARROW AFC,
HOLKER STREET FOOTBALL GROUND,
WILKIE ROAD, BARROW IN FURNESS,
CUMBRIA LA14 5UW**

Postponed

23RD MAY 1998

I shouldn't think there is anyone who is unaware that this gig was postponed

New Date

THE RE-SCHEDULED DATE IS

5TH SEPTEMBER

with hopes to keep the same line up but, I guess, we'll have to wait to have that confirmed.

Refunds were available for those unable to make the re-scheduled date but your tickets will be valid for **5th September** but
read on ...

The North West Evening Mail - Thursday 16th July:-

This was forwarded to me by Ian via e-mail. **Musical Festival Is On The Rocks.** Barrow Rocks has run aground for the second time with organisers accused of not having the money to turn their plans into reality. The all-day music festival featuring headline acts Big Country and The Stranglers was due to take place in May at Holker Street football ground but was cancelled at the last moment and re-scheduled for 5th September. Ged Rule, who is organising the concert through his company Holker Leisure, yesterday told the Evening Mail they were currently in discussion with the bands about which date to hold the concert. He said, *"It might be moved to a little bit later than 5th September but nothing is cancelled, everything is still very much alive. In fact, we are having a meeting tomorrow and might have another two bands to add to the bill."* Big Country manager, Ian Grant, said this morning that the only contact he had had with Mr Rule was

Continued on page 18

a brief telephone conversation last night and he was feeling "very disillusioned". He said, "I pulled the plug on the first concert because there was no finance in place. The last time I met with Mr Rule was a meeting at the Swan Hotel in Newby Bridge on the morning the first concert was supposed to take place when I said that, for the band to continue their involvement it had to be paid the full deposit owed and plans made to ensure the second date was successful. I haven't heard from him since then and in the end I posted a notice on our internet site saying the re-scheduled show had been cancelled. We are now pursuing legal action to obtain the balance of our deposit. We didn't even get paid on the night we played at Forum 28. The money arrived three weeks later from the council and nobody thanked us for playing at such short notice." He added, "I hope he pulls the concert off for his sake, as well as that of the town and the punters but if he doesn't he only has himself to blame for going too far down the road without having the funding in place." Manchester-based Piccadilly Box Office which has been handling some ticket sales confirmed the concert was "definitely cancelled" and advised people who bought tickets to get in touch regarding refunds.

Also appearing in the same newspaper: - **Big Puzzle Hangs Over Big Bands Gig Live Music** - Will the Barrow Rocks concert ever take place? James Drury reports on the on-going rumpus. Have you ever wished you were better informed? Holders of tickets to the Barrow Rocks Concert scheduled to take place on 5th September and featuring headline acts Big Country and The Stranglers must be asking themselves this question. Because, on the one hand, the Piccadilly Box Office in Manchester which has been handling ticket sales say it is "definitely cancelled" while on the other, organiser Ged Rule says it's "still going ahead". This somewhat contradictory state of affairs was brought to our attention by Big Country fan, Kevin Wright, who's been holding some very interesting conversations with band manager Ian Grant on the group's internet website. Kevin discovered the re-scheduled Holker Street concert had been, how can we put it, "indefinitely postponed" for the second time after Mr Grant had posted the following notice on the Big Country News site on 2nd July.

Continued on page 19

Continued from page 18

“Big Country will definitely NOT be appearing at the re-scheduled Barrow FC concert. It has been cancelled. It appears the club or promoters did not raise the money to be able to promote the show. Perhaps they should have thought of this before booking any acts or any of the production.”

Kevin then spoke to Ian Grant via the net to ask about the possibility of Barrow Rocks moving to Forum 28 where Big Country played last time the Holker St concert was, er, put on hold. Ian Grant said, *“I won't discuss any future date until we get the whole of the band's deposit, if not the whole amount due. It transpired that the financial backing wasn't in place and they were naive in their approach generally.”* However, Ged Rule said on Tuesday *“We are still consulting with Big Country and The Stranglers on the best time to have the concert. 5th September is a provisional date and hopefully this will fit in with both their schedules - as soon as we have confirmed anything, we will let you know. The concert is still going ahead”*. But, Piccadilly Box Office had the following statement to make on Barrow Rocks, *“It is definitely cancelled and we are asking people to send their tickets back.”* Pending Mr Rule getting back in touch with some form of confirmation, we've set Mulder and Scully the task of getting to the bottom of what must be Barrow's best kept secret.

So, there you have it. Sounds cancelled to me but, I guess, watch this space, just in case - Jan

Anyway, I hope that you all managed to catch at least one of the recent gigs that did go ahead but, if not, there are still a few dates lined up:-

8th August	Opening for The Rolling Stones - Tallin, Estonia Festival
16th August	Plymouth Festival
20th August	Opening for The Rolling Stones - Zagreb, Croatia Festival
22nd August	Weston Super Mare Festival
<small>(Tony has four or five GWR bands also playing plus Ian's new band - Snowdogs will be appearing)</small>	
23rd August	Pontefract Festival
29th August	Porthcawl Festival

What the Press say:-

NORTHWEST EVENING MAIL 28TH AUG 1998

“Big name bands prove their case -

The case has now been proved. Over the years music fans have been constantly asking why big name bands aren't being brought into Barrow.

The Holker Street concert would have been an ideal opportunity to test the reaction with big names like The Stranglers, Big Country and Arthur Brown heading into town. But it was not to be.

Forum 28 has often been identified as an obvious venue for “young people's” music and Saturday night proved that the punters were willing to support it as such.

At just three days' notice, Big Country and Jason Isaacs had switched from Holker Street to play at the Forum - and the fans followed them.

With the hall three-quarters full, it just went to show that people will pay the money if someone bothers to put the bands on. And it looks like moves might be afoot to do just that. So fingers crossed!

Jason Isaacs and his band did themselves proud. As total newcomers to most people in the Forum, it was always going to be a bit touch and go as to how they fared. The initial response was subdued but happily the fans warmed to the band and gave them a brilliant “first night reception”. They are definitely an “in your face” band with forceful and thought-provoking lyrics being carried off with total professionalism.

Big on vocals, with four out of the five members singing, they played up-tempo songs - which even got a few dancing - alongside beautiful ballads such as “She's The One”. Two other songs which were of particular note were “A Girl Called Jesus” which is featured on their single and “Man In The Moon.”

Continued on page 21

Continued from page 20

Surprisingly, Jason doesn't have a record deal but judging by this performance I am sure it won't be long now.

In case you missed the Big Country review in Monday's paper, I will reiterate

**THE BAND HAVE LOST NOTHING
AND CONTINUE TO PLEASE THEIR FANS.**

The old hits such as "Look Away" and "Fields Of Fire" were there although, surprisingly, "In A Big Country" was not.

The hall was really jumping as fans punched the air and leapt about, only to become spell-bound minutes later with the more melancholic songs."

NORWICH EVENING NEWS

"Now Big Country kick off cobwebs.

After a two year break, former chart-toppers Big Country are coming to play Norwich.

Formed in 1981 and with a debut album which sold three million copies and earned the band two grammy nominations and a host of other awards, Big Country have been "resting" for the past 18 months and are planning to kick off the cobwebs with a short club tour.

Bass player and backing vocalist with the band, Tony Butler, said the lads were looking forward to their gig at the UEA on Wednesday evening.

He said, *"It should be fun, we haven't played together for two years and we are hopefully going to do something a bit different. It's not a promotional tour and we'll be playing bits of this and that. Norwich is a beautiful city and it's always been a pleasure to play there."*

Continued on page 22

Continued from page 21

Opening at the Norwich gig will be the Cornish band Pelt who are signed to Tony's record label Great West Records."

THE FOLLOWING RECEIVED VIA E-MAIL FROM FANS:-

Band survives the test of time:- Big Country received a rapturous response when they played at the Forum,

DISPELLING ALL DOUBTS THAT THEY HAD PAST THEIR PRIME.

Blasting out all the old hits, along with newer material and the favourites of their most ardent fans they proved that the years had been good to them. The gig was organised at just three days' notice after the Holker Street Football gig was cancelled but they still managed to pull in the fans.

The hall was three-quarters full and during songs like "Look Away" and "Fields Of Fire" it was really jumping. Thirty-somethings were taken back to their teens as they leapt up and down, punching the air, while the more serene songs like "Chance" had them spellbound. Big Country knew the fans were totally behind them leaving them to carry on the singing as they left the stage - only to return to ecstatic screams. My only criticism is that they didn't play "In A Big Country" perhaps I was at the bar!

NORTH WEST EVENING MAIL:-

Country Comeback for Rock Legends - Big Country.

The article begins with the cancellation of the football club gig and re-scheduled Forum 28 and then Tony Butler said "*Over the last two years we have been recharging our batteries and becoming*

Continued on page 23

human beings again. Our comeback has coincided with the eighties revival but we are not riding on that - it is really just a coincidence. The interest in Big Country is still out there, I just don't know how trendy or hip we are in the big scheme of things. The band are not resentful of U2 - they spent all their time capitalising on their success in America whereas we did what we wanted to do at our own pace, there is a lot more pleasure in that, we were never a band to strive for the highest peak although we wouldn't mind being as rich as U2, I would hate to be in their position of doing all those fabulous albums and then coming out with something really bizarre as they have. We are all comfortable with what we have done and what we will be doing in the future. People like you because of what you are - you shouldn't lose your identity. We don't get nostalgic. The eighties was really enjoyable time but it is not something we want to live off. They are fond memories. The reason we are continuing now is because we feel we have something to offer, we are very aware of becoming a parody of ourselves and won't allow that to happen". BC records have been spotted in a few bargain bins but Tony shrugs that off saying, "I find it amusing. Lots of bands go through that and I don't believe it is a reflection of our music. The main crux of the band is that all four members, who have been together since 1982, enjoy each other's company and every aspect of our music. Before our break we were all starting to tire, it was a perpetual struggle, every record company tried to make us do things that they wanted us to do so they could make more money, they end up destroying more bands than they make money out of.

We have got a lot of respect for the bands which are around at the moment but it's the way it goes, you don't get airspace unless you are young and hip but, we are still out there.

We have still got it and we are still doing it. We are looking forward to kicking off again.

If NME don't want to write about us then that's up to them".

Notice Board

Tim Jones,

Wondering if anyone is interested in buying the following. He is open to offers.

"The Crossing" blue version cassette

"Steeltown" cassette

"The Seer" cassette

"Peace In Our Time" cassette

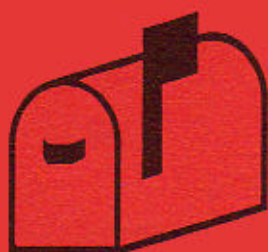
"No Place Like home" cassette

All signed by BC at HMV

Megastore, London on 19th September 1991 in gold pen. "No Place Like Home" CD promo with Vertigo sticker (release date 16/9). Please write to Tim with a SAE

Edward Baptista (001728)

Searching for the "Live At Barrowlands" New Year's Eve '83 concert on laser disc.



MAIL BOX The devotion of fans never ceases to amaze me - not only did several travel 1,000s of miles across land and sea to Barrow, as mentioned, but:

From Hiroshi Suzuki, Japan (004085) "I went to BC live on May 20th. I left Japan on May 18th and went to Norwich on 20th. Intercity was used between Norwich from London. I was surprised at the quickness of Intercity and the scene was very beautiful. But air was foul with London and my nose turned black. I came back to Japan on May 22nd. It is because there was work. If a concert is held next time, I want to go to England with my family. Anyway, live was better than the CD and I want to go if there is an opportunity.

Anyway I have one question. What kind of meaning is 400 miles (Fields of Fire) *This is the approximate journey from Edinburgh to London, a journey that Stuart has made dozens of times and, on one occasion in Autumn the fields were ablaze when farmers were burning the stubble from crops and this apparently inspired the lyrics.*