

WE SAVE NO SOULS!



*The Big Country Fanzine
Issue 5*

Welcome to another issue of "WSNS". Lots to tell you so straight down to business.

First of all, most of you will probably know that the band are to play a one-off show at Barrowlands in Glasgow on May 20th. Tickets are only available from Virgin Records in Glasgow, not from the venue. Sorry, we don't have any details of prices or when the tickets are on sale, at the time of writing (18 March). Let's have a good turn out, eh ?

Stuart rang Jeremy on 25 January just to let us know they hadn't forgotten us and they would hopefully be arranging a meeting to discuss the Country Club "in the near future". The good news is that they have a new drummer, who we only know as "Paul" and they have been demo-ing new material.

Your response to our announcement in the last issue about the possibility of us taking over the running of the Country Club has been very encouraging. Without exception all the letters we have received have said more or less the same thing..."go for it". As soon as anything develops along those lines, we will let you know.

The Poll Results, postponed from Issue 4 appear in this issue and the lucky winners, who receive free copies of Issues 5 + 6 are Robert Davidson of Derby, Martin Massey of Nuneaton and Tina Hutchins of Yeovil. The article on the Skids, scheduled for this issue has been held over until next time.

We understand that a "Greatest Hits" LP is due to be released sometime in May or June this year, though whether this is the bands or the records company's idea is unclear at the moment.

Finally, just a reminder that if you're writing to either of us where a reply is needed, an s.a.e would be appreciated as we receive quite a lot of correspondence and it can be draining on the old pocket, let's face it, neither of us are wealthy men !

Douglas Johnson,

Jeremy Carter,

This will be news to most of you but Stuart "The Man" Adamson made a solo appearance at New Year. While most of us (Jeremy, in particular) were pissed, Stuart was as sober as a judge (sensible chap !) He appeared at the BBC's Hogmany Party held in George Square in Glasgow. He performed an accoustic version of "Peace in our Time" (very well, I must say) and then introduced a friend of his, Richard Jobson. Yup ! A semi-Skids reunion, well probably just a one-off, but I for one was amazed to see them together again. After Richard slagged off Stuart's Arran jumper, they introduced and sang together "Flower o' Scotland" and that got the crowd really going. A rare solo appearance by Stuart and a MEGA-rare appearance by both of them together. I believe, though I may be wrong, that Stuart might have sung "In a Big Country" also (are you sure it was just Jeremy that was pissed !-Eds).

Anyone who can give us more information on this event or who has a video copy of it, please get in touch with either Douglas or Jeremy.

Thanks go to John McKinstry for the above report of a very rare "happening"

Subscriptions/Back Issues

We now have a further supply of ALL back issues of WSNS, though Issue 4 is getting a bit thin on the ground. All are available from Douglas priced £1.20 as usual. Don't delay, order today !!

5-Issue subscriptions are also available for £6.00. The response for subscripions has been really encouraging, does this mean you've actually got some faith in us ?

All orders for back numbers and subscriptions to Douglas.

Poll Results

In Issue 3 we asked readers to fill in a questionnaire giving us details of what they like/dislike about BC and WSNS. Although we had intended to publish the results in Issue 4, events overtook us so they had to be held over until this issue. Jeremy's analysis of the results is reproduced below, but if anyone would like a copy of the full results then please send an A5 sized s.a.e to Jeremy or Douglas, as lack of space prevents us from publishing the full results.

Ah well, after all the completed questionnaires arrived at the Carter household, I set about the incredibly long task of compiling the results. So with the House of Love as background noise, I started...

First up, surprise, surprise came the singles. Oh dear, oh dear. Yes, you've guessed it, my pet hate "Chance" was your favourite single, closely followed by "Fields of Fire" and then a long gap before "Look Away". "Broken Heart" was a clear non-starter, with "Peace in our Time" only just scraping above it. With regard to artwork, "Just a Shadow" came out as the best dressed single, while "Steeltown" did the same in the album category. However your favourite album by a long way was "The Crossing". Not surprising really, as it was one of the albums of the decade, despite not being mentioned in any of the "decade" polls in MM, NME etc... My personal fave (and mine - Douglas) finished up 3rd, while "Peace" was last, but not by much.

Into the depths of the fave live song. "Fields of Fire", any version of it, came across as the best song that any band has written, ever !! I must admit that whether live or on record, the song does inspire some pretty amazing emotions, all different in varied people. To my amazement "Restless Natives" was not one of your fave live songs, as every time I've heard it, the song has been played with a great deal of emotion and intensity and always inspires such an amazing reaction amongst everyone, I really am surprised it didn't get in there.

Back to the murky depths of the B-side emporium. A very tight run thing it was, but a late surge pushed "Winter Sky" ahead of the surprise runner up "Song of the South" by a couple of votes. The R.E.L. tapes featured reasonably well, but "could have been better" was a comment used by a few. How many times have people seen that on their school report ?

Onto the album tracks. On "The Crossing" many of you preferred the "long uns" with "The Storm" coming joint 1st with "Fields" and "Porrohman" racing into 3rd place, just ahead of "C....e" Surprisingly, "In a Big Country" came a poor 9th and "Close Action" was bottom of the pile. On to "Steeltown" and "Flame of the West" soared into 1st place miles ahead of the rest, with the three singles taking the next three places. The constantly out-of-time "Raindance" (yes I know it's supposed to sound like that) came in a very respectable....last !! (Ha Ha) With "The Seer", many of you voted for the title track, so many in fact that it won. "Look Away" was second, with "Hold the Heart" at the wrong end of the chart. With "Peace" it seemed you either liked it or hated it, with hardly any of you saying "it's OK, sort of" Fave rave of the album was "King of Emotion" with "Everything I Need" a surprise 2nd. The title track came in 7th place with the most technically profficient song, "From Here to Eternity" finishing last.

Now on to records company rip-offs (i.e. limited editions) The shaped picture discs came out on top, "Fields of Fire" narrowly beating "Chance". The nicest item of all, the "Broken Heart" red vinyl 12" with free poster completely failed to feature, while the 12" gatefold of "One Great Thing" came 3rd. Surprisingly the "Crossing" playing cards featured quite highly(wishful thinking ?) but the 12" boxed set failed to feature at all.

Moving on to other bands, it came as no surprise when U2, The Alarm and Simple Minds finished in the top 3 places, with Queen, INXS, Cry Before Dawn and Diesel Park West also featuring quite prominently.

Anyway, that's this years poll over and done with. If my health is up to it, we'll have another one next year.

THE MADCAP WORLD OF BIG COUNTRY

Cast your minds back, pop tarts, through the swirly mists of time to approximately one billion light years ago. Stuart Adamson, Mark Unpronounceablename and two other blokes, otherwise known as **Big Country**, were gadding about the charts with their infectious pop tootlings such as "In A Big Country" and all the other ones that sounded just like it! All was going hunky "dory" when, suddenly, The "Tree", as they were then known, slipped off the face of the universe never to be seen or heard of again. . . until now that is. Yes – yes! – they're back!

Their new single "King Of Emotion" is sweeping its way across the nation and Big Country are pop stars once again! So, *Bitz* has rudely awakened Mark Unpronounceablename to find out just what happened to ver lads in their so-called "twilight" years. . . only time seems to be a slight "hitch" as Mark is having a fit or something.

"Hahaaaheheh! Mark Unpronounceable!!! That's a good one that is. *Smash Hits* christened me that years ago and it's stuck! *Everyone* calls me that now! Hoho. . . guffaw. . . teehee!!! Even fans come up to me and say 'Oh, you're that Mark Unpronounceablename bloke aren't you?' It doesn't bother me at all. I like it best when you say 'Markunpronounceablenameofbigcountry' in one long swoop. That looks even *more* fangled!"

So it does. So what *have* you been up to since you last had a "hit" then?

"Well, it's been two and a half years since we were in the charts

but we've been busy. You see, we're a gigging band. Lots of bands go into the studio these days and have the Lock, Stock and Barrel treatment but they can't actually play live. We're really good at it."

Oh. So, you weren't down the dumper then?

"Certainly not! The thing is we also write all our own songs and that takes time to do. . . (*goes on about the time-consuming art of writing "proper" songs for a few months*). We've also been in the studio making a new LP. It's called 'Peace In Our Time'."

Oh dear, sounds a bit like a dreaded "concept" album to *Bitz*. . .

"Oh God, no!! Every song is about something different. I'm not telling you about what though, because Stuart writes the lyrics and he's one for letting the audience decide for themselves."

How very wise of him. So what else have you been doing to "while" away the hours?

"Well, I've been learning to fly an aeroplane. And Stuart has been sponsoring The Big Country Racing Team. Honestly! He's mad about motorbikes is Stuart, but he had to sell all his bikes because he kept. . . er. . . well, let's just say he's better off watching than he is riding. I was watching *World Of Sport* the other day and it's really weird watching this bloke going round with 'Big Country' written on his motor bike! Anyway, I'm still going to learn to fly. As soon as I get time off I'm going to take to the air! Hee hee!"

Mark Unpronounceablename! Unpronounceable name – crazy guy! (??)



Stuart, Virgin Megastore, Dublin, January 1989
Photo; Kathy 'Kitt' Curry

IRISH SCENE

The consensus that London is the music capital of the world vanished for a while with the onset of chart-topping bands like U2, Big Country and the Christians who chose to base themselves in their city of birth. However that scenario has now been reversed here in Ireland, with many of the top bands basing themselves in London.

"The Fat Lady Sings", winners of Best New Act in the Hot Press magazine have achieved notability with the release of two excellent singles, "Arkligh" and "Dronning-Maud Land" (an island off Antartica) and are planning an extensive nationwide tour. Likewise Cathal Coughlan, former frontman of Microdisney now resides in London and his band, Fatima Mansions have released an album. Coughlans lyrics carefully balance severity and wit, reflected in the title of their new single, "Only losers take the last bus home"

The Amazing Colossal Men recently supported Del Amitri on their UK tour and returned here for a series of sell-out concerts.

Recently the Irish Recording & Music Association Awards (IRMA) were held in the Point Theatre, Dublin. Dave Fanning, co-presenter of Rock Steady on TV presented the award for Best Irish Act to Cry Before Dawn. Many people will remember this group as they supported Big Country on the British leg of their "Peace" tour.

They claim that they went down better in some venues than the headline act (but nobody believes them !)

An excellent single, "No living without You" has been taken from their album, "Witness for the World"

Best International Group went to Bon Jovi and U2 received an award for services to the Irish recording industry.

UB40 have been residing in Ireland for the last few months, playing small venues countrywide.

The generous governmental policy of tax exemption for those involved in the arts has enticed many music people

to these shores. Joe Elliott (Def Leppard) is a permanent resident while Terence Trent D'Arby and The Thompson Twins have lived here in the past. However, as many flock to this land of saints and Scholars many of our young people have emigrated and some leading sports people are being driven out by the penal taxation on monies earned abroad.

Many thanks to Shay Greene for the first of what we hope will be a regular column on the "Irish Scene", both on a musical and social basis. Next issue will see a report on cultural aspects of Irish life for young people. (you mean there's more to Ireland than Guinness - Eds)

(Below) Stuart Adamson's new band in obligatory "dues-paying" exercise at frankly mismatched 1982 extravaganza.



from 'Q' Magazine

Some things that Big Country and The Alarm have in common.

1. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the band members have long hair
2. Stage positioning is the same - lead singer centre, bass to his left, second guitar to his right, drums at the rear, keyboards rear left.
3. Both have their roots in the provinces of the UK.
4. The music press hates both bands.

So, pretty circumstantial, eh ? What's all this "New Rock" movement crap cracked by the air-head press in 1983 and still held today ? OK, so maybe they started off on a similar note with their debut albums (chord of D - crap joke dept) but they have always since followed different paths and for groups who produce excellent music with sincerity, passion and downright balls, isn't it about time categorisation of any sort is forgotten ? Isn't it an insult to the bands efforts to play the "spot the similarity" game.

Well, opinionated rant over, I'm off for a fist punch....

Jonathon Selwood, Huddersfield.

Anyone interested in The Alarm could do worse than getting in touch with the Official Fan Club, run by Pauline & Michelle. They issue a newsletter every month giving details of what the band are up to and a twice yearly magazine "Shelter" giving interviews, photos etc.. Membership costs £6.50 (UK) and £8.50 elsewhere and their address is The Alarm Official Club

If you do get in touch with them, tell them you found out about them through "WSNS" as they are going to give us a mention as well.

The Big Country Year Feb 16 - May 15

- Feb 18, 1983 Release of "Fields of Fire" on 7" & 12"
Feb 26, 1983 "Fields" enters UK singles charts
Mar 11, 1961 Birth of Bruce William Watson in Canada
Mar 18, 1983 Release of "Fields" picture disc (COUP 2)
Mar 21, 1986 Start of the UK leg of the "Seer" tour in Newcastle (Douglas' first BC gig)
Apr 4, 1986 Release of "Look Away" on 7" 12" and 2x7" double pack.
Apr 7, 1986 The band perform "Look Away" on Wogan(BBC)
Apr 8, 1986 "Look Away" enters UK charts at no. 18
Apr 9, 1988 Bruce marries long time girlfriend Sandra McAllister in Los Angeles
Apr 11, 1958 Birth of William Stuart Adamson in Manchester
Apr 22, 1986 "Look Away" peaks at no. 7 in UK charts
Apr 23, 1987 First British TV showing of "Restless Natives" on Channel 4.
Apr 25, 1986 "Look Away" picture disc released
April 1986 Release of "The Seer"
Apr 29, 1986 Start of second leg of UK "Seer" tour in Leeds
May 1986 Release of 12" Outlaw Mix of "Look Away"
May 10, 1984 Release of "Live" video, recorded at Glasgow Barrowlands, 31.12.83.
May 13, 1986 The band are interviewed on BBC's "Whistle Test" in connection with the release of "The Seer"

Our thanks go once again to John McKinstry for the use of his Big Country diary. If anyone has any additional entries which we have missed, please get in touch with us

BIG COUNTRY

The Astoria, London

KNEES up for the misty mountain hop. Reel and skip, jig and jump on the spot: country dancing. Big Country have always had the culpable capacity to inspire a bit of a bop. Nothing too complicated, mind; a sort of bloated "Hokey Cokey", something in, something out and oodles of dramatic swells which go 1-2-3-4 and the hey!, with a couple of additional beats thrown in to shove the point home. *There.*

Big Country have achieved much through their consistency. It's largely to do with Stuart Adamson's crafty guitar graft, the twiddles and twaddle most clearly heard in "The Seer", in the upraised banners of the rhythms and the rhymes which so often encompass the savage beauty of the elements. Turn on the radio, drop anywhere into any of their songs and there's no need for the DJ to start frothing at the mouth when it's over. You know. Fine.

Fine. But over the heady, heroic course of a whole evening the whole effect is wearisome. Concentration frays at every available edge, the leg pounds far faster than it is supposed to, fatigue has to be physically fought. It's boring. Very. After a long time — and not too long a time — all that is left is the listing, lumbering momentum and a string of out-of-puff memories.

"Steeltown" and "Chance", the ones that were born bravely out of deprivations, those which strike a path less personal, more aggrandized ("In A Big Country") and "Look Away" and "Fields Of Fire", the latter incorporating a snippet of Greg Lake's dying Christmas breath, each revered revellry is here. So too are a batch of newly hatched songs, all given long winded explanatory introductions, most of which seem to explore the themes and sentiments worked to a pulp already. "Peace In Our Time" the only one standing out and that's simply because the key words are repeated again and again.

There's the continuous swapping of guitars, the bursts of acceleration, the rush around the stage, with Bruce Watson rather slow on the uptake, a pudgy Tony Butler oblivious to all and Adamson still intent upon doing the best impersonation of Foghorn Leghorn this side of Norman Collier. There's the thanks and ingratiating remarks and a shaking of hands and their numbing version of "Honky Tonk Woman". And the perpetual question sustained throughout. Just how much longer can it go on?

PUSH

- MELODY MAKER DECEMBER 19/26, 1987

Memoirs Of A Bootlegger

The first Big Country I ever went to was at Strathclyde University in the heart of Glasgow. I had been a big fan of The Skids and was bitterly disappointed when my guitar hero, Stuart Adamson, quit the band. He went on to form Big Country and their first single "Harvest Home" was released. I bought the 12" single and was more impressed with the B-side, "Balcony" So I dragged myself off to the Uni with this in mind and my brother-in-laws Union card in my hand (for cheap drinks). Clutching my trusty Sony MT10 I tried to suss out the best place to tape the concert. Suddenly, four figures in tartan shirts lurched on stage. "Hullo, we're called Big Country and this is Angle Park" Bang ! off we went. The show was great, full of vibrant energy from four very young men. Stuart managed a good rapport with the audience, being Scottish helped, you get used to all this "Hi Glasgow, you havin' a good time... let me hear you say Yeeeeeaaah !" shit, it was good to hear a familiar accent. After a while Tony got in on the act, although it mostly "this song is called.." or "that song was called.." I was standing near the bar, I only had a fiver, but I had half a bottle of vodka in my inside pocket. The bar staff watched me slowly get pissed on Coke. For most of the concert I stayed near the back, although it wasn't exactly packed, there were only about 500 students with plenty of room to move, so everything was going nicely, they even finished a song seconds before the end of my C90, giving me enough time to turn the tape over. The only problem with taping a concert is that you can't dance too hard and you can't sing along to the songs, although this wasn't a problem as I didn't know most of the songs at this time. Then halfway through "Inwards" my problems started, as I was spotted by a female friend. Those of you who have heard the tape will hear her scream "Hey John" then waffle on about the previous gig in Edinburgh, then try to sing along to "Tracks of my Tears" even though she didn't know the words. At the end of the show she started shouting for "Fields of Fire" even though they had already played it.

They played it again anyway and "Harvest Home", never could understand that. Surely, even if they didn't have any of their own material they could have done a couple of cover versions. Anyway, taping this gig was relatively simple as the bouncers couldn't really give a shit what was happening.

Not so the next gig, Locarno Ballroom, Glasgow, 4/7/83. I was given the tickets as a birthday present and took my younger brother with me. The Locarno used to be called Tiffanys and was a disco of which I was a regular customer (in my John Travolta days) so I knew most of the bouncers. So I stuck my tape recorder in my coat pocket expecting just to walk in with it. Needless to say I was caught, but the bouncer was a neighbour of mine so he just confiscated it and gave me it back at the end of the show. He only took it on principle. Luckily enough the show was being recorded by Radio Clyde and very good it was, "The Storm" blew my mind and became my favourite song until I heard "One Great Thing" A lot of the introductions I had heard before and thought they must be part of the song. One statement had me rolling on the floor when Stuart said "some groups don't like to play what they call the 'toilets' of Britain," I half expected him to say "we don't mind, that's why we're here" There was a great atmosphere at this gig. I was in the middle of what was the dance floor when everyone started jumping up and down, the spring boards just made them jump higher, it was like being on a trampoline. I must say it was probably the best concert by any band I have ever seen. After 1½ hours it was over, I was sweating and almost delirious. The group came in amongst the crowd as it was pissing down outside. My brother was well pleased as he got his photograph taken with Stuart and Mark. For Christmas 1983 I got the best presents I've ever had, my Dad got me a ticket for the New Years Eve Barrowlands concert and my brother got me tickets for the afternoon show (he was 17 so he got them cheap). Now New Years Eve in Glasgow is an experience in itself, almost a religion and as I was going to be away from the family when the bells came in, my Dad shoved a couple of vodkas down my neck.

I got to the gig, shall we say 'warm against the winter cold'. I had my tape recorder stuffed down the front of my trousers, the bouncers were frisking everybody, well tickling them under the armpits. This time I had a separate condenser microphone with me, a Shure Omnidirectional, this made a big difference. Despite spending most of the concert with my nose pressed against Bruce's monitor, the sound quality is crystal clear. The group came on and played as if they were late for their next gig. From start to finish Everyone sang every word to every song, except "Wonderland" introduced by Stuart thus "...this is the first time we've played this song anywhere in the world and we're all shitting ourselves". The audience laughed. They blasted through it and the crowd went mental. "We've been touring America" says Stuart "and it's great to be back in Scotland" The crowd go absolutely apeshit. Meanwhile Stuart was having problems with his guitar, just as they launched into the verse of "Fields of Fire" it died. A roadie rushed on, "oh flip" says Stuart (I THINK that's what he said and it's on Maxell tape). They start the song all over again. After playing "In a Big Country" for a second time, everyone buggers off and I walked past the bouncers with "The Storm" at full blast.

Evening came, the sun set and with it my legs. I was a bit merry so left my tape recorder at home. Radio Clyde were taping the concert and MTV were videoing it. By this time I was running a stall in "The Barras" (ask a Glaswegian) so I had the contacts to let someone else do the dirty work. You've seen the video, heard the bootleg and worn the T shirt. All I can say about it is, it will be in my memory for the rest of my life. I came out of the concert drunk, went to a party and got shit-faced. And so ended 1983.

To be continued in Issue 6.



STUART ADAMSON

So what has Stuart Adamson of Big Country been up to recently? Well, er, quite a lot actually. He's been out on the "road", he's been nearly eaten alive, he's been "interviewed" by William Shaw, he's . . .

Been nipping about a lot

"We finished the LP, 'The Seer', in February of this year and we've been on the road since March. We did three British tours, we've been to Canada, America, Sweden, Holland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland. . . . We've been to lots of places."

He hasn't been giving two hoots about people who say that all Big Country's songs sound the same

"I don't give two hoots about it. It really doesn't trouble me at all. I don't make records so that people can say to me 'God! Isn't that startlingly like Big Country!' Who else is going to make records that sound like Big Country? We are Big Country! (Laughs) Our songs are all different. What's the same is the commitment. Take the song 'The Seer'. It's nothing like 'Hold The Heart' or 'Look Away'. If people say they sound the same, that's their opinion. Opinions are like arseholes. Everybody's got one."

He's been talking a lot about "commitment"

"I think that's part of the reason we've been successful. There's a commitment in the group. If there's one thing that runs through all of Big Country's work it's that it's all done with the same amount of commitment and excitement and genuine feeling. People identify with that. Too many people go for far too low a common denominator and think of 'the kids' as some mass of mindless morons. There's a responsibility to create music that's worthwhile and lasting and invokes a sense of involvement in the real world rather than some fictitious desert island. . . . (Pause) But then again, it's only bloody pop music. . . ."

He hasn't been worrying whether he's trendy or not

"The first band I ever went to see was Led Zeppelin. It was at the Caird Hall in Dundee in 1972. They're a bit trendier now but it wasn't easy to explain that 10 years ago in the heady days of punk. Things always go in cycles, don't they? Maybe in 10 years Big Country will be trendy. Do I want to be trendy? I'm not really fussed. We're trendy in my house and that's what matters!"

He's had another baby

"My daughter was born last year, just before I began work on 'The Seer'. There's a lot of work in the house when there are two children to be brought up. Am I domesticated? I don't know — you'd better ask Sandra (i.e. Mrs Adamson) about that."

He's been fishing

"Yeah, I'm heavily into fly fishing. . . ."

. . . And he's been riding around on motorbikes

"Yes. And I've been sponsoring the Big Country Motorcycle Racing Team which did very well this year. One guy finished fourth in the National 1300 Production Championship and another guy won the MCA Production Championship which was splendid. I try to ride when I can. Do I ever fall off? Falling off is part of it. I've been in a couple of accidents but they've never been anything major. I was coming down to do Pop Quiz one day and it was wet and I was late for my plane. I came off going round this corner — I was leaning too far. I had a few stitches in my arm. I've never been seriously maimed though."

He's turned down a position on the board of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club

"They offered me it which was really nice but if I was going to do it I'd have to do it properly or not at all. So I had to pass on it, but at least it's made me friendly with a few people in the club. It was nice to be asked to help but I'm not into half-doing things. It's good to see that they're doing so well though: they're at the top of Division One in Scotland and if they carry on the way they're doing they'll be in the Premier League next year. I always try to go if I'm at home; I've seen five matches so far this season. I'm not really interested in football though because of the 'Eeh ver lads!' – that terrace thug's idea of football. I actually enjoy watching the game. I think it's a splendid sport."



▲ Stuart Adamson: he's been falling over

He's been recording a film soundtrack

"It took me up to the end of March last year to finish the score for this new film *Restless Natives*. We had a few arguments with the director and stuff because I'd written almost two hours of completely original music but they wanted to put on all this older Big Country stuff. I was going 'Look, I've written this stuff and it goes much better with what you're trying to do,' but it caused us a bit of hassle at the time. The film suffered from it as well, but I like the finished product. The script is excellent."

He's been grumpy in the mornings

"I'm a terrible man in the morning. I'm appalling.

If I get up early enough it's OK – about 7 o'clock. Otherwise I'm the most crabby so-and-so you've ever met in your life. Everyone who knows me will verify that. I'm absolutely hopeless."

He's been reading poems by a bloke called Hugh MacDiarmid

"He's a Scottish poet, or he was a Scottish poet: he died a few years ago – and he was also a founder member of the Scottish Nationalist Party. Reading his poems gave me the idea for 'The Seer'. He had this idea for a Scotland that was modern and vital and outward-looking and not one that was just a sentimental picture of clans, whisky and bagpipes – a country that was part of the world. I don't think I can ever put things as well as he did..."

He hasn't been eaten by a shark

"No. The closest I've ever been was in Miami and that wasn't very close at all. The story got blown up a bit. It was quite amusing. We were on the beach at Fort Lauderdale and suddenly the coastguards began hollering for everyone to get out of the water quick. I was miles out at sea. You know that feeling you get when you're swimming in the sea and you think 'My God! Is there something underneath?' I was crapping myself."

He's been listening to records

"I'm currently into The Smiths. I think that 'The Queen Is Dead' album is a masterpiece. I think Morrissey's lyrics are amazing. The way he gets his ideas across is splendid. I always liked Johnny Marr's playing but I never could get to grips with Morrissey – but that album's really hot..."

He's been watching the news on telly

"Yes, I'm an inveterate news watcher."

He's been having trouble with his ticklish eyelashes

"I've got these devilishly ticklish eyelashes. It's hell when I'm being made up for photo sessions." (Make up artist who's making him up for Smash Hits photo session: "Really? I've never met anyone with ticklish eyelashes before.")

He's released a new single, "Hold The Heart"

"It must have been almost a year and a half ago that I wrote it. It was the third song that I wrote for the LP. I remember thinking I wanted to write a very ballady song, something that people would never think of as a Big Country song, a very direct boy/girl lost and found song."

And now he's off on tour again!

"I never get tired of the actual physical act of going on stage. I don't think we've ever played as well as a group as we have this year. But the travelling is a bit of a bind after a while and I do get very homesick. I'm too old for all that travelling around. What do you mean I'm not supposed to say that? I thought I was allowed to say what I liked. I thought I was in a position of infinite power, I thought I was blessed with God-like powers... That's what it says in the guidebook to being a pop star..."

In Issue 17 of the Country Club Magazine a competition was set by John McKinstry and a number of people have asked us about the answers as they have heard nothing from Country Club (but then again, who has) We have asked John to give us the answers and they are printed below. As far as we know, no-one has actually won the competition and John has received nothing from Country Club for his efforts, despite being offered a prize.

1. Bass Dance (approx 1' 35")
2. One Great Thing - 8
Look Away - 5
Broken Heart - 5
3. The Crossing, The Storm, The Sailor, The Seer, The Teacher, The Travellers, The Red Fox, The Great Divide, The Longest Day
4. 14
5. Steve Lillywhite, Chris Thomas, Will Gosling, Steve Churchyard, Peter Wolf, Robin Millar, Geoff Emerick.
6. BIGCR612
MERD 185
BIGCR712
7. Harvest Home, Just a Shadow, The Teacher.
8. Broken Heart(13 Valleys) and The Longest Day
9. Peace in our Time, Look Away, Broken Heart, 1000 Yard Stare, King of Emotion and River of Hope.
10. 3
5
11. Tall Ships Go
12. Heart and Soul
13. Made in Heaven
14. All of Us
15. The Longest Day
16. True
17. True
18. False - none in 1987
19. True - Flame of the West
and Peace in our Time
20. True

For anyone who hasn't the faintest idea what the above is all about, please send an s.a.e to Douglas and a copy of The questions will be despatched to test your knowledge.



"So Adamson grabs me and says..look I'm doing the solo on this one.."

Photo; Kathy 'Kitt' Curry

DISCOGRAPHY

In response to many enquiries from readers of "WSNS" we have decided to start what we hope will be a definitive discography of the bands releases on all formats. Later issues will deal with promo & foreign releases, but we start with UK releases on vinyl, cassette and CD. If we have missed anything, please let either of us know.

PART 1 - UK Commercial Releases

COUNT 1	7"	a) Harvest Home	9/82
		b) Balcony	
COUNT 12	12"	a) Harvest Home	9/82
		b) Balcony	
		Flag of Nations(Swimming)	
COUNT 2	7"	a) Fields of Fire(400 Miles)	2/83
		b) Angle Park	
COUNT 212	12"	a) Fields of Fire(Alt Mix)	2/83
		b) Fields of Fire(400 Miles)	
		Angle Park	
COUP 2	Sh PD	a) Fields of Fire(Alt Mix)	3/83
		b) Harvest Home	
		Angle Park	
COUNT 3	7"	a) In A Big Country	5/83
		b) All of Us	
COUNT 312	12"	a) In a Big Country(Pure Mix)	5/83
		b) In a Big Country	
		All of Us	
COUNT 313	12"	a) In a Big Country(Pure Mix)	6/83
		Heart & Soul	
		b) In a Big Country	
		All of Us	
COUNT 4	7"	a) Chance	8/83
		b) Tracks of my Tears(live)	
		Initial copies came with free portrait photo.	
COUNT 412	12"	a) Chance	8/83
		Tracks of my Tears(live)	
		b) The Crossing	
COUP 4	12" PD	a) Chance	11/83
		Tracks of my Tears(live)	
		b) The Crossing	

COUNT 5	7"	a) Wonderland b) Giant	1/84
COUNT 512	12"	a) Wonderland(extended) b) Wonderland Giant	1/84
COUNT 55	2 x 7"	a) Wonderland b) Giant a) Lost Patrol(live) Part 1 b) Lost Patrol(live) Part 2	2/84
COUNX 5 (clear vinyl)	12"	a) Wonderland(extended) b) Giant Lost Patrol(live)	2/84
MER 175	7"	a) East of Eden b) Prairie Rose	9/84
MERX 175	12"	a) East of Eden(extended) b) East of Eden Prairie Rose	9/84
MERP 175 (poster sleeve)	7"	a) East of Eden b) East of Eden	9/84
MERXP 175 (poster sleeve)	12"	a) East of Eden(extended) b) East of Eden Prairie Rose	9/84
MER 185	7"	a) Where the Rose is Sown b) Belief in the Small Man	11/84
MERX 185	12"	a) Where the Rose is Sown (extended) b) Where the Rose is Sown Bass Dance Belief in the Small Man	11/84
MERD 185	2 x 7"	a) Where the Rose is Sown b) Belief in the Small Man a) Wonderland(live, Texas Tapes) b) In a Big Country(live, Texas Tapes) Auld Lang Syne(live, 31.12.83)	11/84
BCO 8	7"	a) Just a Shadow b) Winter Sky	1/85
BCO 812	12"	Just a Shadow(extended) b) Just a Shadow(7" version) Winter Sky	1/85

BIGC 1	7"	a) Look Away	4/86
		b) Restless Natives	
BIGCX 1	12"	a) Look Away(12" Mix)	4/86
		b) Restless Natives(soundtrack Part 1)	
BIGCD 1	2 x 7"	a) Look Away	4/86
		b) Restless Natives	
		a) Margo's Theme	
		b) Highland Scenery	
BIGCP 1	Sh PD	a) Look Away	4/86
		b) Restless Natives	
BIGCX 11	12"	a) Look Away(Outlaw Mix)	5/86
		b) Look Away(12" Mix)	
		Restless Natives	
BIGC 2	7"	a) The Teacher	6/86
		b) Home came the Angels	
BIGCX 2	12"	a) The Teacher - Mystery Mix	6/86
		b) Restless Natives(soundtrack Part 2)	
BIGC 3	7"	a) One Great Thing	8/86
		b) Song of the South	
BIGCD 3	2 x 7"	a) One Great Thing	8/86
		b) Song of the South	
		a) Porrohman(live, Texas Tapes)	
		b) Chance(live, Texas Tapes)	
BIGCE 3	2 x 7"	a) One Great Thing	8/86
		b) Song of the South	
		a) Wonderland(live, Texas Tapes)	
		b) Inwards(live, Texas Tapes)	
BIGCG 3	7"	a) One Great Thing	8/86
		b) Song of the South	
		(gatefold sleeve, includes live photos)	
BIGCM 3	Cass	a) One Great Thing	8/86
		(Big Baad Country Mix)	
		Song of the South	
		b) In a Big Country(Pure Mix)	
		Fields of Fire(live, Texas tapes)	
BIGCX 3	12"	a) One Great Thing(Boston Mix)	8/86
		b) Song of the South	
BIGCX 33	12"	a) One Great Thing(Boston Mix)	8/86
		b) Song of the South	
		(gatefold sleeve, includes almanac & discography)	

- BIGCR 3 12" a) One Great Thing 8/86
 (Big Baad Country Mix)
 b) Look Away (Outlaw Mix)
 Song of the South
- BIGC 4 7" a) Hold The Heart 11/86
 b) Honky Tonk Woman (live)
- Two versions of sleeve available, with faint & bold print
- BIGCX 4 12" a) Hold The Heart 11/86
 b) Honky Tonk Woman (live)
 Hold The Heart (instrumental)
- BIGCX 44 2x12" a) Hold The Heart 11/86
 b) Honky Tonk Woman (live)
 a) The Big Country Interview Part 1
 b) The Big Country Interview Part 2
- Interview from Howard Stern Show, WXRX Radio, New York.

We conclude this section of the discography with the final release from 'The Seer'. Next issue will bring you up to date from the comeback single, "King of Emotion". As we want to include details of foreign releases and white labels, promos etc in future issues, anyone who has any of these, please send as much detail as possible to Jeremy, including catalogue numbers etc...

TOUR NEWS

CARTER THE UNSTOPPABLE SEX MACHINE have added a few dates to their tour at Middlesborough Teeside Poly (March 13), London Camden Palace (April 3), Chelmsford Y Club (5) and Nottingham Kool Kat (6).

THE CHILLS who release their second London/Slash LP 'Submarine Bells' next week have made a few alterations to their

Jeremy, is there something you're not telling me !!

Douglas.

We now continue with Part 2 of our interview from RTE, Irish Radio & Television, from Issue 4. Thanks again to "Kitt" for the original source.

If you remember we left the interview just as the video for "One Great Thing" was being shown.....

Int) You were laughing during that as well fellas, what's so funny about that, is it a while since you've seen that one ?

SA) Yeah it is...it's funny because that's the song which we supplied to a certain company for a beer commercial in Scotland

Int) I want to talk about that as a matter of fact. Hughie Lewis was in this studio not so long ago and he was....he wasn't exactly giving out about people who get involved in deals like that, but he was sort of saying that he would certainly never do it for...all the right reasons, so how come you guys got involved in it ?

SA) I think that...well the reason that we got involved in it was basically that we needed the money, we were skint !

MB) Sounds the right reason to me...

SA)....it was right in the middle of all our business troubles...we've got to get some dosh, you know, 'cos not only do we have to be responsible for ourselves, but there's other people who rely on us for their living as well, so it's kind of...but I have to say that I think that things like that shouldn't be over-emphasised. I think in certain ways it is a bad thing that it's simply beer companies which are becoming involved in the promotion of music...but what you have to actually realise that the people out there who actually listen to bands and who are into music do have brains and intelligences of their own and I think you

should...it's a shame, but a lot of musicians seem to credit people who are interested in them as having absolutely no intelligence at all. I would like to think young people do have an awareness of their own and that there is enough education around for people to be well aware of the problems that can be inherent in the abuse of alcohol and in the abuse of any substance at all and I think it's about time we started relying on building people up as individuals in their own right and granting them a degree of intelligence and a degree of trust and giving them knowledge rather than just saying, simply, this is a bad thing...let people know why it's bad and what the ins and outs of it are rather than simply saying ...this is not happening...

Int) Well said Stuart, I must say, that was...all right, we'll move away from sponsorship in that case. By the way, that video won a few awards as well, didn't it ?

SA) It did, yes, it was our most succesful video as videos go...

MB) Bruce actually had quite a lot to do with the ideas behind that...

At this point Stuart interrupts Mark

SA) ...a guy called Storm Thorgusson did the video.

Int) Do you get involved directly with the making of the videos, or do you let whoever is directing and producing just go ahead and...

SA) Sometimes, it just depends, you know...I tend to be... I'm not greatly enamoured of videos, I have to say, I find it very difficult to transfer something which I feel is a very...a mental thing, you know...with the pictures that I try and create in songs and lyrics, to tie that to one set of visuals, I'm not very comfortable with that. I think it gives people too much one fixed idea of a song and I'm maybe, like, wanting to show three or four different sides of something.

Int) I want to talk about the new LP, "Peace in our Time" The album, as the title suggests, has a little bit of a message there in it, a warning about the nuclear arms race, if you like. Who is supposed to be listening to these songs Stuart, or have people given up listening to political songs and songs about nuclear war and things like that ?

SA) I dunno, that way that I like to write songs is, I like to put real life situations and real life characters in there, you know, so that at least I feel that the music that I'm involved in and committed to is a living, breathing part of the environment that it comes out of, that is a part of society other than something that exists in a void for its own gratification. I think that people are interested in music being something other than three minutes of just dance music, I think that people like to have questions raised and points debated. I'm certainly not a political writer from a point of view of having one set dogma or theory that I like to say to people...this is the right way and this is the wrong way... What I much prefer to do is present situations that people find themselves in and tell a story about it and that's the way I do things. I think people are always interested in story telling and interested in music as a form of communication as well as something to bop around to.

Int) So you're not necessarily trying to ram a message down anybody's throat or anything ?

SA) No, not at all, I mean, even with the "Peace in our Time" thing people may well interpret it simply as a plea for world-wide sanity and I'm quite happy with that, but for me personally there are other interpretations of it you know, it could be Peace in our Time with a question mark after it which puts an ironical slant on it, or some individuals own quest for their peace in their own time, which makes it intimate and personal.

Int) Are the band very political Mark at all ?

MB) Not really, no.

Int) No ?

MB) No...I...

Int) You went to Russia recently...

MB) It's personal, you know...

Int) The band headed off to Russia, so I mean, why go to Russia by the way ?

SA) Well what we wanted...like we were saying earlier on about wanting to play any place where we possibly can play, what we were able to do was, through people we met in the Soviet Peace Foundation and a group of people called the Foundation for Social Invention that was a group of writers and musicians who were in exile within the Soviet Union until Mr Gorbachev came into power, we were able to put on the first ever privately promoted shows in Moscow, which meant that instead of people having to be invited to come along to see the band, anyone who wanted to could go and buy a ticket and come along and we were able to play in a stand up venue so people could jump around or whatever.

Int) It's very trendy for bands to head off to the USSR and play gigs there and use it as a bit of a publicity stunt. Did you get a knocking for perhaps trying to use it as that ?

SA) Well I think it... the problem is that people didn't actually realise that what we actually did out there was very much a first, the fact that it was done out with the government, you know, whereas most, in fact every other person who's been there has went under the auspices of the government and then people are invited along to go and see the band, but what we did there, we did the first shows which had been put on where anybody who wanted to go and see the band could go and see them and they were allowed to jump around and stand up and do what they wanted to do, so that was very much a first you know and to be quite honest, if it had been

in the normal run-of-the-mill way, which is, you're invited by the government to go and they're very much in control of everything, I wouldn't have went, to be quite honest.

Int) Your records aren't of course on sale over there, so were there any fans ?

SA) Yes, surprisingly enough there is. What happens is people throughout the Soviet bloc, the Communist bloc countries are able to tune into Western radio and they make cassettes of what they hear coming through and then there's a sort of underground black market tape thing that goes on, so people are very much aware of what's going on musically...

Int) So there were one or two people singing along...

SA) Yeah, not a lot, but one or two and then what happens when you get one or two, the rest of them join in phonetically, you know. They may not know the words but they make all the right noises. Sometimes I do that too !

Int) What about problems with just bringing the whole logistical problem of taking a band, equipment and everything to a country like Russia where they're probably not as geared towards the whole situation as we might be in the West. Did that mean any problems for you ?

SA) Yeah, I think if you're going in under...with the government help, it's OK, but going in ourselves where every little problem that cropped up had to be solved by ourselves, was unbelievable 'cos the bureaucracy there to begin with is outrageous and there is like... the power in Moscow is forever fluctuating, the power goes up and down, I don't know what they're doing with it, but it's always going up and down and in and out.. yeah it's unbelievable, just to try and get in there and do it is outrageous.

(to be concluded in Issue 6)

Bits and Pieces

WANTS/SWAPS

Phil Read of

Staffs, B78 2LT wants the 7" of In a Big Country that came with a free kneckerchief shrink-wrapped with the sleeve. He also wants the 12" promo-boxed set (some hope - Eds) and any early, i.e. pre-Peace T-shirts, preferably M or L size.

Kathy "Kitt" Curry wants copies of the 12" singles of Fields of Fire, Wonderland & Just a Shadow. She also wants to get hold of copies of Issues 1 & 2 of the Country Club magazine (originals or photocopies). Her address is,

Jonathon Selwood of

would like anyone to get in touch with him who has articles from such magazines as Guitar or Musician about Big Country i.e. technical articles on the band and their equipment etc...

Seamus Greene of

would like to get hold of any sheet music for any BC songs. Anyone know of any ?

In Issue 4 we mentioned a 7" single of River of Hope from Holland, though we were unsure whether it was a promo or a normal release. Many thanks to all the people who wrote to us about it. It was a normal release on Mercury, Cat no. 874 616-7. The A-side is River of Hope taken straight from the album and the B-side is In a Big Country (live) recorded at the Moscow Palace of Sport on 2.10.88.

A few people have asked about the possible inclusion of a regular article on equipment and sound gear, guitar effects etc... used by the band. Anyone who feels competent enough to put something together, please get in touch with either Jeremy or Douglas.

In addition to the New Year's Eve appearance (see review elsewhere) Stuart also made a guest appearance at the Jerry Lee Lewis gig at London's Hammersmith Odeon in November. One of the music paper reviews stated that Stuart and his guitar were "alien", though whether they meant to each other or to the concert wasn't quite clear. Anyway, what do music paper critics know, they all hate BC !

The great clear vinyl 12" debate continues...Stuart Arnott from London advises us that he has spoken to Mercury record company reps who claim that these discs do NOT exist. We think this one will only be resolved if someone can actually produce one, though in our opinion, if they do exist, they are bootlegs.

Stuart (again) was briefly featured in the TV programme about the Wet Wet Wet free show in Glasgow last September, which was shown over the Christmas period. When asked whether he would be ditching the rest of the band and going solo, he replied "No danger, no chance !"

Tony was spotted playing bass for The Creatures (Siouxsie and Budgie) on Channel 4's Big World programme last November. Anyone know how that came about and whether he intends to do any more work with them ?

Can anyone remember the names of the two backing singers who accompanied the band on their visit to the Soviet Union in 1988 and who appear on the video of the Moscow concert?

Dave Gardner from Andover asks whether the Big Country sponsored motor bike racing team is still going. Any bike enthusiasts amongst us ?

Douglas has recently acquired a BBC Transcription Disc of one of the Hammersmith Odeon shows, some of which was broadcast on the Radio 1 "In Concert" last year. The full track listing is;

Side 1 Peace in our Time

Look Away

Wonderland

13 Valleys

1000 Yard Stare

Side 2 The Seer

River of Hope

King of Emotion

I walk the Hill

Restless Natives

He describes it as "simply the best live recording of Big Country that I have ever heard" A snip at £85 !!

We have decided that we want to spread the word about "WSNS" in a big way. Apart from advertising in music papers etc... (which can be kinda expensive) we have previously been mentioned in the review sections of Record Collector magazine and also on Channel 4's Teletext Service, on their BSV's Rock & Pop pages. All the reviews have been favourable and have gained us new readers, but we want to expand even further. This is where you, the reader, can help us. We want you to spread the word about us in your area, in local record shops, at gigs etc... We can supply you with posters and handbills so ask your local record shop if you can stick one on their wall or if they would be prepared to put a leaflet in with every record of BC's that they sell. We are currently putting together a supply of posters and handbills so if you think you can help, please get in touch with either of us. If anyone has any bright ideas about how we can publicise our activities then please get in touch, there may even be a prize for the most original idea.

One of the winners of the 'Golden Break' advertising awards on TV recently was Maxell Tapes for their advert using as a soundtrack...Into the Valley by The Skids

For Mega-Trivia fans only...if you look closely at the opening credits for Channel 4's new music show, 'Rock Steady' you will see what appears to be either a back-stage pass or a ticket for David Bowie's gig at Wembley Stadium on 20.6.87 and shown prominently on it is the logo of a certain band that supported him. Any guesses ?

Well boys and girls that's your lot for the time being. We hope you have enjoyed Issue 5, if not, then write and tell us why not. Issue 6 will be out in the early part of June, so please send money nearer the time. In the meantime please keep writing to us with anything you think may be of interest for a future edition. In Issue 6 we will have a full report on the gig at Barrowlands on 20th May and any other news that we hear about concerning the band.

We would of course like to thank all those who have given us help, information etc..to compile this issue of "WSNS". These include Neil Rutherford, Nicky Stanchev, "Kitt" Curry, Jonathon Selwood, John McKinstry, Dominic Williams, Phil Read, Shay Greene, John Dunlop, Liam Shand and anyone else we have forgotten.

Just a reminder to all readers that need to fill gaps in their collections, get in touch with Dominic Williams, who always has BC stuff to sell/swap. He has just got a copy of the "Chance" picture disc, amongst lots of other stuff. His address is

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

DATELINE TUESDAY 20/3/90

Since we went to press there have been quite a few developmants regarding concerts new releases etc.. Most of you will know about the mini-tour to promote the "Greatest Hits" compilation LP which we understand is due for release on 7 May, but just in case you don't, the details are as follows:

Aberdeen Capitol Theatre	May 17
Inverness Bowling Pavillion	May 18
Glasgow Barrowlands	May 20
Newcastle City Hall	May 21
Birmingham Hummingbird	May 22
Hammersmith Odeon	May 23

New drummer Pat Ahern will make his debut with the band

Douglas is very p...d off as he will be out of the country on holiday and will miss all six gigs Letters of condolance will be greatly appreciated ! However WSNS reader Dave Booth will be going to all six and wants to meet up with any fellow WSNS readers. He can be contacted at 99 Aspen House, Hailes Park Close, Parkfields Wolverhampton WV4 6EA.

In addition to the tour, the band are to play at the Glasgow Green show on Sunday 3 June, similar to last years Wet Wet Wet show. The Headline act is Deacon Blue - watch the music press for further details.

A new single entitled "Save Me" is to be released on 23 April and will be the only new track on the compilation LP. A follow up single, "Heart of the World" will be on the new LP of studio material, hopefully to be released in the latter part of 1990.

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

DATELINE WEDNESDAY 25/4/90

Single to be released 30/4/90

Band to play Glen Pavillion, Pittencrief Park, Dunfermline on 1/5/90 for Channel 4's "Rock Steady"

Additional gigs arranged;	Dumfries Loreburn Hall	May 16
	Hammersmith Odeon	May 24

Rumours about a gig at St Andrews University, Fife on May 15 are unconfirmed.

The compilation album "Through a Big Country" to be released May 14.

Video compilation also to be released, though the exact date is not known.