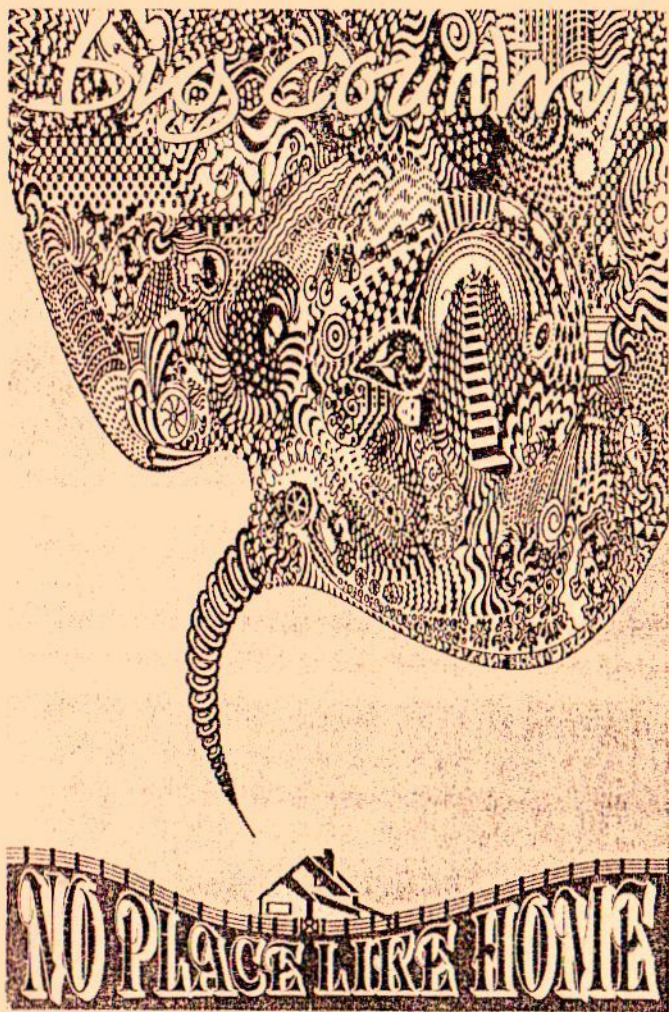


WE SAVE NO SOULS !



THE BIG COUNTRY FANZINE

ISSUE 11

OCTOBER 1991

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"We Save no Souls" is an independant Big Country fanzine and is no way connected officially to the band or to Country Club, the official fan club. (But does have the approval of the band and their management.) The views expressed are generally those of the readers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor.

"We Save no Souls" is published quarterly and is available, priced £1.35, from;

Douglas Johnson

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FROM THE ED

Hello and welcome to Issue 11 of "WSNS". By now you will no doubt have played "No Place Like Home" to death and are eagerly looking forward to the tour in October. In case anyone still doesn't know, the band are touring the UK from 3rd October until 10th November (full details elsewhere), then going on to Germany for a further short tour. It is possible that further European dates may be added.

I am sure everyone will join me in welcoming Chris Bell and Colin Berwick to the band, on drums and keyboards respectively. Chris Bell has previously played with Gene Loves Jezebel and Spear of Destiny and Colin Berwick has played with The Big Dish, who some of you may remember supporting Big Country back in 1986 one of the legs of "The Seer" tour. I am looking forward to meeting both of them on the tour and hopefully finding out a little more about them.

Yet again, Radio 1's total domination has decided that "Reptile" was not to be a hit single. Despite receiving rave reviews on "Round Table", airplay was minimal, with the result that after one week in the Top 40, it slipped out, never to be heard of again. Being realistic, I cannot see any other fate for "Beautiful People", scheduled for October 7th release.

"No Place Like Home" was released on 16th September to "mixed" reviews in the music press. You can read a selection of these and my own opinions later in this issue. I cannot, however, allow the review in Melody Maker to pass without comment and just in case anyone hasn't seen it, it is reproduced later on. What annoyed me about the review was that Caren

Myers made no attempt whatsoever to actually review the songs, she made it obvious right from the start that it was nothing more than an attack on the band and their music and that she intended to "put the boot in" and nothing more. We all know that the music press like nothing more than taking the piss out of certain bands, Big Country included, but what is the point in reviewing an album if you're not going to make the slightest attempt to tell people what the songs are like. To describe them as "crap" is not very erudite, is it ?

Anyway, enough of my witterings, on with the show as they say. I suppose in the spirit of the bands new image I should dispense with "Stay Alive", so

"We hope you like it"

Douglas



BIG BOYS IN THE GROOVE

It has taken nine long years for Stuart Adamson to finally make a record he can actually bear to listen to ...

It's a superb new album called *No Place Like Home* ... and the disc will kick-start the latest chapter of his group Big Country's incredible chart-topping career.

Stuart told me: "This album is the one I've been most satisfied with.

"Normally, I can't stand to listen to our records for ages afterwards.

"But I've been playing *No Place Like Home* all the time. It's by far the most mature album we've ever done."

The album includes Big Country's outstanding new single *Republican Party Reptile* - a HIT if ever I've heard one.

CHANGE

It's a STORMER of a song, with a power-charged change of musical direction which will surprise even the band's most diehard fans.

And Stuart agrees that it WAS time for a change.

He said: "In the past, some people said that all our songs sounded the same. I was SICK of hearing that ... it was an unjustified criticism!

And Stuart can even listen in!

"The music on this record is how we sound NOW as a band. I've never had any kind of big musical masterplan. I just write songs that inspire me, in the hope that they'll inspire other people too.

"Big Country have moved on. But I still play my guitar in a very individualistic way, and we still make very rootsy, guitar orientated music."

On August 31, Big Country will preview *No Place Like*

Home to members of their fan club with a gig at Dunfermline's Glen Pavilion.

Stuart said: "The album covers a lot more ground, and that pleases me. We go from country-style songs, to out-and-out rock tracks, to almost-psychedelic sounds - and it has wide range of lyrical styles too.

Check out *No Place Like Home* ... for Big Country are back on form!

Daily Record 17/8/91

Glen Pavillion, Dunfermline 31/8/91
Photo: James Fairbairn



NO PLACE LIKE HOME ?

It was obvious from the very loud noises coming out of the Pavillion where the band were soundchecking, that we were to get much more than an accoustic set. Then the surprise, an "ironing board" - Big Country have another keyboard player, introduced later as Chris Berwick, ex of "The Big Dish" (remember them from the '86 tour support ?)

Six new songs dispersed throughout the set, mixing very nicely with the old stuff and would you believe "Winter Sky !" Pick of the new stuff live was "We're Not in Kansas", the new opener, catchy lyrics, rocky guitars, definately a potential single.

The night was full of minor hiccups, to be expected (but plenty of rehearsal time before the T & C).

Tony mistimed his entrance into "Beautiful People", the band stopped and a cry from the audience

"...taxi for Butler..." had us all in stitches.

"As you can tell, I really like that one" says Stuart afterwards. "Winter Sky" followed, but "I'm not going to play it if you clap too fast !"

"Leap of Faith", then "Ships", a superb version with the whole band, much better than the version that appears on the album.

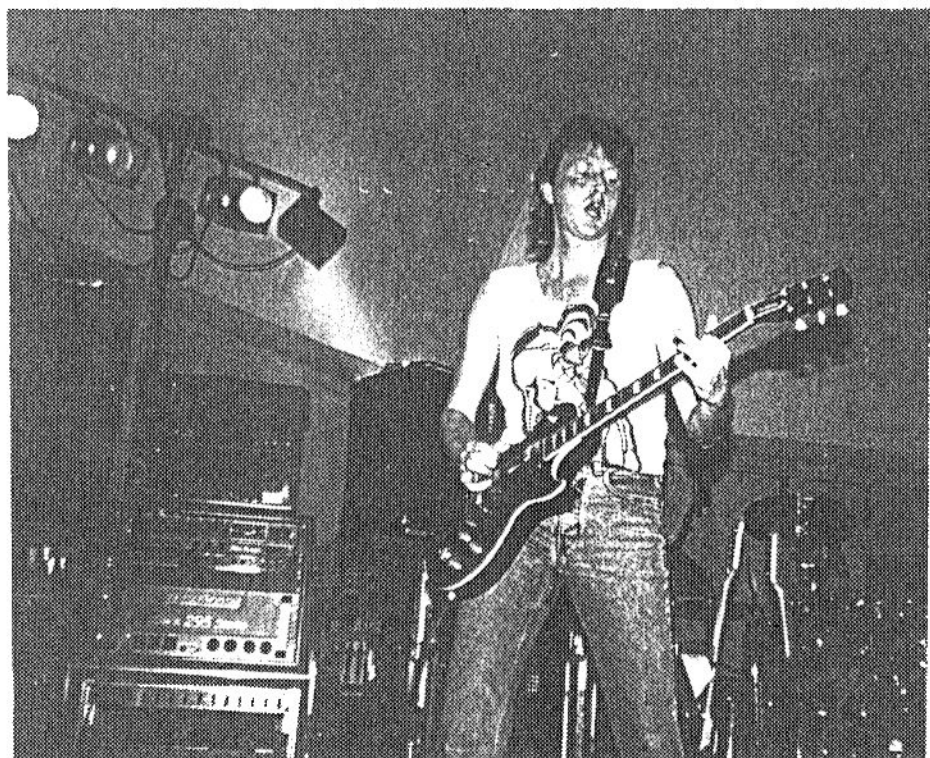
I suppose an encore was inevitable, but what a surprise we got. "Mannish Boy", the Muddy Waters classic (it seems Stuart's definately got the blues) and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" by The Band. We did get "Fields of Fire" I suppose, a return to what the crowd expected, though I can't help feeling that was a bit of pandering to the masses.

Plus points, no "Chance", minus points, no "Restless Natives", but a great show for those who made the trip, wetting the appetite for the forthcoming gigs. A little rough at the edges perhaps, but who really cared, we were there to see the new boys and to preview the new stuff.

For those of you who are interested, the set list for the Dunfermline show was as follows; We're not in Kansas, King of Emotion, Look Away, Republican Party Reptile, Beautiful People, Winter Sky, Leap of Faith, Ships, Wonderland, The Hostage Speaks.

Encores were Mannish Boy, The Night they drove Old Dixie Down and Fields of Fire.

Completists might like to know that the set list taped to the mixing desk included Keep on Dreaming, Chance, and In a Big Country, but these were not played.



Glen Pavillion, Dunfermline 31/8/91
Photo: James Fairbairn

THE ADAMSON INTERVIEW

We now continue with Part 2 of the interview with Stuart Adamson, given to me at Rockfield Studio, in May this year.

DJ) Going back to live work, you said to me last year when I asked you about who decides the content of the live set, you said very definitely "me". Have you ever thought about doing a live album ?

SA) No, never.

DJ) Never at all ? To a lot of people that's where Big Country....

SA) Yeah, but when you take a live record home and put it on, it's not the gig in your room, is it, just worse versions of the same songs ! I'll tell you what happens. A lot of bands say they're going to do a live album and they get all the tapes from the live stuff and go..."HMMMMM", so they go into a studio and re-record them, in fact Simple Minds re-recorded their whole live album, but that's beside the point. I think a lot of live TV is really shite as well, 'cos the guys who are doing the sound always balls it up, they never turn the guitars up. It's always bass, drums and vocals, you'll be playing away like a demon and it's "turn the guitars up !"

DJ) That was very true of the Dunfermline show, the sound was terrible.

SA) Yeah, the actual gig was brilliant...

DJ) That's right, it was really good. I actually wrote to Channel 4 to try and persuade them to show it, but without success.

SA) What was the BSB thing like ?

DJ) Haven't you seen it ?

SA) No.

DJ) Bruce has got a copy. It's really good, the camera work is excellent, probably the best live set I've seen on TV. The sound quality is really good as well.

NR) What about the Princes Trust, the 3 tracks you did there were on BSB as well.

SA) Was it ?

DJ) Yes, the sound was a bit rough on that as well. I take it you didn't see that either ?

SA) You see I'm terrible for things like that, once it's done, it's done. I'm not very nostalgic like that.

DJ) Going back to the subject of a live album...

SA) See, I think the live album thing for me, it's like...it implies you've got to move on, lets get on with something else, it's just how I am. Doing a live album, it's like "Christ, we did this gig months ago, what are we doing mixing it now ?" Live albums are like Greatest Hits albums, they're not that important.

DJ) Whose decision was it to do the Greatest Hits album last year, was it yours or was it the record company's ?

SA) It was a very mutual thing. We wanted to do one because we felt we were going through a transitional period and it kind of cleans the decks for us...

DJ) ...end of Part 1...

SA) Aye, "that was great, right, next..." plus we were actually ready to record the album and they suggested doing it, so we said OK, we'll go and tour it and promote properly. It kind of set us back for doing this record, but it's been a good thing for us, it sold a lot more records than I thought it would.

DJ) Yes, it sold about 300,000....

SA) Just below platinum, which is great to come back with a platinum album.

DJ) I know a lot of people who don't own any of your records who bought the Hits album.

SA) Well we kind of knew that would happen anyway.

DJ) I think that happens with a lot of Greatest Hits albums.

SA) Aye, people like collections. It's good because it means, probably for us, that it's encouraged a lot of people to come out to gigs that might not have, not that we've ever had bother selling out gigs. That's not been a problem.

DJ) No, you do seem to be able to pack the halls.

SA) The live stuff's always been great. We're good value for money, you know! We fucking try hard enough!

DJ) I've seen you enough times to know that.

SA) We're only going to do 45 minutes this year.

DJ) We want at least 2 hours. Not after an hour and 25 minutes at Scarborough 2 years ago...

NR) .. and that included the encore.

DJ) No, an hour and 35 minutes to be fair...

SA) Aye, I was just coming back from being away.

DJ) Actually, to be fair, that particular night you started to re-suffer from that chest thing...

SA) Aye, there was a lot of trouble that night as well, wasn't there?

DJ) Seats being ripped up and thrown on stage. You actually stopped playing at one point and started shouting at the audience.

NR) You went off at one stage as well...

SA) Aye, I seem to remember that as being a very good gig.

DJ) It was a brilliant gig, it was a great live performance.

SA) Is that all we played for, as short as that?

DJ) An hour and 35 minutes and that included the encore.

SA) You're lucky to get an hour out of most bands!

DJ) That's the thing, we're used to expecting more from you.

SA) Did you ever see the great "Magnum Opus" sets, the bloody two and a half hour jobs, like Whitley

Bay Ice Rink. We played nine thousand... I tell you what, the longest gig we ever did was at the RDS in Dublin, we played for 3 hours and this is without a word of a lie, we played stuff that we've never ever played before or since, we played a whole load of stuff off "The Seer"...I can't even remember the titles of the stuff !

NR) "The Sailor", "Red Fox" ?

SA) Aye, we played both of them.

DJ) I've had a few people asking me whether you've ever played that sort of stuff live.

NR) Have you played all the tracks live ?

SA) No, 'cos there's some we just cannot play live.

DJ) Like "Tall Ships Go" is a one that people keep saying to me "they must play that..."

SA) We could play that...

DJ) Bruce said to me last year that you could never play that because there's so many guitar overdubs on it.

SA) Well there is for him, but not for me, I just.. this is before everyone started all that "hammer on" style playing. My entire part is all finger tapping, all the way through the track.

DJ) Could I make a formal request then, for the Town & Country shows for you to play "Tall Ships Go"

SA) Play it, I can't even fucking remember it !

DJ) I'd thought about suggesting to Country Club about the possibility of a short, maybe a live EP for fan club members only. You did do a flexi-disc a few years back, which was available through the Country Club.

SA) Maybe what we should do is...we've got some good live stuff on DAT (Digital Audio Tape) that Nigel (Luby, sound engineer) has, recorded two years ago. The last tour we did in Germany was an absolutely cracking tour and the live tapes off the desk are absolutely brilliant.

DJ) I've got a few bootlegs from that tour...

SA) What, from Germany ?

DJ) Yeah, I've got them from Germany, Italy...

SA) There's some good gigs, aren't there ?

DJ) The best one I've got is from Milan, June '89, that's a cracking gig.

SA) Aye, we played good in Milan. Was it pandemonium ?

DJ) It sounds pretty hairy !

SA) It was, it's always wild in Milan, what a place it is. The punters are absolutely brilliant out in Italy. I remember that gig, it was brilliant. In fact, the one in Turin was even better, it was a stormer. There's one gig from the Biskuithalle in Bonne...

DJ) I've got that...

SA) Have you got that, that's maybe one of the best gigs we've ever done.

DJ) I've got a few live tapes, about 60 or so which you pick up from various sources...

SA) I don't mind that though...I think that people that are interested in bootlegs are going to be people that are interested in your albums anyway.

DJ) The quality of some of them is so bad anyway, it's only the diehard fans that would consider having them anyway.

DJ) Just out of curiosity, can you remember that Newcastle gig in March 1986 when you had problems with the sound. What exactly was the problem ?

SA) The mixing desk for the out-front sound broke down, so we had to take the monitor desk from off the stage, up the back and mix the gig with that. We couldn't hear what was happening on stage at all.

DJ) So you had no monitors ?

SA) None whatsoever, that was live without a safety net !

DJ) That was a superb gig, you did what, 7 or 8 encores ? Who decided that you were going to give a free show, 'cos you came on stage near the end and told everyone to come back in 4 weeks or so for a free show.

SA) It was just a spontaneous thing.

DJ) Once the initial problems had been sorted out, which took 30-40 minutes, it didn't sound too bad.

SA) There's nothing worse than being all keyed up to go and see a band and things go horribly wrong, it's maybe your only chance to see them for ages. Plus, it's not difficult to persuade us to play again in Newcastle, it's not like some places we hate playing, it's always been brilliant there.

DJ) I've heard you say that in the past, that you enjoy playing in Newcastle.

SA) I really do, most places are really good, but some places can be funny at times. Sometimes in the very South, people can get very blase at times.. Saying that as well, we've played at Guildford Civic Hall, I think 3 times, the first time I think I had a cold anyway, so I wasn't really into it and the next time it was alright, but a bit quiet, but the last time it was absolutely brilliant.

DJ) That was the last night of the "Peace" tour in England.

SA) That's right, we were away to Europe the next day.

Conversation then turned to "WSNS" itself.

SA) It must be a lot of work doing it.

DJ) Don't I know it !

SA) I've got a mate that runs the Dunfermline fanzine...

DJ) ..."Walking down the Halbeath Road..."

SA) He's had enough of that now, he's away to live in the bloody Highlands !

DJ) It is a lot of work, but it's, for want of a better description, a "labour of love", I know that sounds horribly cliched...

SA) But that's why I think you should have access to the band, I think that's important.

DJ) It is greatly appreciated, it's difficult enough to try and fill the bloody thing, especially when the band is fairly inactive and you don't know what's happening. If it wasn't for the fact that you rang me up to tell me that you were going into the studio and this is happening, that is happening, I wouldn't have a clue what's going on. I've had a couple of really long letters from Ian (Grant) and he's told me stuff that I would love to put in the fanzine, but he's told me in confidence, so there's no way I would ever betray that. I need a good relationship with Ian for obvious reasons.

SA) He thinks it's great as well, he just has to keep a professional distance.

DJ) We've had this conversation before about the official Fan Club. I used to knock it quite a lot, but having spoken to the guy who runs it, Andrew Bremner, on a couple of occasions and also talking to Ian....

SA) It's hard, because there are people who actually want that sort of thing, it's very difficult to provide a good "middle of the road" service 'cos I'm not really a middle of the road sort of guy.

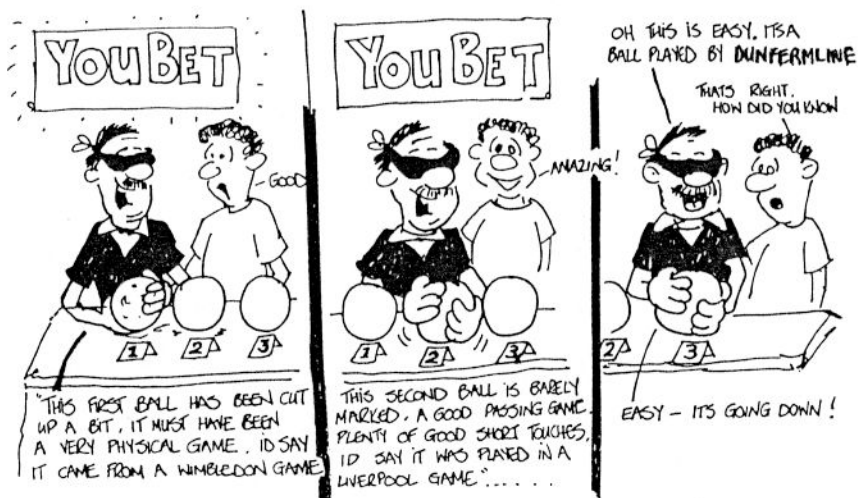
DJ) We really look at things from a entirelyly different point of view anyway. Their outlook is a lot more general, whereas mine is perhaps a lot more analytical, more in depth, to appeal to the more "hard core" fan.

SA) I spoke about this with Ian and that's why I'm well up for having access for people 'cos you need to see other sides to it, I think the more the merrier. It's good to be able to get a different view. You're there to be knocked, but to be quite honest, it won't make any difference to what I do.

NR) You're not getting knocked just for the sake of it....

SA) Yeah, 'cos you know it's done by people who really care about what you do.
 DJ) Construction criticism is perhaps the...
 SA) ...eternal cliché ?
 DJ) We're getting back to clichés again...
 SA) But clichés are good, they only became clichés because they're generally true.
 DJ) You said that on the 'phone the other night, I made a sarcastic comment about the album title...
 SA) You'll understand when you see the lyrics.

And that is where we leave the interview. We did continue to talk about other things and these will come out in future editions of "WSNS".
 I would like to thank Stuart for taking the time to talk to me at such length.



THIS ONE'S FOR YOU STUART (SORRY !)

(Mind you, it seems to apply to all teams wearing black & white)



Rockfield Studios 26/5/91
Photo: Douglas Johnson

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Now I'm sure the last thing you need is another review of the new album, as you all have your own ideas about it and your favourite tracks, but as I'm the editor I'm going to bore you all with my own thoughts on it. After all, if I can't put them in my own fanzine.....

WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS

I love this one. A great album and, it would seem concert opener. Lots of little changes of pace and direction, always holding your attention, with some great guitar work from Stuart and Bruce, little runs and fills all over the place. A great live track, destined to become a Big Country classic.

REPUBLICAN PARTY REPTILE

Straight ahead, stomping rock 'n roll and the obvious first single. The "beat", for want of a better word, reminds me of Trampled Underfoot by Led Zeppelin, but that's what being an old fogey does for you. Again, live it's a belter, Stuart giving it "loads" with the slide guitar.

DYNAMITE LADY

Third track into a new Big Country album and still no sign of the b.....e guitars ! Inspired by a US rodeo novelty act Stuart saw on satellite TV, this is another example of the radical change in direction, musically, that the band seem to have taken and I for one, am bloody delighted. As much as I love the band, I felt their music was becoming a little stale and predictable. Stuart's "wah-wah" playing is subtle and wonderfully understated.

KEEP ON DREAMING

Definitely better live than on record, but a good 'un none the less. I think it's similar to Kansas.

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

Shite. Sorry, boys.

THE HOSTAGE SPEAKS

Lyrical very clever, about the Middle East hostage situation, written before the recent spate of releases. Emotionally sung by Stuart with a nagging, persistent, restless (sic) rhythm. Possibly the LP's most underrated song.

BEAT THE DEVIL

A (partial) return to the "old" sound and I'm not sure I like it. Sounds very "Peace" era to me, but more beefed up.

LEAP OF FAITH

Vaguely reminiscent of The Rolling Stones "Get off of my Cloud", certainly in the chorus section. Again, sounds very "Peace" to me. Like the gospel backing singers, though.

YOU, ME AND THE TRUTH

Wonderful, even with a "cheesey" organ sound tootling away in the background, described somewhere as sounding like Hue & Cry ! I'd love to hear this live.

COMES A TIME

Back to the crashing drums and grungy guitars, don't like this at all I'm afraid. Sounds too much like a B-side, not album material at all. I would have preferred Kiss the Girl Goodbye, why wasn't that on the album, it's a much better track.

SHIPS

F....g wonderful, the album's stand out track. This has GOT to be the next single, whether in this, solo form or the full band version which was recorded at Rockfield, which is the one being played live.

INTO THE FIRE

Quirky, but I like it. The chorus sounds a bit like Running Up That Hill by Kate Bush, then half way through...crash, bang, wallop, back to the grungy guitars and crashing drums. Sounds almost like two tracks joined together.

PLAYING AT HOME

Town & Country Club, London 4/10/91
by Neil Rutherford

With two new members, a new album and the promise of a totally revamped set list, I eagerly awaited the opening two nights of the tour at the T & C in London. The convention had served to wet my appetite and judging by the atmosphere at the Friday night gig, tonight was party night - you could have cut the atmosphere with a knife.

The first two or three bars of "Kansas" alleviated my worst fears. The technical problems which beset the previous night's concert had been rectified and the mix had just a "little" less guitar. Kansas is surely destined to be a concert favourite (but so was Restless Natives which unfortunately was nowhere to be found). A good mixture of new and old followed including Winter Sky. Stuart's solo acoustic spot was retained, giving the rest of the band a well deserved (toilet ?) break.

The show started to wind up towards the climax, straight into Wonderland and a full band version of Ships, which like Kansas should become a favourite before the end of the tour. The main section of the show ended unsurprisingly with In a Big Country, during which Stuart unveiled his new party trick. Taking a camera from somebody in the front row, he proceeded to take a picture of that fan, from the stage. A nice souvenir for the lucky owner. (Perhaps a rogues gallery could be included in a future issue if anyone wants to send them in - Ed).

The first encore was the thought-provoking Hostage Speaks and the retained cover of Rockin' in the Free World, the version tonight being infinitely superior to the live version on the CD single of Beautiful People. Everyone should have gone home happy after this, but they came back for one final encore, Stuart

announcing that the gig had been recorded by Radio 1. They could not have chosen a better night. The final encore, inevitably perhaps, was Fields of Fire. Big Country were back where they are best, live on tour. The full set list for the show was;

We're not in Kansas, King of Emotion, Look Away, Keep on Dreaming, Republican Party Reptile, Winter Sky, Beautiful People, 13 Valleys (Stuart solo), Wonderland, Ships, Chance, In a Big Country.

First encore; The Hostage Speaks, Rockin' in the Free World

Second encore; Fields of Fire

Thursday's show had two variations, 13 Valleys had bits of Just a Shadow included in it and the second encore produced Mannish Boy, the old Muddy Waters blues song, as premiered at Dunfermline.

.....

Thanks to Neil for the above review. From talking to people who attended the different shows, it seems the set list was open to flexibility on different nights. I would like to compile the set list of all the shows on this tour and want people to write to me with details of the songs played at the concerts they attend.

I also want some photos of the shows, so anyone who gets any good ones, please let me know. If they're good, I'll use them in a future edition.

.....

"WSNS" APPEAL

After the band played their short set at the HMV store in London on 19 September, I believe that Stuart went to GLR and did an accoustic set for them which went out the same night. Anyone who can supply me with a tape of it would earn my undying gratitude.

PLAYING AWAY

Bonn Biskuithalle - 6th September 1991

by Ralf Kirschnick

The gig was a very low-key affair as normally every gig is fly-posted heavily throughout Germany, but in this case I didn't see a single poster here in Dusseldorf. I would say there were about 300-350 people there, most of them fans, of course. The venue, the "Biskuithalle" (roughly translated to "Cookie-Box" by the natives) is the same place as the band played in January 1989 on the "Peace" tour and the gig was filmed for a show called "Rocklife", which is produced by the same people who were behind the famous "Rockpalast" and is shown late Saturday night on a regional station.

The gig itself was quite good, at least in my opinion. It was only the 4th time I have seen the guys in concert, but Stuart and the others seemed to be in a very good mood and played a great mix of old and new songs. The new ones fitted quite nicely between the classics and I think the new album will be just great, judging from what I heard. The set list (as far as I can remember) was something like this;

We're not in Kansas, King of Emotion, Look Away, Reptile, Winter Sky, Ships, Beautiful People, 13 Valleys (acoustic), Wonderland, Leap of Faith, In a Big Country and Chance. Encores were; Peace in our Time (Stuart solo acoustic), Fields of Fire, Mannish Boy and Rockin' in the Free World. Stuart apologised for the last two songs because it was only the second gig with the new guys, so they didn't know any other songs. As for Winter Sky, he said they have often been asked to play it, but had never done it 'til then. In the end, he tried to get

everybody to strip naked because he had seen the film "Woodstock" lately and didn't want to play any more songs until everybody was undressed, but they played the encores anyway. Very few people actually took off everything, but I found BC's audience a little cleverer than "James" fans, who all sit down when the singer tells them to. Maybe they should call one of their next singles "Get Out" and watch what happens.

In the end I would say the lads enjoyed themselves just as much as the audience did and I would be very surprised if that didn't show on TV as well.



"Do you think there's any chance that you might have a hit by next week Stuart, 'cos that's when the electricity bill's due"

BIG COUNTRY NO PLACE LIKE HOME

(Vertigo)

"WHAT do you do," wonders the writer of the sleeve notes with undisguised awe, "when you are a group that has created one of the truly distinctive sounds in rock and been at the top of your profession for eight years?" What, indeed. The truly distinctive shall always be distinguished from the falsely distinctive, and where I come from, that means only one thing: BAGPIPE.

The great thing about Big Country is that they were never able to live that one down. Better, they can never stop themselves from bringing it up in a vain attempt at pre-emption. For the rest of the world, it's a joke, but for Stuart Adamson, it's an obsession. If Adamson were on his deathbed with the priest approaching to give him extreme unction, his last words would be "Don't mention the bagpipes!". Did I mention that Big Country are also SICK AND TIRED of maulous journalists making cheap shots about bagpipes? In fact, just to make sure we know they're not kidding about this, they enlist the help of (again) the sleeve notes writer, who tells us, his nostrils quivering with indignation, that "For too long, the emotionally charged essence of Big Country's music has been obscured by LAZY and CLICHED talk of bagpipe guitars and checked-shirt rock". Well, I never.

The terrible thing about Big Country is that their music is crap. This is a band that makes Lime Spiders look like The Rolling Stones. Adamson is responsible for the

"emotionally charged essences" that make him sound like a Celtic Springsteen wannabe, gasping through a series of insufferable bar-room boogies. This, we are told, is Big Country getting back to basics, their R&B roots. Naturally, all sentient listeners will wish they wouldn't, but who listens to us anyway?

In terms of songwriting technique, I invite you to consider this couplet from "I Know We're Not In Kansas": "They took up all the yellow bricks/And sold them to Japan/And still the advertisers tell you/There's no place like home". Did I happen to mention that Big Country are sick of being laughed at?

And so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the kind of music that still gets made over all our objections. The deeply risible Big Country will slog on, mixing their metaphors, writing garbled jibes at PJ O'Rourke (who can take care of himself), trying too hard to make people forget the bagpipes. As for this particular album?

No place like the bin.
CAREN MYERS

Melody Maker 21/9/91

Channel 4's Oracle review of "No Place Like Home" is probably the best one I've read of the new LP. A 4-star review from Jon Homer, he's obviously a bit of a fan, 'cos he gave "Heart" a good review last year as well. It read as follows; "Ignore the dreadful album cover and concentrate on the music. No Place Like Home is Big Country's finest moment yet.

Now reduced to a trio, although departed drummer Mark Brzezicki plays here as a session musician, Big Country have never sounded so mean and hungry. The romantic imagery is still here, but there's a harder and more brutal side to the songs, as hinted at on Peace in our Time. The songs on No Place Like Home are concerned with contemporary issues. The Hostage Speaks is an intelligent observation on the power of TV to distort and orchestrate the news, while Leap of Faith has the same sense of longing that managed to conjure up on Losing my Religion. The guitar playing here is rooted more in America than Celtic music and the overall sound is one of a band in transition"

BIG COUNTRY No Place Like Home

VERTIGO 510 230

Strange times in the Big Country camp - there's barely a rousing guitar anthem in earshot! Instead there's an assortment of rootsier instruments (mandolins, fiddles, slide guitars) and a simpler approach, involving a Joni Mitchell-style piano ballad and bemusing '70s rock guitar sounds, with the result that much barely sounds like Big Country at all. New producer Pat Moran (Robert Plant, Edie Brickell) has finally succeeded in beelining up the fiddly, lame rhythm section which plagued them since Steeltown, but alas there are no obvious tunes to match the new attack. Part of this is down to a still one-dimensional intensity of approach, and partly because of Stuart Adamson's noble but heavy-handed lyrics - caring for the common man, disillusion with politics and society etc. It's only a partially successful overhaul, then, and somewhat hard going (the cassette and CD have two extra tracks, making a full hour and boasting one of the better songs in You, Me And The Truth).★★
Ian Crauna

Q magazine



Glen Pavillion, Dunfermline 31/8/91
Photo: James Fairbairn

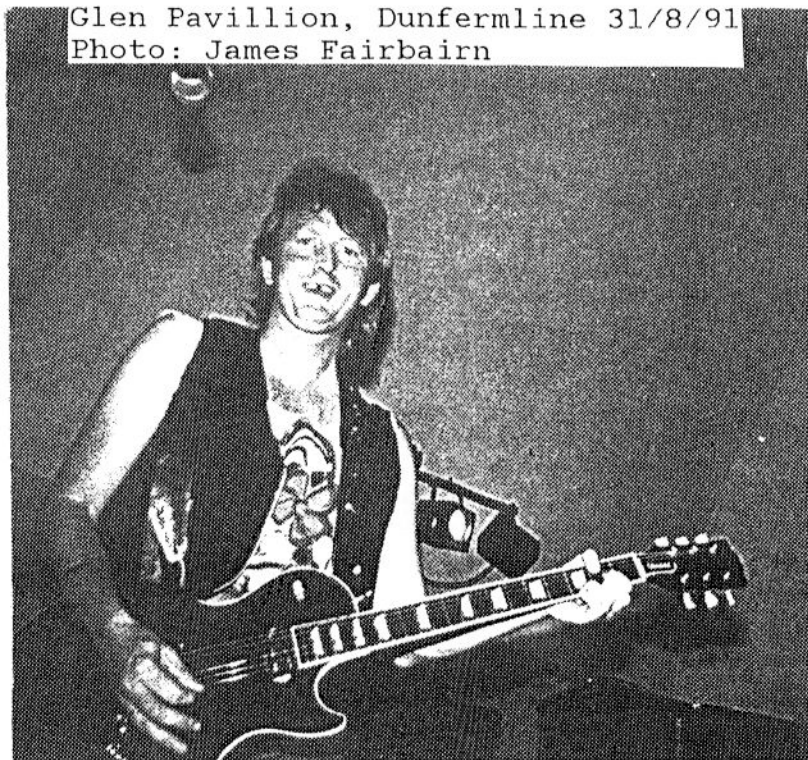
HMV Oxford Street 19/9/91

Photo: Stuart Arnott



Glen Pavillion, Dunfermline 31/8/91

Photo: James Fairbairn





Tour pledge from Big Country

SINGER Stuart Adamson was adamant: "If there's ever a Big Country tour without playing in the Tyneside area, that'll be the day I'm not in the band."

Recalling some of the happy times from concerts at venues as varied as Whitley Bay Ice Rink and Newcastle's City Hall and Mayfair, he promised Geordie fans would not be forgotten when planning a British tour at the end of the year.

Before then, Big Country will play some London dates to promote the mid-September launch of their new album *No Place Like Home*, followed by a stint on the road in the Far East and Australia next month.

And it's a new look band who go on tour. Although Mark Brzezicki plays on the album, the drummer's on-off membership saga is finally settled - he's out

Stuart, bassist Tony Butler and guitarist Bruce Watson decided to replace him with Chris Bell, the former Gene Loves Jezebel man recommended to them by Robert Plant's drummer.

No Place Like Home is the band's first new album for exactly three years and Stuart blamed the delay on the uncertainty over Mark and the 1990 release of the greatest hits collection *Through A Big Country*. "We were ready to do it last year then the record company said they wanted to bring out the compilation," he said.

"The greatest hits album very much marks the end of one phase of Big Country and the start of the



New look for Big Country

next. When *Peace In Our Time* came out, I said we wanted the next album to be more rock."

There has already been a taste of that with the current hit *Republican Party Reptile*, taken from the LP. "I wanted to have hands on the project more, with the emphasis more on the musicians than any production techniques," said Stuart.

"We met various producers before starting work on it and Pat Moran's attitude is superb. He likes the interplay between musicians which, after all, is what being in a band is all about. Pat kept his

hands on the reins and he was very inspirational, rather than saying 'Do that. Do this'.

"It's the most diverse album musically that I have done and I'm very proud of that, but it's still very much Big Country."



Newcastle Evening Chronicle

SUPERCARS II

What is it with Gremlin programmers and Big Country records? First we had titles of their records for the cheat modes for *Lotus Turbo Esprit*, now we continue in the same vein with *Supercars II*. Are they hardcore fans of that 80s Scottish rock band? Is it some surreal joke? Is it merely an incredible coincidence? Who knows?

Anyway, to access the cheat mode, enter player one's name as 'Wonderland' and player two's name as 'The Seer'. You can now start the game in one or two-player mode with the cheat active.

Amiga Format Magazine

MISTER 10%



Almost all of you know that Ian Grant has been Big Country's manager since the beginning, initially in partnership with Alan Edwards, then on his own since 1989, but how many of you know anything about him? In our tireless quest to bring you the facts about the people who matter in the Big Country camp, we asked Ian to answer a few questions and he kindly agreed.

DJ) How and when did you get started in the music business and what did you do beforehand ?

IG) My first contact with the music business was in 1968. I happened to do "liquid lightshows" locally in the town I grew up in, Worthing in Sussex. My first major show was at the Brighton Dome for the Pink Floyd. Subsequently I formed what was called an Artslab, the first being the Drury Lane Artslab in London, called the Worthing Workshop. This involved running multi-media events in the local neighbourhood, such as all-weekend rock disco's, street theatre, poetry readings, publishing our own mag which got busted for obscenity and a whole host of 60's hippy style events never thought of or motivated by the need to make money. I did promote Deep Purple, Arthur Brown, Black Sabbath and Hawkwind (many times) to name a few, but we rarely made a profit.

The next milestone for me was to be the local promoter for the International Times free festival "Phun City". This featured the legendary MC5 as headliners, to this day one of the most exciting and memorable live performances I have seen.

Throughout this period of time (1968-70) I guess I really made my first contacts and had some inclination to the nature of the music business.

Harvey Goldsmith, Richard Branson, Chrysalis, Island Records, Blackhill Enterprises, Clearwater Productions were names of people and companies I was becoming familiar with and dealing with, due to the Workshop and I soon learnt that one thing leads to another where doing business or making contacts with people is concerned.

I went off the rails for a while and got married for the first time, until, in 1975 I came to my senses and had another stab at working within music. I ran

a local agency booking anything I could get 10% on and soon after I was approached by a Brighton band for management. All this led to moving to London in September 1975. I had developed a contact with Derek Savage and Dai Davies who had managed Gypsy, Ducks Deluxe and Brinsley Schwarz. They were impressed by my hustking and stubbornness and invited me to be their third partner in a new adventure called Albion Management.

DJ) Which bands/artists have you managed in the past ?

IG) In London I ran an agency that represented The Jam, 101ers, Eddie and the Hot Rods, Sex Pistols, Johnny Thunders and I brought The Ramones into the UK for the first time, with The Flaming Groovies. We ran three successful venues, The Nashville, Hope & Anchor and The Red Cow (which is where I first became aware of Stuart. We also set up a management company and on our books were Rocky Sharpe and the Razors, Roogalator, Neil Innes and Fatso and a band by the name of The (Guildford) Stranglers, whom I ended up managing from September 1975 until July 1980. Either on my own, or with partners (Alan Edwards) I have also managed The Members, Hazel O'Connor, The Skids, Tanz der Youth, Alice Cooper (for Europe only) and The Cult.

DJ) When and under what circumstances did you first get involved with Stuart/Big Country ?

IG) My first contact with Stuart came when I managed The Stranglers. Firstly, Jean-Jacques Burnel saw The Skids as they were starting out in Scotland and was impressed enough to hassle me into bringing the band to London, he had his eyes on producing them.

Indeed he arranged for demo-time, but when Virgin became interested and signed the band, Simon Draper had other ideas. The second time was when The Skids supported The Stranglers on the "No More Heroes" tour of (I believe) 1977. When I quit managing The Stranglers in 1980 I heard The Skids were looking for new management. I approached Stuart and Richard Jobson and started managing them on the release of "The Absolute Game" in September 1980. I have managed Stuart ever since.

DJ) What other bands/artists do you currently manage ?

IG) I only manage Big Country at the moment, however I am talking to a major artist(s) that I have been involved with before.

DJ) What, briefly (if that's possible) does your role as manager entail ?

IG) I could talk forever on this question. Suffice to say, I have to look after every detail and aspect of a bands career.

DJ) What can you tell me about the future plans for Big Country ?

IG) The future ? That Big Country attain the status and success they deserve.

DJ) Ian, thank you very much for your time.



BITS 'N PIECES

Thanks very much for whoever in the Big Country camp was responsible for giving "WSNS" a name check on the album sleeve. Pity they couldn't have included my name and address as well, might have drummed up a bit more business !

In "I'm only waiting" does Stuart really sing "I'm only waiting for the Burco man" ? Was this a song inspired by a rainy afternoon waiting for the engineer to come and fix his central heating ?

WSNS reader Kevin Grosvenor panicked when he heard Steve Wright mention on his afternoon show that Big Country were playing at the T & C that evening. The only problem was the date, 2nd September. Good old Radio 1, really on the ball as usual !

When Midge Ure appeared on Nicky Campbell's evening show on Radio 1 (7/8/91) playing live in the studio, he was backed by, amongst others, the "Big Country Rejects" Messrs Brzezicki and Philips-Gorse. They have also appeared on Midge's new album as well as the promo video etc...

A number of readers, including David Cockburn, have pointed out the similarity of the chorus of "Into the Fire" to "Running up That Hill" by Kate Bush from her 1985 album "Hounds of Love" (my favourite all-time album - Ed)

Come on Stuart, come on, come on baby.....

Quote of the month from HMV Oxford Street (19/9/91)
Stuart; "How much did it cost you to get in ?"
Crowd; "Nothing"
Stuart; "You know how much we're getting paid then"

The Japanese boxed set of the first four albums is a very nice collectors piece to have and includes a booklet with some nice colour pictures as well as the lyrics to the songs, both English and Japanese. The set basically consists of the first 4 albums with additional tracks, as follows;

The Crossing, plus In a Big Country (extended), Fields of Fire (extended), Chance (extended) and the track The Crossing.

Steeltown, plus Wonderland (extended), East of Eden (extended), Angle Park and All Fall Together.

The Seer, plus Tracks of my Tears (live), Lost Patrol (live), Wonderland (live), Thousand Yard Stare (live) and Look Away (12" Mix)

Peace in our Time, plus Save Me, Black Skinned Blue Eyed Boys, Prairie Rose and Heart and Soul.

A great shame Restless Natives was omitted, I was under the impression it was originally going to be included.

All of the tracks have been available previously in one form or another, but it's nice to have stuff like Angle Park and The Crossing available on CD.

A very nice piece, Country Club deserve a big pat on the back for making it available at a reasonable price. I have heard reports of it being sold in record shops for over twice their price !

A little piece for the collectors. I have recently been advised of an alternative version of "Harvest Home" that was available on a compilation LP that came with an early 80's magazine called Debut. Other artists featured were Wang Chung and The Thompson Twins.

The Greatest Hits video has recently been spotted selling for £3.99 in various bargain bins.

EXCHANGE & MART

Brian Cameron, Leven,
wants to get hold of the 12" of "East of Eden" with
the poster sleeve (MERXP 175) and the cassette
single of "One Great Thing" (BIGCM 3)

Dave Beckwith wants a copy of the BSB gig from the
T & C last year. he can be contacted at

Liam Shand,
wants to get in touch with any Big
Country fans living in the north of Scotland for
get-togethers, sharing transport to gigs etc...

Anyone wanting any gaps filled in their Big Country
collection could do worse than contacting;
Dominic Williams,

or,
Spiral Scratch,

.....
Well that's your lot for another issue, hope you've
enjoyed it. Issue 12 will be out either just before
or just after Christmas.

Special thanks are due to the following people for
help, ideas, contributions and inspiration (and
buying me a pint !)

James Fairbairn, David Bearne, Stuart Arnott, John
McKinstry, Phil Read, Dominic Williams, Kitt Curry
(for remembering my birthday), Matthew Stott, John
Loter and especially Neil Rutherford for keeping my
feet on the ground. And not forgetting Stuart, Bruce
and Tony, the raison d'etre of all our endeavours.

See you on tour !

This is the section where I try to sell you as much as possible !



THE OTHER BIG COUNTRY FANZINE...

"Inwards" available from Jason Allen, 131 Park Road, Keynsham, Bristol BS18 1AS, priced £1.50

T-SHIRTS

Get the ultimate in street cred, be the "man about town" with your very own "WSNS" T-shirt. The only fashion item to be seen wearing this autumn can be yours for the pitiful sum of £6.50, inc postage. The T-shirt is 100% pure throbbing cotton and has the "WSNS" logo in black and red on the front. Be sure to state chest size when ordering.

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£6.50 - UK

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£9.50 - anywhere else

Back issues of all issues (except #6) are available for the ridiculously low price of £1.50 each, inc postage.



Big Country

THE 1991 TOUR

October

- 3-7 Town & Country Club, London
- 10 Legends Nightclub, Dingwall
- 13 Capitol Theatre, Aberdeen
- 14 Barrowlands Ballroom, Glasgow
- 15 Magnum Sports Centre, Irvine
- 17 Sands Centre, Carlisle
- 18 University, Liverpool
- 20 Apollo Theatre, Manchester
- 21 City Hall, Sheffield
- 22 City Hall, Newcastle
- 24 Town Hall, Hull
- 25 Barbican Centre, York
- 26 Leisure Centre, Redcar
- 28 St Georges Hall, Bradford
- 29 Victoria Hall, Hanley
- 31 Riviera Centre, Torquay

November

- 1 Arts Centre, Poole
- 3 University, Reading
- 4 St Davids Hall, Cardiff
- 6 Colston Hall, Bristol
- 7 Civic Hall, Wolverhampton
- 9 UEA, Norwich
- 10 Polytechnic, Leicester

- 28 Quartier Latin, Berlin
- 29 PC69, Bielefeld

December

- 1 Modernes, Bremen
- 2 Docks, Hamburg
- 4 Tor 3, Dusseldorf
- 5 Musichalle, Hannover
- 7 Roxy, Ulm
- 8 Longhorn, Stuttgart
- 9 Metropolis, Munich
- 11 Musichalle, Frankfurt
- 12 RCOI, Nurnberg