

WE SAVE NO SOULS!



The Big Country Fanzine

Issue 7 - October '90

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

I understand that a new Big Country single will be released just after Christmas or New Year. The band have recorded rough versions of about 15 songs and have been talking to three producers about beginning proper recording. They are; Tim Palmer, who we knew about, Chris Kimsey and...Steve Lillywhite. I really hope that Steve can do it as I believe that he would be able to bring the best out of the band and bring about the much needed return to form.

From the Ed

Hello and welcome to another issue of "WSNS". Loads of things to say, so straight down to business. Firstly and most importantly, I have to announce that Jeremy Carter is no longer involved with "WSNS" and I have taken on full responsibility for the running of the fanzine. Not to mince words, I'm afraid that Jeremy has been playing "silly buggers" and for reasons known only to himself, has gone completely incommunicado. He refuses to answer letters and return 'phone calls and no-one that I know has heard anything from him in months. A number of people have written to me complaining about things sent to Jeremy that were not returned, money sent for the fanzine where they have heard nothing etc... Eventually I had to give him an ultimatum and no response was forthcoming. It was not a decision taken lightly, though I felt I had no alternative. If anyone reading this has stuff outstanding with Jeremy, please let me know.

As a result of this, the competition from Issue 6 has been extended for a further period. I don't know whether anyone has sent entries to Jeremy, but I'm afraid he hasn't sent any on to me. I have only received two entries, both sent to me direct. If anyone who has sent entries to Jeremy would like to re-submit them to me, then I should be able to announce the results of the competition and also details of the T-shirts in Issue 8, due in the first week of January.

Right, enough of this negativity. I hope most of you were able to catch Big Country on at least one occasion during the mini-tour at the beginning of August. The actual reason for the gigs is not clear, though Ian Grant did tell me that they were purely for my benefit as he had

remembered that I missed all the May gigs as I was out of the country on holiday ! I suspect it was probably to warm the band up for the Town and Country Club show, which as you know was filmed by BSB and despite what Country Club say, was not shown live that evening (see elsewhere in this issue for further information). The gigs all seemed to go down well and I was fortunate enough to see the shows at Manchester, Doncaster and Town & Country.

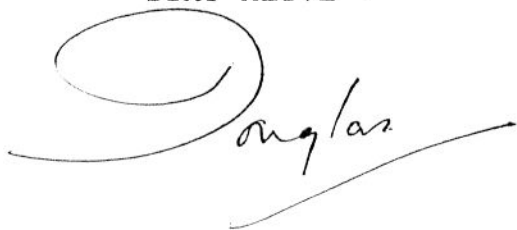
I mentioned in Issue 6 that I suspected "Heart of the World" would not be a chart hit and unfortunately I was right. The highest chart position was no. 50 and obviously the single got no airplay on Radio 1 and from what I can gather, precious little on ILR stations either. With the similar treatment of "Save Me", I cannot help but compare this with the massive success of the Hits album, which has sold over 300,000 copies in the UK. "Heart" sold approximately 3,500, which, putting it bluntly, is pathetic. What do we put it down to ? Bad marketing, lack of promotion, who knows. The song, while not great, was catchy enough, and deserved better. At the end of the day though, do the band, or we the fans really care about singles chart success ? The charts are full of shit, 3 minute heroes, soap opera dummies and records made by machines and producers, with only the odd moment of brilliance like Maria McKee or Cocteau Twins. (my opinion, of course). As long as Big Country continue to make music that comes from the heart, real music that excites and delights us, why worry. Big Country will be around long after all these people are long forgotten.

Last issue I promised an increase to 36 pages but I had reckoned without yet another price increase by the people who copy and put together

the fanzine for me. As this is their third price increase since "WSNS" started, I was faced with the decision to either keep my promise, which would have meant a price increase of something like 10-15p, or keep the same number of pages and put off a price increase, at least for the time being. Eventually I decided on economy, so for the time being, "WSNS" remains at 32 pages.

Anyway, enough of my ramblings, that's about all for the moment. Issue 8 will be out in the first week in January, turkey overdose permitting. Until then,

STAY ALIVE !

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Douglas". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the printed name "Douglas Johnson".

Douglas Johnson

Any letters where a reply is required, please enclose an s.a.e.

"There's a guy here about the faulty E-bow"



BACK TO THE FUTURE ?
by Neil Rutherford

The sentiments expressed in Dave Cox's article "Future Horizons" in Issue 3 of WSNS, in my opinion ring truer today than when originally written, especially after taking into account the failure of both "Save Me" and "Heart of the World" to reach the Top 40. Big Country must decide what they see as success. Do they really want to attempt to reach the heights they achieved after the release of "The Crossing" when they were received like a breath of fresh air, or do they wish to rely on their past glories, recently shown with the success of the Greatest Hits release, a mere plateau in their present downward spiral of "has beens". They should continue to play the faithful venues in the same cities as on the mini-tour in May, Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham etc... playing to and pleasing their hard core following. But how many people were experiencing their first Big Country concert? Very few, I expect, perhaps a few being taken along by partners. But should Big Country continue to take their music to "the people" by playing smaller venues, e.g. Dumfries, Doncaster. I appreciate the fact that Big Country are a tremendous live band but they must ask themselves why they have started to play venues that they would only previously have played in their early, formative "Crossing" years. Big Country have a large, loyal following and fans of any group will travel to see concerts and by playing these venues I personally feel they are admitting to themselves that they have seen better days.

In releasing and having success with the Hits album, why did the recent singles fail? Who did buy the Hits album - many people who previously had not purchased a single, if previous sales of Hits albums are anything to go by.

However this shows that people still want to listen to Big Country's music. This is a large potential market for a future album, something which Big Country should try and exploit. The new album which they have been, and are to continue to demo must be a complete, quality album which can re-establish the group.

However, are the two recent singles up to scratch? I suspect not. Both failed to reach the Top 40 - hardly indications of a great album to follow. It is no good Stuart complaining about lack of airplay on Radio 1, if the singles were strong enough, they would have been played, especially as the Hits album was Top 10 at the time. I also can't help wondering if "Heart of the World" just might have performed better if the small "rap-like" section (as performed during the May tour) had been retained.

To find this successful formula, Big Country should not have to change their style that much. Many heavy metal bands have "softened" up and found chart success. But Stuarts recent efforts don't give us much hope, they are pale shadows of work on "The Crossing" and to a lesser extent on "Steeltown" and "The Seer". Would it be harsh to suggest that he could be musically washed out. I hope not. Maybe all the pressure of being the groups sole writer is becoming too much. He needs new ideas and perhaps a new face in the band who can share/assist him in this role. Alternatively maybe a professional songwriter should be found, though this may lessen the feeling/passion with which they play their music live. Releasing a cover version may get them airplay in the short term, but may just be papering over the cracks.

Drastic action perhaps, but the next album is going to be make or break. Big Country, either collectively, or perhaps Stuart himself must decide what he wants for the bands future and be prepared to accept the consequences of his decision.

DISCOGRAPHY

In Issue 5 we printed the first part of Big Country's UK discography from "Harvest Home" to "Hold the Heart". We now continue from the "comeback" single, "King of Emotion" to the most recent release "Heart of the World"

BIGC5	7"	a) King of Emotion	8/88
		b) The Travellers	
BIGC512	12"	a) King of Emotion	8/88
		b) The Travellers	
BIGCD5	CDS	Starred and Crossed	
		King of Emotion	8/88
		The Travellers	
		Starred and Crossed	
		Not Waving but Drowning	
BIGMC5	Cass	King of Emotion	8/88
		The Travellers	
		Starred and Crossed	
		On the Shore	
BIGC6	7"	a) Broken Heart(13 Valleys)	10/88
		b) Soapy Soutar Strikes Back	
BIGC612	12"	a) Broken Heart(13 Valleys)	10/88
		Soapy Soutar Strikes Back	
		b) When a Drum Beats	
		On the Shore	
BIGCR612	12"	same as BIGC612	10/88
Limited edition of 10,000 with free commemorative Russian poster, first 5,000 in red vinyl.			
BIGCD6	CDS	Broken Heart(13 Valleys)	10/88
		Soapy Soutar Strikes Back	
		Wonderland (12" version)	
BIGCDR6	CDS	Broken Heart(13 Valleys)	10/88
		Soapy Soutar Strikes Back	
		Made in Heaven	
		When a Drum Beats	
BIGC7	7"	a) Peace in our Time	1/89
		b) Promised Land	
Also limited edition postcard pack, BIGCP7			

BIGC712	12"	a) Peace in our Time Promised Land	1/89
		b) Over the Border The Longest Day	
BIGCR712	12"	a) Peace in our Time Chance	1/89
		b) In a Big Country Promised Land	
Limited edition gatefold sleeve, first 3 tracks recorded live in Moscow 2/10/88			
BIGCD7	CDS	Peace in our Time Chance The Longest Day Promised Land	1/89
BIGC8	7"	a) Save Me	4/90
		b) Pass me by	
BIGC812	12"	a) Save Me	4/90
		b) Pass me by Dead on arrival	
BIGMC8	Cass	Save Me Pass me by	4/90
BIGCD8	CDS	Save Me Pass me by World on Fire	4/90
BIGCX812	12"	a) Save Me	5/90
		b) Wonderland 1000 Yard Stare	
Limited edition gatefold sleeve with 4 page colour booklet, B-side tracks recorded live in Moscow 1/10/88.			
BIGC9	7"	a) Heart of the World	7/90
		b) Black skinned, blue eyed boys	
BIGC912	12"	a) Heart of the World	7/90
		b) Black skinned blue eyed boys Troubled Man	
BIGMC9	Cass	Heart of the World Black skinned blue eyed boys	7/90
BIGCD9	CDS	Heart of the World Black skinned blue eyed boys Restless Natives	7/90

BIGCX912 12" a) Heart of the World 7/90
b) Peace in our Time (accoustic)
13 Valleys (accoustic)
Limited edition gatefold sleeve with free
"Heart" design poster.

That concludes the band's UK singles discography and as they are currently demoing new material, it is unlikely there will be any more releases until 1991. If there are any omissions or mistakes, please let me know.

Starting in Issue 8 there will be the first of a semi-regular series of articles by Dominic Williams about Big Country collectables from around the world, starting with UK and US promo releases. What I would like readers to do is to send details of any stuff they have to Dominic, giving as much information as possible, track listings, running times, catalogue numbers, sleeve details etc... Dominic's address is

"The Travellers" or "10 Days in May"
by Phil Read

Tuesday May 15

Travelled by train on my own to St Andrews, which took about 6 hours, to see only 40 minutes of the gig. This was because my last train was at 10.45 pm and the railway station was 5 miles away. Had a chat with the taxi driver about The Skids, then got the overnight train back to Birmingham. I was hoping to get a sleeping compartment, but as there were none available I had to put up with trying to get some sleep in the seats. This was rather difficult as I couldn't decide if it was more comfortable with an armrest sticking in my back or my stomach !

Wednesday May 16

Arrived in Birmingham at 06.30 feeling pretty worse for wear, only to find that my car wouldn't start. Had to wait two and a half hours for the AA and eventually got home at 09.30, which gave me about 30 minutes to get all my things ready to go away in the caravanette. My mate Elliott, who is an avid Alarm fan (he also likes Big C) came round at 10 o'clock in "Thunderbird 6", the vehicle that was to become our home for the next week.

After loading up with plenty of BC tapes (oh, and some food) we set off on the journey to Dumfries. I decided to be really sociable by dossing in the back of the van ! Arrived there around 3 pm, met up with Ray "Handrail" Robson and managed to get a quick word with Tony before the soundcheck. After a plate of bangers and beans from "Master Chef" Read, we proceeded to the Loreburn Hall and trudged along the queue of people handing out leaflets advertising "WSNS". Also managed a quick word with Ian Grant who seemed slightly annoyed that "Save Me" had not entered the charts.

Watched a brilliant two hour set by the lads, complemented by a very good venue. After the gig we set off on the long haul to Aberdeen, stopping off at a lay-by to doss near somewhere called Moffat.

Thursday May 17

After a very greasy fry-up, we set off on the 5 hour drive to Aberdeen. Met up with Dave Booth from Wolverhampton, who had unfortunately been used for target practise by a low flying seagull. Decided to give the support band a miss (again) but another cracking performance from Big C. Gave out some more handbills and headed off towards Inverness stopping at what seemed a nice quiet lay-by to achieve some serious dossing. This, unfortunately turned out to be a bit of a mistake on our part as we were, in fact, parked about 8 feet from a railway line, something we realised at about 4 a.m. when we were rudely awoken by the thundering sound of a diesel locomotive pulling a heavy train past us.

Friday May 18

After a little more sleep, we headed off to Inverness. Went to the local baths and had a sauna, shower and swim. Tried to find the Bowling Pavillion, which wasn't easy as it was about one and a half miles out of Inverness in the middle of farmland. Saw Tony again, and asked him to sign my copy of the Hits LP. Whilst doing this, he dropped the record out of the sleeve and it went rolling across the car park. I am now the proud owner of a Greatest Hits LP "designer dented" by Anthony Errol Butler !

Managed to smuggle my camera into tonight's show, but couldn't really get close enough to the stage. Watched Lies, Damned Lies" the support band and thought they were crap. Tonights show was, for me, one of the best and everybody in the venue seemed to be enjoying it too, as about 90% of them were bopping. Bought a 1990

Tour T-shirt, which features possibly one of the worst ever pictures of Bruce. Stopped overnight just outside Inverness, well away from any railway lines !

Saturday May 19

Did some shopping and had a couple of pints in Inverness before heading south. Went via Loch Ness and Fort William - the scenery was just amazing, anyone who's never been there should go, it's great. After a quick cable-car ride half way up Ben Nevis we carried on to Glencoe, which is arguably one of the most scenic places in Scotland. Had a kick-around with our football which is quite challenging on the side of a mountain. Watched Big C on "Cannon and Ball" on the TV in the van. Stopped overnight near Criannlarich. It felt a bit weird tonight, no concert to go to.

Sunday May 20

Another early morning fry-up and finally realised that neither of us could cook. Set off for Motherwell, met up with John McKinstry and Jeremy Carter (who? - Ed). Went to Barrowlands and helped the merchandise blokes carry in some stuff. Stuart arrived for the soundcheck in the merchandise van, apparently he wanted to watch some football on TV so he left it as late as he could. Managed to have a chat to both Stuart and Bruce inside the venue, while helping the guys from the merchandisers. Complimented Stuart on the gigs so far, but he thought he had played "shite" at Aberdeen, which surprised us as we thought it was one of the best.

Managed to get to the front tonight, but this meant having to suffer "Lies, Damned Lies" again. The atmosphere was building and when Big C came on the place went wild. The Glaswegians sure know how to show their appreciation for a great band. Tonight's gig was the hottest I've ever been to, people were being hauled out by the security every couple of minutes.

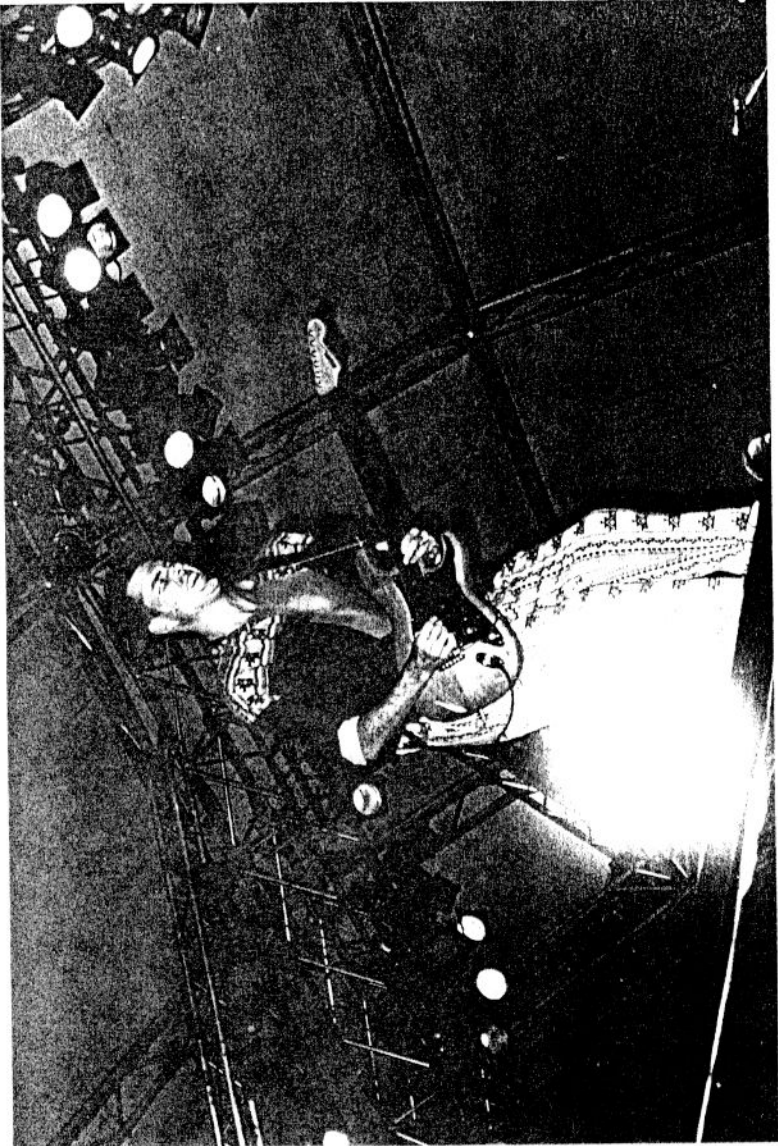
They eventually resorted to throwing bucketfuls of water over the crowd to try and cool everyone down. We all got absolutely drenched, but it was worth it as Big Country put on one hell of a show. After the first encore, Bruce came on stage wearing a pair of Pat's boxer shorts, black boots and nothing else. Very trendy ! Stuart peeled his soaking shirt off and introduced "River of Hope" Cue another almighty frenzy from the crowd, by this time my body had run out of sweat; my arms and face were bone dry. I think Elliott was almost glad to see the end of this gig as he nearly passed out near the end.

After the gig, went to the railway station to catch a train to Motherwell where we had left the van. Walked a mile in the wrong direction, thought "sod this" and paid £12.00 for a taxi. Back at the van we put the cooker on full blast to try and dry out a bit, little did we know that we would melt the light cover instead. A couple of vodka nightcaps and it was "Goodnight Motherwell"

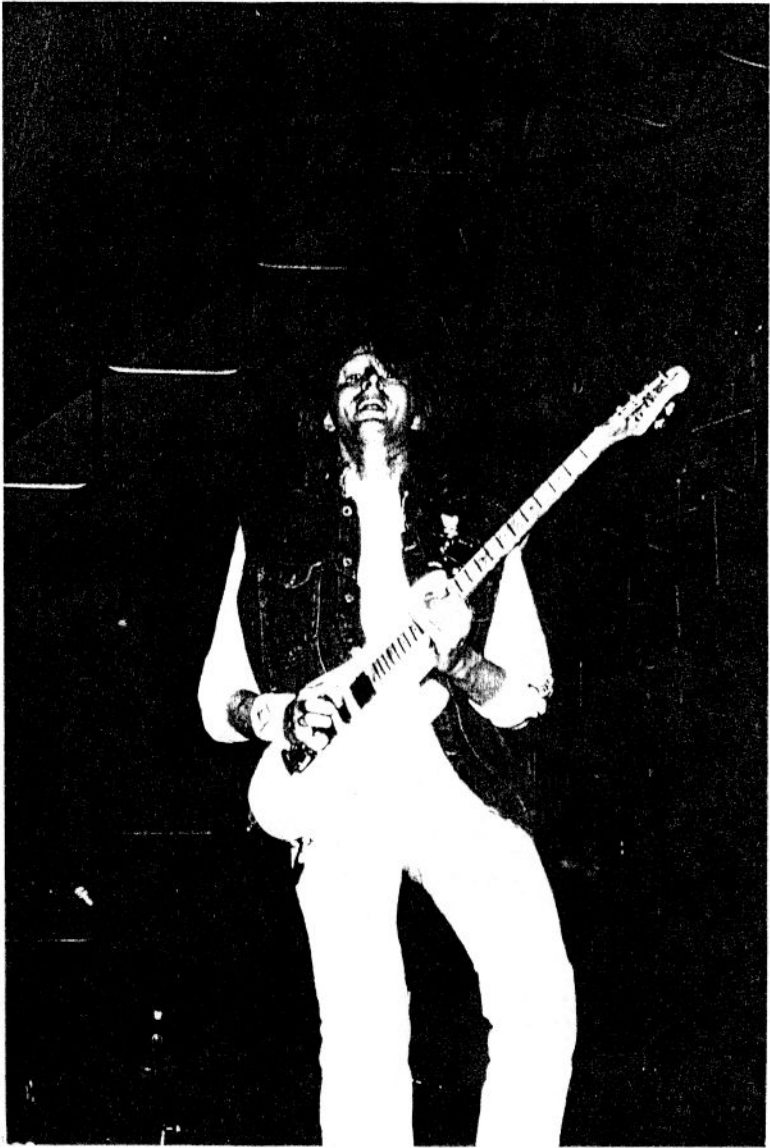
To be continued.....

The Travellers II ?

BIG COUNTRY are finding getting from A to B a chore lately since band member **BRUCE WATSON** was warned by his doc not to fly ever again because of a painful ear infection. The rest of the band loyally volunteered to stick with their mate and go everywhere on terra firma together, which has led to a few five-hour train journeys from Glasgow to London.



Stuart on stage - Thurles Festival 3/8/90
Photo "Kitt" Curry



Bruce "rocks out" - Thurles Festival 3/8/90
Photo "Kitt" Curry

THE NINE YEAR ITCH!

INSIDE THE confines of Glasgow's Park Lane Studios there's a ruck going on. Mike, back from a stint on the road as a renegade Jazzer, has just punched Henry out in the line hamfisted tradition of Australian soaps.

"Bloody typical!" moans newfoud Big Country sticksman Pat Ahern. "Put the guy on the road for a few days and he turns into a bloody delinquent and starts getting into the Rock 'n' Roll animal thing!"

Slumped down by the TV set watching the latest underwhelming escapade in the ongoing *Neighbours* saga, longstanding Big Country six stringer Bruce Watson merely grunts and then contemplates the joy of catching the Clash on *That Was Then, This Is Now* as well as copping a few words of wisdom from former Clash/current BAD man, Mick Jones.

Elsewhere, bass player Tony Butler reflects on how Big Country in general, and he in particular, has avoided the typical route that most Rock 'n' Roll bands take. There's no hint of zoo-like behaviour and gone are the days of Butler hanging around outside London recording studios waiting for a gig, or hanging out in pubs. The bass player now lives in a quiet Cornwall village with the equally taciturn Cure guitarist Port Thompson for a neighbour.

Similarly, BC mainman Stuart Adamson has turned his back on the whole star strip that normally would envelop a band of Big Country's stature and has returned to his Dunfermline roots in search of a genuine community spirit. It's allowed Big Country to reach quasi-anonymity as well as success.

Adamson confesses his total hatred for the type of small talk that 'the biz' engenders. You get the feeling that he'd rather let the music do the talking than indulge in any extraneous conversation concerning the rationale behind his band.

Still, while wasted words are not his style, Adamson recognises the need to make some concessions to playing the Rock game.

"When the first album, *The Crossing*, exploded the way it did, we really didn't expect it," begins Stuart, reflecting on the events of some seven years ago by way of explaining his weariness. "At that time a lot of people tried to push me into some type of figurehead for a generation. I've never liked that idea of 'I am the light! I'd already done that with The Skids and for six months we were truly meant to be Godlike. It's a situation where it's Show me the nearest puddle and I'll walk across it. It just tends to get in the way of the music and what you're trying to do as a songwriter. Because I don't want to do that, you do the opposite and become a nerd!" he quips with a grin.

"That's probably what I've become, but all I've ever wanted to do is write Folk songs and play them with loud guitars without a load of stuff getting in the way. I really admire people like hardcore Blues or Folk singers, people who are cult figures but who have that directness."



Big Country release a retrospective greatest hits collection 'Through A Big Country', they have a new single 'Save Me', a new tour scheduled and a new attitude. After nine years of melodious Pop Rock success, Stuart Adamson is finally coming to grips with what it's all about. And now he's explaining it all to PHIL ALEXANDER

Despite Adamson's refusal to assume a divine or egotistical role, he's far from introverted or elusive. He likes to talk, although he'd probably prefer to discuss the sporadic fortunes of Dunfermline FC than the sense of vision that has driven Big Country so ferociously for the last nine years. Nine years of classic, Celtic-flavoured Pop Rock that has certainly shaped the Scottish Rock scene, while also seeing the band take the hard knocks to the point where, as Adamson quips, they've recently been hailed as "a Status Quo for the '90s".

"The thing that really riddles me - and I'm sure that it's down to an insecurity on my part, which I probably wouldn't have if I was American - is that it really hurts my head when people think that what we've done was contrived. The idea of this trendy, ethnic, Scottish type of music," states Adamson, with a pained expression. "It's just the way I play

guitar and I've come to terms with that attitude from other people. But there was a stage where we almost became embarrassed by it. We reached a point where we thought 'People keep on saying it's a formula so it must be. Then I sat down after the last tour and I thought 'Shit! This is what we do and it's natural!' Because I grew up in a small village environment, where I was exposed to Rock and Folk music, I learnt to play guitar that way. That doesn't make it less valid than someone who grew up in Detroit listening to Funkadelic or James Brown. People expect you to apologise, but won't. If so happens that I'm a working class, white Scotsman, That's where I come from and that's what I play."

BACK IN THE TV lounge at Park Lane, Watson is still sprawled in front of the box, Ahern reclines on the sofa, while Butler looks on as Mick

Jones begins to talk about the general saferness of modern music, about the modern day dinosaur bands as part of The Clash TV retro. So have you ever felt like a fossil, Stuart? Like you've created something which has outgrown your control?

"Definitely, yeah," admits Adamson with a look of concern. "We get a lot of that, a lot of snidey asides. People say 'What relevance do Big Country have to the '90s?' and I just say that to understand that you have to come out and see us live. I don't think it's a bunch of empty Rock gestures. If I did think it was down to that I wouldnae do it because I'm no fan of seeing somebody onstage going through the motions."

"I saw David Bowie a couple of weeks ago at Ingleston and the songs were great. But I felt that he wasnae trying particularly hard. He wasnae trying to involve the crowd when live it's really the crowd's occasion. We're not a pale reflection of what we were eight years ago. I honestly think that I know what's exciting about Rock music because I'm still excited by it myself."

"Which brings us to Big Country's current live escapades which, at the time of going to press, will have just got underway."

"The gigs mark an end of something," states Stuart. "I think they're going to be imbued with a touch of overt sentimentality. That'll be good because it'll definitely be the last time we play some of

those songs live. This isn't the same Big Country and we want to put some of that past to rest."

Big Country's past, however, is presented in glorious Celtic Technicolor on the just released 'Through A Big Country' platter. A line collection that perhaps marks the end of Chapter One in the Big Country story?

"Hmmm. That's a bit corny isn't?" winces Stuart. "I'm glad I didn't say that, but I suppose it is. I think we went through a phase after we played Moscow (in August and October '88) where we were constantly in the media glare and there was an inherent nervousness in the band. We had to decide whether to stop or to go for it. That's when Mark (Brzezicki - now in Fish's band) decided to leave. He still wanted to be involved on a session basis but I dinnae want that."

"To be honest you can't replace somebody like that. There's seven years of memories, but with Pal in the band now there's such a positive feeling. It's a question of saying 'Bollocks!' to everyone and being the type of band we want to be. It's ridiculous to say this at 32 years old, but I've just begun to reconcile myself with what we do."

The new material, recently demoed at Park Lane with Kenny MacDonald (Gun, Slide) at the helm, along with acoustic versions of 'Broken Heart (Thirteen Valleys)' and 'Peace In Our Time' for future use as future 'B' sides, according to Adam-

son, will have "a harder edge and a freer attitude", following on from the current 'Save Me' single which was produced by Tim Palmer (Tim Machine, The Mission and a longstanding Skids fan).

"Save Me" actually just came from a load of jamming. It's a lot more Bluesy than anything I've come up with before and I wanted to make it a quasi-spiritual song. Working with Tim Palmer on that was really enjoyable after general dissatisfaction that we felt working with Peter Wolf on the last album, 'Peace In Our Time'. We'd like Tim to work with us on the next album if he's got the time, cos he really contributes a lot to things and hopefully we'll get round to recording straight after this tour around June."

AS THE conversation winds down, Adamson prepares himself for the next day's arduous journey to the bright lights and cameras of old London town for an early morning video shoot for the current single 'Save Me', already included on the greatest hits package. "I'm not very good at videos," moans Stuart as the band prepare to clamber into a car that'll take the quartet to Glasgow station. As the foursome make their exit, two little kids standing by the studio door endure whether there's a band in the studio, unaware that they've just walked past them. Somehow it seems to sum up Big Country's self-effacing appeal.



COMPETITION
 "Through A Big Country" is choctful of every BC classic you care to hum. We've got ten copies of the album to give away, one of which could be yours if you can answer the following question.
 Which band was Stuart Adamson in before forming Big Country?
 Answers on a postcard to: RAW Country Club, 52-55 Carnaby Street, London W1V 1PF.

BIG COUNTRY
 (L-R):
 Tony Butler,
 Bruce Watson,
 Stuart Adamson
 (second),
 Pat Ahern

Feile '90 or "The trip to Tipp"
by "Kitt" Curry

Over here in Ireland we probably see leprechauns more times than we see Big Country. Stuart take note ! So finally the 19 or so months of waiting paid off. Big Country were added to the line up of bands appearing at Feile '90 in Thurles, Co Tipperary. For me it was like going to see Haley's Comet, so this event was not to be missed.

Well, after a month of waiting and bribing people to make the "trip to Tipp" with me, four of us set off the 90 or so miles. They say it's a long way to Tipperary, that's an understatement especially when it's a hot, sticky day and your brother has confiscated all the Big Country tapes you had planned to blast out of the car stereo on the way down. Anyway, several buckets of sweat and a few sharp words later, Thurles was hit by four VERY dehydrated people, so it was instinct to head for the nearest pub. After that (which was nice) a few of us found our way to the stadium. On the line up were The Amazing Colossal Men, No Sweat, Big "Fab" Country and Meat Loaf, in that order. Unfortunately we missed the first act, but judging by the reaction of the crowd, they went down well. No Sweat (they are sort of demi-Gods over here) went down a treat, but I missed a lot of their set due to the fact that I was in a 6 mile queue for the Ladies. (Shouldn't have spent so much time in the pub then, should we - Ed). I was praying I would get back before Big Country came on and I did.

Eventually the interval music stopped and the crowd started shouting out for Big Country. A huge cheer went up as Bruce appeared on stage playing the opening riffs to the brilliant "Restless Natives", soon to be followed by Pat, Tony and Stuart. The band played for about an hour, belting out all the favourites including "Look Away" "13 Valleys" and "Fields of Fire", which came early in the set. I think it was

during this song that the band were overcome by the chant of the Irish World Cup song, which goes "Ole, Ole, Ole etc..." Stuart soon picked it up on his guitar, much to the delight of the crowd. as this song is like the National Anthem here at the moment, staying at No 1 in the Irish charts for the past 12 weeks ! During "Chance" Stuart did his usual introductions and called Pat "Paddy" which went down well. and as the "Oh Lords" went out, 20,000 fists went into the air. I'm sure if there had been a roof on the stadium it would have been lifted off ! This was the bands first ever visit Thurles and boy were they going down a treat.

After running through an impeccable set the band finished up with my all time favourite "Lost Patrol". This song is just amazing live and delivers some bloody brilliant guitar work from both Stuart and Bruce, as did "The Seer" and "Wonderland". The whole gig was nothing short of perfect and the band put everything into it. I would have liked to shake Stuart's hand during "In a Big Country" just to say "bloody brilliant", because that's what it was.

Unfortunately the band did not re-appear after "Lost Patrol" but left the crowd singing for a good while after.

Meat Loaf was next, but for me and a few thousand others, we had seen the passing of "Haley's Comet" once more and are now awaiting its return. Don't leave it so long next time lads.

It would take me a month to say something about the other bands on the 3 day bill, but I won't as I didn't see half of them. (In the pub again, were we - Ed). All I will say is that I learned 3 things that weekend. Firstly, it is very wise to put up a tent before you go to the pub. Secondly, check out your neighbours in advance as you could end up camping beside 40 Hari Krishna's like we did. Oh, and thirdly, Big Country are fab !

Manchester International II
by "The man with grey eyes"

After meeting "The Travellers" (see elsewhere this issue) at the hotel, yours truly and WSNS Ed decided it would be in order to sample some local ale at 70 odd pence a pint. After being beaten at pool by "The Travellers" we all duly arrived at the International II and met up with Dominic Williams and Steve Hignett. We chatted and drank shorts selling at the usual club-style rip-off prices, whilst keeping one ear on the support the superbly named "Playing at Trains".

The atmosphere was akin to my first experience of the Barrowlands gig in May this year. It was all one could do to avoid being crushed and this was before the gig and the real moshing had started ! This was without doubt the smallest place I have ever seen Big Country. "Thousand Yard swing".... not in here, mate !

Opener "Restless Natives", probably one of their best ever songs, sets the pace and heat, for it is mighty hot in here. The only fault with "Restless" is the lack of keyboards. It's no use the traditionalists moaning about synths being "shite", just blag the Hammy Odeon 1989 BBC Transcription Disc, although I agree some songs were spoiled by Josh (remember him ?)

The pace is relentless as ever and the band effectively have the gig in the can after 4 songs, "Mosh Away", "Fields of Fire" etc... Other highlights are "The Seer" as usual, "Lost Control" (Lost Patrol) which the band leave the stage to, after the first encore to the house singing the refrain (WSNS theme tune, as it were). Newie "Heart of the World", unfortunately devoid of the Rebel MC Butler and Stuart Adamski's tongue in cheek rapping...who says the band have no sense of humour.

A blistering "Porridgeman" is also worth a mention, with crash heavy drums..."give us iron, give us rope"...more metal than Maiden ! Low spot is definately a shagged out "Chance", but no "Save Me" or "I Walk the Hill" unfortunately. Last song in the set, Neil Young's rousing "Rockin' in the Free World" goes down like a Big Country classic.

Phew !! What a gig. Like Adamski said, "I'm knackered !"

Postscript: "Time for Leaving"

On Sunday afternoon the chink of "The Seer" on Douglas' car stereo is interrupted by the clang of the exhaust falling off "In this Place" (well actually it was Huddersfield).

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TOP TIPS

DON'T waste money buying 'Big Country's Greatest Hits' album. Simply buy one of their 7" singles and play it over and over again.

Paul Goss
Basildon

SAVE money. Instead of buying a Big Country single, simply listen to the theme tune from 'Z Cars'.

P. Goss,
Basildon

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BITS 'N' PIECES

Wants/Swaps

Dominic Williams wonders if anyone has a spare ticket stub from the International II gig on 4th August. He managed to get his ticket autographed but then proceeded to lose it. His address is printed at the end of the discography, elsewhere in this issue.

Douglas would very much like to get hold of a tape of Robert Plant's excellent performance at Knebworth, as broadcast on Radio 1 on 30th June. Anyone who can help, please get in touch.

I have spoken to Channel 4 about the recording of the Dunfermline gig on 1st May. Unfortunately they have no plans to show the gig, either as a repeat of the "Rock Steady" programme, or in greater length. What I would like as many fans as possible to do, is to write to Channel 4, asking them to show the gig on TV, but send the letters to me and I will forward them all to Channel 4 with a covering letter. That way, we might stand a chance (excuse the pun) of seeing the whole gig, and speaking as someone who was there, it was a monster gig.

Better news however about the show at the Town & Country Club on 10th August, filmed by BSB. This has been provisionally scheduled to be shown on Monday 12 November, so watch out for this in the satellite TV pages of your papers.

Whilst talking to Pat after the show in Doncaster he told us that Mark had expressed regrets about leaving Big Country and probably wished he had not done so. He would re-join, but the others wouldn't have him back.

Anyone have problems with refunds from the Town & Country Club for the rescheduled show on 10th August ? Tina Clarke from Windlesham in Surrey did. Country Club informed everyone that tickets for the original Alexandra Palace show must be exchanged before the 4th August, though the box office at the T & C said that a refund would be given at the door. On the day, however, the box office refused to give a refund before entry and after waiting for two hours to be at the front of the queue, she was told that if she wanted a refund, she would have to go to the ticket sales queue, which was already very lengthy. Rather than miss the chance to be at the front of the crowd, she decided to forfeit the refund, but as she says..."I would have paid double my ticket price...another excellent evening" Quite why the box office couldn't have given a refund before the doors open is beyond me.

Channel 4's Teletext service, 10 July, page 543
"Heart of the World", reviewed by Jon Homer.
"Brand new song from Stuart and the boys and another slice of anthemic guitar rock that manages to be as powerful as the loudest heavy metal band, but several times more effective and intelligent. A minor hit perhaps."
(Very minor - Ed)

A rumour that has crossed my path recently was that Neil Tennant (Pet Shop Boys) used to be a roadie for Big Country in the very early days. Anyone shed any light on this ?

Whilst listening to an interview that Stuart did in December 1984, he mentions giving a song to Jimmy Iovine for a film called "Streets of Fire". Does anyone know anything about this film and whether a Big Country track (and if so, which one) was ever used.

The acoustic version of "Save Me" performed by Stuart & Bruce on the James Whale TV show in May this year, was in my humble opinion, bloody fabulous. With all the acoustic versions of Big Country songs now in existence, what price an album of acoustic stuff "for fans only" - how about it, Country Club !

A number of readers have written in regarding the use of keyboards, especially for live work. Opinion seems to be that some songs, "The Seer", "Peace in our Time" are enhanced by the inclusion of keyboards, while others, like "Wonderland" are spoilt. According to Bruce, the experiment with keyboards for live work was not a success and towards the end of Josh's brief stint with the band, the keyboards were turned down almost to nothing in the PA.

Anyone notice Pat backing Taylor Dayne on Top of the Pops recently. He was also spotted in the house band used in the opening ceremony of the Special Olympics in Glasgow on 22 July.

Ray Robson has suggested that Stuart should get part in Neighbours or Coronation Street to try and improve the public profile of the band. Mind you, this is the man who, while taking a photo of Stuart at Doncaster, was heard to say "...smile, pretend you've just had a hit !"

Enquiries about the second address for Country Club in Leamington Spa have proved fruitless. Apart from postcards advertising the "Heart" single, no-one seems to have had much in the way of correspondence. Seems a bit of a waste of time (and money).

On the subject of Country Club, am I the only one to think that some of the merchandise they offer is a bit overpriced ? Also, information on the groups activities only seems to be issued if you write to them requesting something, instead of being distributed to all members on a regular basis. Otherwise, what's the point in having a fan club.

In Issue 5 Dave Gardner from Andover asked about the Big Country sponsored motor bike racing team and whether it was still going. I asked Stuart about this and he told me that he withdrew his sponsorship as "...the only time they got in touch was when they wanted more money...!

After the bands appearance on ITV kids programme "Ghost Train", I am happy to report there is no truth in the rumour that Nobby the Sheep is to become Big Country's official mascot !

Back to BSB again. Big Country's performance at the Princes Trust concert in July was shown on 22 September and repeated the following day. They were introduced as "one of Britain's finest rock'n'roll bands" (?) and played 3 songs, "The Seer", "King of Emotion" and "Heart of the World" I wasn't at the show, but the impression I got from watching a video of the event was that there was no atmosphere in the arena and this seemed to affect the bands performance. My attention was also caught by Stuart's haircut which made him look like Morrissey from some angles. With such pop luminaries as Roachford, The Chimes and Lisa Stansfield for company, I wonder if Big Country really did themselves any favours by appearing on this bill, even though it was all for charity.

Anyone fancy a Russian penpal ? I have recently received a letter from Alexander Ivakov, a Russian Big Country fan who would like to write to anyone from the UK. He is 26 years old and married with 2 children. He works as a fencing coach and loves writing to people. He wants to learn more about the UK and he can be contacted at Gagarin Prospect 2028, Joshkar-Ola, MARI ASSR, USSR

Stuart was originally pencilled in to appear in the "Celebrity Splash" charity event, broadcast live by Radio 1 on 12 August. When I asked him about this the week before, he said that he had no intention of appearing and joked about sending Pat along instead.

Most of you will know of Stuart's love of footy and Dunfermline Athletic in particular, who he has followed since he was a child. I believe that a couple of years ago he was offered a position on the board of directors. He turned it down however, as he felt he could not give the job the time he felt it deserved. Well, recently he has become involved in a campaign by fans of the club to get ex-manager Jim Leishman re-instated after he was axed for no apparent reason, after serving the club for many years. Stuart handed a 4000 name petition to the club calling for Leishman's re-instatement and he has been quoted in the sports press. When was the last time you saw your favourite pop star on the back page of your daily paper !

Can anybody supply me with a copy of the article about Pat in the July edition of "Rhythm" magazine. I am also after a piece about Bruce in a magazine called, I think, "Vox"

The long awaited "River of Hope" documentary has finally made an appearance - but there is a snag. It is only available on CDV (Compact Disc Video) which seems a really sensible move on the part of the record company ! It is split into 2 parts, the first being the Moscow concert currently available on video (and recently spotted selling for £5.99). The second part is a "fly on the wall" documentary of the Russian trip, including scenes from the Soviet Embassy bash and backstage scenes of the Moscow gig. If anyone out there fancies a copy, it will set you back about £20. The catalogue number is 080 592-1.

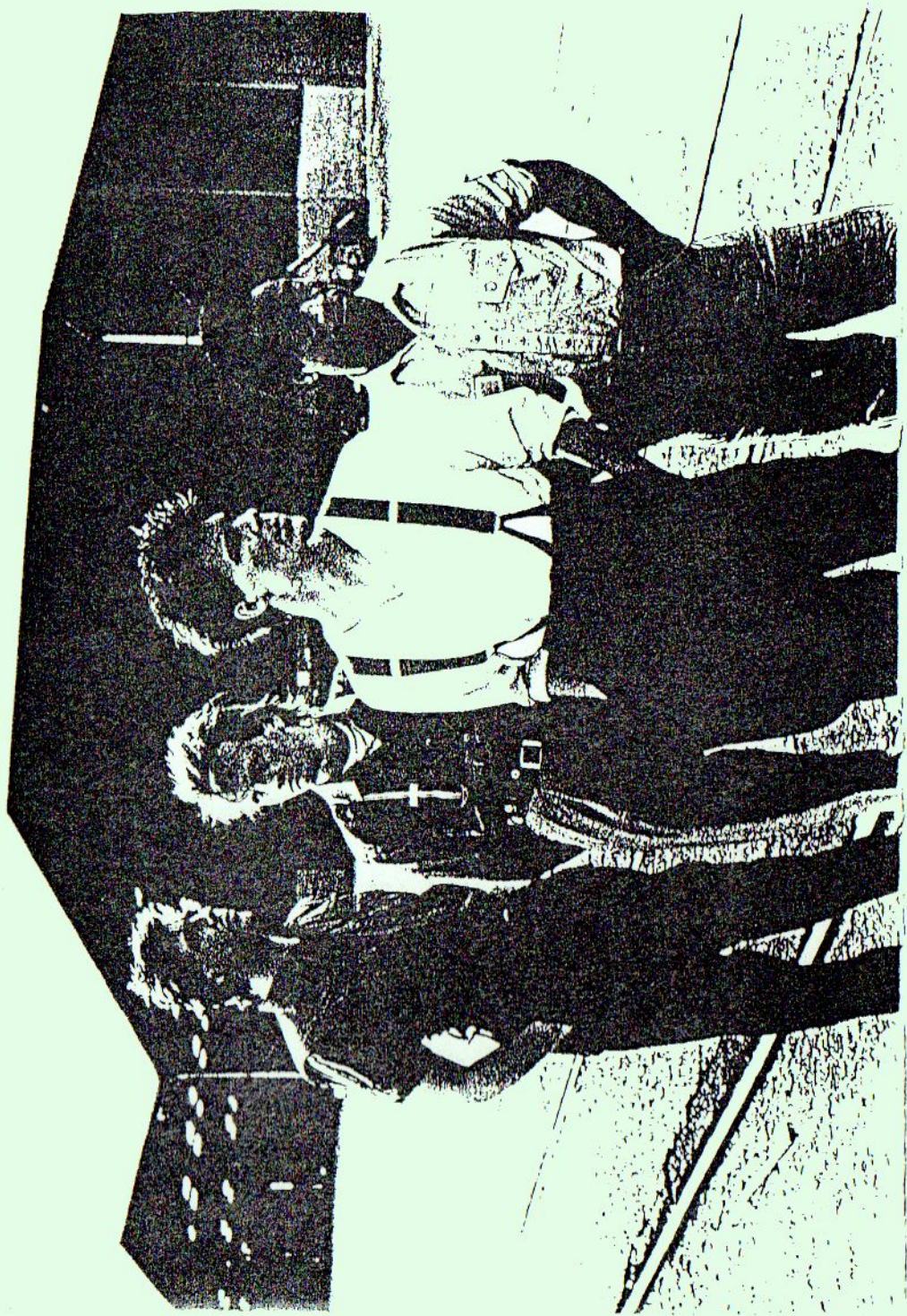
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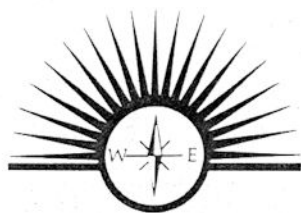
A 5 issue subscription is available for only £6.00 and I will guarantee that, in the event of price increase, there will be no increase to existing subscribers until their next renewal. A lot of people's subscriptions expire with Issue 8, due in January 1991, but again, I guarantee there will be no price increase until then and existing subscribers will be invited to renew at the old rate.

I still have a few copies left of Issues 3,4 and 5, but Issues 1 & 2 are sold out. I will be arranging a re-print of those issues in the not too distant future and everyone who wants one should send the appropriate money to me. All back issues are available at the reduced price of £1.00 (inc postage).

Without whom etc...

I would like to thank the following people for help and inspiration in putting this thing together. They are, in no particular order, Dominic Williams, Phil Read, Ray Robson, Neil Rutherford, John McKinstry, "Kitt" Curry and anyone else that I've forgotten (and there's bound to be at least one !)





BIG COUNTRY



WE SAVE NO SOULS! *The Big Country Fanzine*

The original idea for this fanzine came from Jeremy Carter who put together Issue 1 in May 1989. Dissatisfaction with the official fan club, "Country Club" was the main reason and to give a platform of communication for fans of Big Country all over the UK and beyond. After Issue 1, Jeremy asked Douglas Johnson to help with the compiling and editing and Issue 2 was published in July 1989. Further issues have followed at regular intervals and the fanzine is now published on a quarterly basis. Stuart Adamson and Bruce Watson have seen copies of the fanzine and Stuart has spoken to Douglas about it on several occasions. It was originally hoped that we might be involved in the revitalised "Country Club" but this has turned out not to be the case.

I want people to contribute to the fanzine, to say what they like or dislike about it, or Big Country, reviews of gigs, amusing stories, absolutely anything related to Big Country. The more I receive, the better I can make the fanzine. The whole idea of a fanzine is that it is written by fans, for fans.

The fanzine costs £1.20 (inc postage) and is available from;

Douglas Johnson