



Once again we've teamed up with our friends at Wave 105, to bring you the best celebrity interviews. Steve Power's recent guest was none other than Chris Difford. Here and only here is the entire interview for you to enjoy. AND don't forget you can catch Steve every Saturday until 1pm.



Chris Difford

This is Wave 105, the South's best variety of hits. Saturday morning, thank you for choosing us. It's a warm welcome to Wave 105, not for the first time. A welcome return Chris Difford! Hi Chris, good morning. Good morning.

Are you a good morning person or are you a nocturnal beast?
Saturday morning, I used to have a job washing cars on Saturday morning so ever since I was 18 I've been sleeping in to get over it all.

Really, a kind of rebellion against all those valleys.
No, Saturday morning's got a strict timetable for me. I get up and go down to the bakers in Rye; I live on the south coast, get the bread and cheese and pasties and all that sort of thing and come back for lunch.

What made you choose Rye?
Well I've been living in London for 28 years in the same street and I

Francis Dunnery came along and suggested that I worked on a solo album which is something I'd been very reluctant to do. But I went into the studio, checked out a few ideas with him and the album started taking shape

decided that for my children's sake it would be amazing if they could have half the time in London and half the time in the country. Of course it didn't work out quite like that, but, so I moved down there and decided that the country was for me.

Now you've been out on the road. You're out on the road quite a lot really aren't you, playing gigs. You've kind of reverted to being a musician, is it fair to say?

Yeah I was off the road for three years and I went into management. I was working, or I am working with Marti Pellow and various other bods, and then last year Francis Dunnery came along and suggested that I worked on a solo album which is something I'd been very reluctant to do. But I went into the studio, checked out a few ideas with him and the album started taking shape, but it was a bit of a hobby really - we'd sort of do it over the weekends and on a Friday night when we had time.

What was the reluctance to do something solo, was it being used to safety in numbers and partnerships or did you just not really fancy being the lone crusader?

To be honest with you I just did not have the time. I mean, when you're managing somebody or you've got your focus on somebody else's career, you know, you have to sort of let your career go for a bit. I mean I learnt a lot in those two years, but I've learnt even more in the last year doing my own stuff, you know. It's given me an insight into me and to why I left Squeeze and into my future which is a pretty good place to be.

So, because to an outsider, the situation with Squeeze, you'd have thought "why would somebody want to ..." you know Squeeze, everyone loves Squeeze. You're kind of one of those great British institutions whether you like it or not, that everyone has fond memories of, everyone loves the songs - "oh, squeeze, they're great". You know, would it not have been easy just to carry on through?

Yeah, I mean some bands are very good at that, Status Quo being one of them, but particularly Glenn was always very desperate for a challenge, you know - a new album, new songs, going on tour, and really going round and round in a circle ... like a mad dog in fact. For me I kind of got bored with that circle that we were playing, but I loved the people. I loved Glenn and I still do, and the whole network of Squeeze was a great thing. But for me I had to step outside it to realise what its' strengths and weaknesses were. And that's often what you have to do when you're on a merry-go-round, you have to get off to observe the artwork, the paintings on the side of the thing and how the thing's been built.

Is that the real fun in music, being able to go back and just strum a guitar with a few mates?

Yeah, its something that I forgot how good it was. I mean we used to do radio tours in America and you'd be on the road for three or four weeks, you'd be flying hundreds of thousands of miles every week and doing about ten radio shows a day and TV and everything. And in the end you get very jaded by it all and you think "oh my god, not another bloody radio sta-

tion", but you know, if you're with the right people and you've got the right team it's absolutely great, you know. I mean, it's a Saturday morning, what else would I be doing instead of getting the bread and pasties?

You're very unassuming aren't you, I've never seen you fallen drunk outside nightclubs on the front pages of the Sun. I'm not saying you don't do it, but at least you obviously hide it very well. Are you that unassuming? Does it all just kind of wash off you a bit?

I've had my fair share of falling out of clubs, being thrown out of clubs, even on my own birthday party at Madison Square Gardens I got thrown out. It was the most embarrassing night. The bouncers came and threw me out and I said "you don't understand, it's my bloody birthday, I've just played Madison Square Garden". They lobbed me in the back of a limo and sent me home and everybody had a great time, which is probably just the right thing isn't it. So I've had my fair share of that but I don't participate in that kind of character any more, you know, that's for other people, for younger types.

Well I was going to say, is it an age thing, is it a maturity thing or is it just the fact that it actually gets a bit boring after a while?

No I know people of my age who still behave as if they're 16, you know and I think there's some good things to be said about that, but for me I'd outlived the character that I was, you know. When I left school at 15, 16 years old and I went into a band, my image of being in a band was taking drugs, drinking, touring around the world, having flash cars and going round in private jets, and we achieved most of those goals. But the character that I sort of fell into, you know, a sort of dark crusader if you like, over the years took its toll. It wore me out, you know, and in the end I had to fight with it to get it off my back.

Right, Squeeze days - well documented and looking on the websites, the various websites and internet interest in Squeeze still. The interest from the fans is still, well fanatical obviously, but intense, very intense isn't it? People will tear apart your lyrics to decide what they really

mean, and what's your favourite Squeeze .. it's a real obvious way of life for some people still isn't it. Is that a lovely feeling to have or can that sometimes be an albatross where you think "crikey, I don't really want to mean that much to be honest"?

No, I have my own website now which is obviously www.chrisdifford.com and whenever anybody writes to me I always write personally back to them because I think it's good to take the time. The squeeze websites are all very good, they're all really well maintained and I respect all the people that go onto it and take the time to love a band that was as good as Squeeze.

I'm sure you've been asked this before but if you had to track it down, I won't say "what's your favourite track" but in the top three, which are the ones? Do you judge it purely on musical merits or do you judge it on memories that go with it and where you were at a certain time?

Both really. Emotionally I think that "Some Fantastic Place" was probably the best moment of our career, which is a song Glenn and I wrote about our very good friend Maxine Barker who really brought us two together when we were kids. She died of fighting cancer and we sat down and wrote this song for her and that's the proudest thing.

I mean I remember in Squeeze, you know, we would always get the call to make the next album and then you'd rush in. I mean, there's good and bad in this, but you'd go in and write maybe 15-20 songs in a month and you go in and record them in three weeks, then you're out on the road again

Any others that are up there with that in terms of just, maybe on a positive, you know, a happy-go-lucky note?

Well I mean I look back affectionately, as you do a pussy cat or a dog on songs like "Cool For Cats", "Up The Junction", "Pulling Mussels (From The Shell)". I mean they're all friendly cats you know. "Labelled With Love" is a fantastic song. If it wasn't for Elvis Costello that side of us would have never come out, I mean, he found that in a pile of demos that we were never going to use and he said "This is a great song". And he picked out "Tempted" too which Paul Carrack obviously sang and that was something else that we'd never really thought about doing. In fact we did do a version of it but it



sounded like ELO, cellos all over it and stuff. It was pretty random.

Tell us about the album, I mean what have we got on there?

Well there's songs really that are very autobiographical. Francis and I looked through the whole compilation of demos that I had and we picked the songs that we felt were relevant to me where I was at this particular time and some of them were written quite a while ago actually. I mean the original "Electric Trains" was written 9 years ago. "Cowboys Are My Weakness" was written 9 years ago. So we didn't kind of rush to write anything new because you have to, you know, we just chose what was right.

I was going to say, the pressure hasn't been on to do it really, as you say, for ages. You shied away from doing the solo work so it's almost been a part time project hasn't it really?

It's been very much that and I think it's the right way to go. I mean I remember in Squeeze, you know, we would always get the call to make the next album and then you'd rush in. I mean, there's good and bad in this, but you'd go in and

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write maybe 15-20 songs in a month and you go in and record them in three weeks, then you're out on the road again. There's something to be said about the spontaneity of that but there's also something to be said for just sort of taking your time, understanding what records should be about for a man of my age.

Hark at him "a man of my age"! So you've got the farm, you've got the recording studio, you've done the musical, you've been in Squeeze, you're doing the solo work. Is there anything left unchallenged? I mean you talked about Glenn being a man of challenges, you must have that pride inside you to have done what you've done.

Yeah, I'm three quarters of the way through my book which'll be ... I don't think it'll come out next year, probably the year after that. And then I'm working on a musical with a guy called Mike Davis who wrote the script for "Taboo" which is the Boy George musical and we're working on a few ideas. So those are my two, I'd love to be able to financially be able to take the time off to work on the musical because I think that's probably the best bet.

Oh lets get down to the nitty gritty then, I



mean Squeeze sold a few albums. You say "take the time off financially". Is there still an element that says "yeah I need to work today actually, I need to get some cash through the door"?

Every day. Yeah, I mean I had a lot ...

far and wide, I mean I like Rogers & Hammerstein and I like the songs from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, but I also like Paddy Macaloon from Prefab Sprout. It's quite a broad church really.

What do you get attracted to most - a melody or ... Women!

Yeah, apart from that, it's a good start.

No I mean I'm serious, all the CDs in my car CD tray, I was listening to them the other day, I was thinking "There's no guys in there, it's all women" - Beth Neilson, Chapman, Shaun Colvin, Joni Mitchell. It's kind of strange but I love the female voice. I don't hear too many good ... I like David Gray, I think he's great but on the whole you can't beat a James Taylor or a Joni Mitchell.

All right, Chris it's been a pleasure having you in again. Good luck with the album "I didn't get where I am", out now?
Yes.

In all good record shops and a few dodgy ones round the back as well!
And on the internet.

And on the internet as well.
If you can trust it!

And the website as well?
Yes it's up there.

Chris Difford...
dot com.

Best way to find it. Chris, thanks for coming in. Thank you

date so there you go, I'm pleased with him.

Excellent, well worth it then, god an accountant who's worth his money!
Yeah I know!

You must introduce me to him! Finally, songwriting partnerships. You're not going to speak up for yourself so I will, you know. Lennon, McCartney - people put you and Glenn in that bracket, whether you like it or not and there are people who revere you to that extent and rightly so. Do you think of yourselves as good songwriters, and also who do you think of as a decent songwriter? When do you hear a good song?

Well, Difford and Tillbrook - great songwriting team, fantastic moments, some great albums. I look back very affectionately on the things that we did, you know we had a very unique partnership that lasted 26 years. Songwriters that I like are