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ELTON

HERCULES

THE MAG

inside this issue:

News of Elton's
health scare

The split with
John Reid

Review: Solo Tour

Exclusive
interview with
Charlie Morgan

Announcing:
First Ever
Worldwide
Convention



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Elton at Halle
(Photo: Jimmie Collins)

Watford's new strip - with thanks to Peter Cook & Watford FC web site



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FROM THE EDITOR...

The big news this season has been Elton's health scare and heart operation - he certainly had us all worried for a while! But the good news is that he is well on the way to a full recovery, and has already returned to work, performing a private concert in Florida just weeks after the surgery. Elton also plans to record a new studio album this year, for release in the Spring. See our news pages for more information about the pacemaker operation.

Hercules organised a "Get well soon book" on behalf of fans - and we received many letters, cards and presents from you for Elton. All of your get well wishes were forwarded to EJ via his office.

There are many benefits of belonging to Hercules - and one of them is the regular meetings and conventions which we organise. These can vary from just a few like-minded people having a chat over a drink - to much larger conventions with competitions and raffles etc. Some UK members decided to carry on with their gathering at a venue close to Leeds Castle, although Elton's concert planned for that evening had been cancelled just two days earlier due to his illness. You can read details of this get-together, along with others on pages 18 and 19. Also in this issue we announce our plans for our first ever international fan convention.

We realise that the majority of people who read **The Mag** do not have access to the Internet, and it can be a bit frustrating to keep reading about our Web site for those who have not yet seen it. However, as it is part of the service which Hercules provides, we feel that it is important that you are made aware that the Web

site exists. The quarterly fanzine is a great way to catch up on Elton's recent news stories, collector's articles, and to read about fellow EJ fans experiences over the years, but if you need more immediate information, please read page 23 for more details.

We are delighted to announce new, better, discounts for Hercules members on Elton merchandise from Wrap It Up! From August 1, 1999, fans can enjoy a universal 10% discount on orders they place - just quote "Hercules Universe" when ordering from Alan.

Thanks for all your letters and opinions about the new-look fanzine - it appears you really like it! You can read some of the comments I received on page 26. For the next issue - I would like to hear from you about a certain topic; over the years I know lots of you have seen Elton in concert many times. I would like to hear about your thoughts on Elton's performances during his well-documented and self-confessed years of drug abuse.

Do you think the drugs affected his performances and have his concerts improved since he recovered from his addictions? I, for one, remember coming out of a few shows in the late '80s wondering whether he had deliberately sung a certain verse twice.....! I'll print some of the replies in the next issue - I look forward to hearing from you. The address to write to is on page 2.

And finally, we have two new members of the Hercules team, to offer you an even better service! For French-speaking fans, we have Francoise Linden-Gilles, and Urpu Kallio, who lives in Finland, has become the Nordic representative.

Tanni



(photos: C Hochmuth, June 1999)

NEWS BULLETS...

Full details of the following news items have appeared on our Hotline and Web-site

DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART...

News of Elton's illness spread fast, and within 24 hours of having an operation to install a pacemaker on July 9th, we were pleased to see EJ walking out of hospital, and laughing and joking with the waiting press reporters the following morning.

The hour long procedure was, by all appearances, a success. "I feel very well," Elton told reporters awaiting him in front of London's Wellington Hospital. "I'm a bit stiff, a bit sore, but everything went really well. It came as a bit of a shock, but the operation was a simple procedure, the only thing I really regret is cancelling my shows." (referring to the open-air UK shows, which were subsequently re-scheduled for the beginning of September)

What was first thought to be the result of heat stroke, then an ear infection, finally was diagnosed as an irregular heartbeat. "Literally, I was on the plane to David and Victoria's wedding, but I was ill and had to have some tests," Elton said. "But I was given the all-clear so went back to France, with medication for an ear-infection."

"Then I was playing tennis in the afternoon when David (Furnish) suddenly rushed down to the court and said 'You have to stop playing, your doctor's been on the phone - there's a problem with your heart'..... so I immediately flew back to hospital in London."

An official statement from Elton said the only downside of wearing a pacemaker "is that I have to carry a card explaining why I set off the alarms when I walk through airport security. I will resume a normal lifestyle after a couple of months rest. Life will get back to normal."

Elton promised to reschedule

every postponed show. "My doctors have ordered me to rest for the rest of the month and I will not therefore be able to play at any of the concerts planned this month", Elton explained.

On behalf of all his fans Hercules wishes Elton a full and speedy recovery!

John Barrett, the charge nurse managing the cardiac floor of Wellington Hospital in north London, said Sir Elton was fine and there were no problems with the operation. "I would expect no complications. The procedure is very simple and less than 1% of patients get a complication."

Sir Elton: "Thank God for the British medical system"

The BBC's Lisa Holland: "He is now well on the way to recovery. Sir Elton has been given strict orders not to make any sudden movements to ensure that the wires attached to his heart become properly embedded. He will be unable to play tennis or play the piano for at least two weeks, because he must not lift his left arm above

his shoulder. Doctors have given him a two-month convalescence period in total."

Mr Barrett said Sir Elton must rest to allow the wires attached to the pacemaker to become embedded inside his heart. General movements, even those as simple as brushing your hair (!!) could dislodge the wires, he added. An incision would have been made in the left side of the chest before wires were inserted into the heart. The wires are then attached to the battery-operated pacemaker.

Sir Elton described the operation in which his pacemaker was fitted: "It was a 2-hour operation, but I was conscious for the last 25 minutes.... but I was in no pain whatsoever. I could chat to the surgeons as they finished."

The life expectancy of a pacemaker is between eight and 10 years.

See page 25 for more information on Elton's pacemaker



Elton waves to fans as he leaves hospital

NEWS BULLETS...

These news items have appeared on our Hotline and Web-site

ELTON BACK ON STAGE!

Elton gave his first performance since he was fitted with a heart pacemaker last month. According to spokesman Simon Prytherch, Elton gave a private concert in Orlando, Florida, on August 14, 1999. "He played a full solo set for 3,500 people. The concert went brilliantly," Prytherch said, quoting EJ as saying: "It's been a while since I played. I'm a little rusty, but I hope you like it."

NEW ALBUM

According to unconfirmed sources, Elton and the band will be back in the studio later in 1999 to record a new studio album expected to be released in spring 2000. Elton will take a one year break from touring - except for the five postponed UK solo shows late August/early September. Be prepared to see him back on the road with the band in June/July 2000.

SHOWS POSTPONED

Elton's solo shows in Linz, Austria (June 27) and in Prague, Czech Republic (June 30) were postponed to year 2000. The latter, because of rumours of poor ticket sales, was rescheduled to June 18, 2000. Also postponed (for health reasons) were Brescia, Trieste, Graz, Madrid and UK.

CANDLE IN THE WIND

RE-INTRODUCED

Elton finished the second leg of his US Solo Tour 1999 at the Providence Civic Center June 19. He experiments on the set list every other show. Elton's reported rehearsing Amazes Me, Come Down In Time and Believe. Surprisingly, Elton replaces The Last Song with Candle In The Wind at University

of Wyoming's Arena-Auditorium on June 1 - a benefit show for anti-hate organisations. It's the first time he's performed Candle since Princess Diana's funeral.

SATELLITE

Elton's solo concert in Lucca, Italy July 2, was broadcast live on the national radio RAI RADIO 2. It proved to be the last Italian show before his heart operation.

FANS ARRIVE AT

CANCELLED GIG

Media coverage of Elton's ill health was so extensive that only nine people arrived at Leeds Castle, UK, unaware that the long-awaited performances were not going ahead. The open-air gigs had only been postponed 2 days before. Castle special events manager Nick Day said: "We had four people on the Saturday, three on Sunday and two on Monday, all from overseas."

ELTON KNOWS THE SCORE!

Comedy movie The Muse was released in USA on August 20. It has an Elton music score, and Hercules sneaked in to offer a preview in the June 1999 fanzine edition.

AIDS FOUNDATION

In June, Elton took heat from AIDS activists who want him to account for money raised through EJAF. The AIDS Accountability Project says it's been bugging EJ for 3 years for forms required by the U.S. tax authority, the Internal Revenue Service. An Elton representative is quoted saying: "We have accountants who deal with these things and I'm sure they just haven't gotten the forms yet."

Meanwhile, attorneys for EJAF fire back at the AIDS activists.

According to Sarah McMullen, the EJAF's publicity director, Michael Petrelis of the AIDS Accountability Project insinuated EJAF failed to provide tax records after he requested them numerous times. US law requires charities to make tax returns available to the public upon request.

"(EJAF) has always fully complied with this law," according to a statement released by EJAF. McMullen claims EJAF first found out about Petrelis' request for the records a week before, and promptly mailed them. The press release stated, "from 1992 through 1998, the Elton John AIDS Foundation funded more than 1,100 grants in North America. To date, the Elton John AIDS Foundation has distributed over \$12 million in grants in North America and \$5 million internationally."

CHARITY GIG APPEARANCE

Elton flew in from US Midwest between concerts to Mansfield, Massachusetts on June 5, for the 20th annual KISS concert at the Tweeter Center. He played Crocodile Rock, then was presented with two cheques totalling \$50,000, one from KISS-108 (a Boston radio station), and a second from Brooks Pharmacy chain, to the Genesis Fund Charity.

DAVID FURNISH ON TV

UK independent TV network ITV, televised Falling for a Star on May 30 - interviews with several celebrities about their relationships and cuts David Furnish in and out of the programme several times between other famous people and their partners. David talks about his relationship and life with Elton, telling us that Elton was very protective towards him in the beginning.

NEWS BULLETS...

Full details of the following news items have appeared on our Hotline and Web-site

ELTON "AND" TINA TURNER

Remember back before Elton and Tina Turner had their public falling out a few months ago and cancelled their plans for a joint tour? Well, they do plan to perform at year's end in Las Vegas, but they're not performing together. On December 30, 1999 they'll perform, separately, at the Thomas & Mack Center. And the next really big night both will be performing in Caesars Palace -- in two different showrooms, for invitation-only.

A BIG SEASON FOR WATFORD FC

Watford FC is playing in the Premier League this season! But Elton says he won't bankroll the team even though they need millions of pounds to survive in the Premiership.

Sir Elton said: "When I came back as chairman I made it clear it would not be a case of bottomless pockets. It has to be up to the club to raise the finances. We have to acquire many new players and improve our overall standard but Graham (Taylor) will be cautious because he knows we do not have the funds that other clubs have. We have to stay in the Premiership and try to establish ourselves. I know how difficult that will be but we already have a good collection of young players and they will give it their best shot."

DON'T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON ME

Elton's Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me turned out to be the hush-hush anthem of the total eclipse of the sun that happened over parts of Europe on August 11, 1999. German radio stations played the original song and its various cover versions all day long.

ELTON HOSTS SUMMER BALL



Elton with his mother, stepfather and David during the Summer Ball at Woodside

Sir Elton's summer ball rolled on July 1. And despite reports of financial problems, everything smells of roses in England. Even the flowers for Elton's party at Woodside - which cost £30,000 - are paid for by sponsors OK! Magazine. The party bill is £150,000. Elton invites stars including George Michael, ex-Spice Girl Geri Halliwell, actress Catherine Zeta Jones, Michael Douglas, Sean Connery, and Sir David Frost. Guests stump up £1,000 for tickets to benefit the Elton John Aids Foundation.

ELTON & DAVID AT FASHION EXHIBITION

Elton and partner David Furnish attended the Versace Fashion Exhibition in Via Del Gesù, Milan, June 27. The next morning, they walked to the Versace shop in Via Monte Napoleone to do some shopping. After less than an hour they came out and walked back to their hotel. Later that same day Elton and David flew back to Nice.

ANOTHER GUEST APPEARANCE

Elton makes a cameo appearance on the new Mary J. Blige album "Mary" which is released August 17, 1999. Other appearances are by Lauryn Hill, Aretha Franklin, Eric Clapton, and K-Ci.

"LES LUNETTES D'ELTON JOHN"

The English play "Elton John's glasses" by David Farr has been adapted in French and will be running at the Tristan Bernard Theatre in Paris from August 23, 1999.

AIDA ON THE STAGE

Elton and Tim Rice's Aida will debut at Chicago's Palace Theater December 9. It moves to New York April 6, 2000. This new version of the musical - a bit different from the first staging in Atlanta in 1998 - directed by Robert Falls, will again star Heather Headley as Aida.

NEWS BULLETS...

Full details of these items have appeared on our Hotline and Web-site

ROCKET RECORDS FINISHED?

Media reports say Universal Music Group/Island are to close Elton's Rocket Records label. No comment was available from Island executives as to why. But Elton will continue to record for Island. Nevertheless, Elton tells The Mirror newspaper July 17 he's considering leaving Universal in USA.

EUROPEAN SOLO TOUR SONGS

Before his operation blocked the European Tour, Elton played a nearly 3 hour solo show at Ludwigslust, Germany, on June 25 - less than a week since ending the US leg. Elton drops Talking Old Soldiers (replaced by Live Like Horses), Blessed, Can You Feel The Love Tonight, and Recover Your Soul. In German tennis stadium at Halle's Gerry Weber Stadium (June 26), he adds Something About The Way You Look Tonight, but doesn't play Written In The Stars. At the show in Lucca, Italy (July 2) he works in Song For Guy into the intro of Take Me To The Pilot.

ELTON TO HOST CHAT SHOW

Before news of Elton's illness broke, it was reported that he is to host his own TV chat show. Pal DJ Chris Evans persuaded him to interview stars such as newly weds Posh Spice and David Beckham, Michael Jackson and Madonna in six one-hour specials on Saturday evenings in the UK. Ginger Television boss Evans will act as executive producer on the shows, already the subject of fierce bidding between BBC1 and ITV. A friend of Elton said: "He'll be a natural for this kind of show. With his personality, he'll put people at their ease. Elton's also got loads of contacts in showbiz so getting top calibre guests will be easy." It is not known whether EJ's recent illness has changed these plans.

YOU DUMMY!

Elton is one of the highlights of Madame Tussaud's Celebrity Encounter in Las Vegas' newest attraction, The Venetian Resort Hotel & Casino. The wax museum opened doors July 22.

ELTON AND BERNIE ARE

FAITHFUL

The new Marianne Faithful album, Vagabond Ways, is available in Europe. It features the Elton John/Bernie Taupin song For Wanting You. In the USA, the album is only available as import.

MONEY MATTERS...

There has been much speculation in the press regarding Elton's finances, with new details emerging almost weekly. According to The Sunday Times June 27, Elton seeks a £25m loan to pay off his bills. Elton puts the record straight in a frank interview about mis-management of funds on page 10. Elton's new manager, Frank Presland, is quoted "Elton John's finances are sound." According to Presland, Elton is just reorganising his finances and he is trying to gain more control over his back catalogue.

EJ TALKS TO THE MIRROR

Elton gave an exclusive interview to The Mirror newspaper July 17. He spoke of his medical ordeal, about his new projects and about saying goodbye to his recent manager, Colin Bell, and how he felt let down by John Reid.

ELTON III CANDLE

Slatkin & Co., New York has recently informed us that they will have a new Elton III candle in the year 2000. You read it here first! The great news is that the Elton III candle will be available later this year.

CANDLE SCORE ON DISPLAY

The autographed musical score of Candle in the Wind 1997, as performed by Sir Elton at Princess Diana's funeral, and the handwritten manuscript with the song's new words written by Bernie Taupin, are now housed in the "tribute room" at the Diana, Princess of Wales' museum in Althorp.

ELTON TO APPEAR AT

EXPO 2000

According to German news agency dpa, Elton is planning to perform a show during the World Exhibition Expo 2000 in Hannover, Germany, next year. The Expo will open doors June 1 and run until October 31, 2000.

NOT ELTON, NOT AT

THE WEDDING!



In a great spoof of the Posh Spice and David Beckham Wedding, London's Evening Standard newspaper July 5, called upon the help of our very own Hercules member and look-a-like Raymond Johnson to recreate the special day. A grand colour photo of Elton (Raymond) graced the cover of the pull-out section. The newspaper claims that while OK! Magazine paid £1m for pictures of the real wedding...the Evening Standard paid...a few pence!

ELTON JOHN AND HERCULES IN HALLE (WESTFALEN/GERMANY)

So far, this 26 June 1999 had been a perfect day and it should even become better as we were now on our way to the Gerry Weber Stadium in Halle (Westfalen/Germany) looking forward to an Elton John concert of probably several hours.

SET LIST

Your Song
Skyline Pigeon
The Greatest Discovery
Border Song
Live Like Horses
Daniel
Honky Cat
Rocket Man
Sacrifice
Better Off Dead
House
Something About The Way
You Look Tonight
I Guess That's Why They Call
It The Blues
Ticking
Carla Etude
Tonight
I Don't Wanna Go On
With You Like That
The One
Blue Eyes
Mona Lisas And Mad Hatters
Take Me To The Pilot
Sorry Seems To Be
The Hardest Word
Levon
Crocodile Rock
Don't Let The Sun Go
Down On Me
Circle Of Life
Bennie And The Jets
Candle In The Wind

From 11am the fans had been arriving at the hotel "Ravensburger Hof" in Bielefeld to meet for a warm-up party. More than 50 Hercules members and their partners found their way to Bielefeld where we spent the time with rare video and audio recordings of Elton's concerts as well as with memories of former tours and our own adventures in connection with EJ.

At 5pm we formed a long car line and drove the 10 miles to Halle.

The Hercules members took their seats in section C under an almost perfect blue sky and with temperatures of about 30°C at 6pm. In tough negotiations with the tour organisers we had managed to get a big number of connected seats for members. We even got them a bit cheaper than the "normal" tickets booked in advance. Unfortunately, we were seated in the upper circle and not in the inside like I had hoped. Still, in my opinion it was nevertheless a special experience to spend a whole concert together with like-minded people and longtime friends.

At exactly 7pm instrumental music from AIDA started and only a few minutes later Elton appeared on stage with rather strangely coiffed hair. He immediately started with the first notes of Your Song. After that he welcomed the German audience, announced some well-known and some less well-known songs and declared how proud he was to perform in the stadium, as he is a big tennis fan and had often seen it on TV.

But after that Elton's pleasure in talking was almost done, and he continued with what he does best: playing the piano and singing. The first part of the

concert reminded me not only of the latest US tour, which had finished just one week ago, but also of his concerts with Ray Cooper in 1994. The only difference being that Elton remained on stage on his own all evening.

While he had performed Talking Old Soldiers in the USA it was now replaced by Live Like Horses. But this was almost the only variation to the American set. Undoubtedly, a first highlight was Rocket Man which sounded amazingly fresh and new after so many years and uncountable live versions. Yet again, Elton gave this classic a new touch. If I remember correctly, this was the first time that he didn't end the song with "I think it's gonna be a long, long time" but with "I'm a rocket man".

Unfortunately, this highlight was immediately followed by a lowpoint - in my opinion: Sacrifice. Although I enjoyed the solo version a little bit more than the one with the band, it has just never been one of my favourite songs. But more than 10,000 people in the audience were crazy for it.

The next song, House, was another highlight, which still surprises me as the song is rather simply made. Perhaps that's exactly its secret. When Elton started with "Something About The Way You Look Tonight" and not "I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues" as he had done the evening before I felt a little hope that this could be my first concert for years where I didn't have to hear it. But of course, Elton played it immediately afterwards.

But now I don't want to stress the negative aspects too much - there is absolutely no reason for doing so. A perfect sound and an

elton john & hercules at

HALL OF FAME

by *Stephan Heimbecher*

Elton in splendid performing mood made this concert unforgettable. Especially so when he played the series of Ticking, Carla Etude and Tonight. This was certainly the climax of the evening.

Our block of 100 Hercules members tried to make the audience move from their seats during the following I Don't Wanna Go On With You Like That but we only succeeded half an hour later when Elton played Crocodile Rock. Before that he performed a brilliant version of Take Me To The Pilot. This again was - like Rocket Man - a small surprise for me because you have heard this so many times during the last years. Nevertheless, Take Me To The Pilot sounded amazingly "new". Another surprise was that Written In The Stars was left out. Elton hadn't played it in Ludwigslust either, meaning that this was a show without the current single, although the concert was introduced with sounds of AIDA.

Because of all that, a set without a lot of unexpected and unusual songs still became interesting and exciting. Although Elton had already quit his abstinence from Candle In The Wind at the end of his US tour, it was yet somehow strange to hear it as an encore after a three-hours non-stop programme.

Although the audience had needed some time to warm up - no wonder when there are only some pseudo-VIPs in the first ten rows who seemed unable to show enthusiasm - it finally celebrated Elton with standing ovations after Crocodile Rock. He obviously enjoyed this and returned thanks to the fans in front of the stage with lengthy autograph sessions.

(Photo: Jimmie Collins)

I don't have **B** much money, **BUT IF I DID...**

ELTON TALKS ABOUT HIS BITTER SPLIT WITH JOHN REID, AND REVEALS THE TRUTH ABOUT THOSE FINANCIAL RUMOURS

Whilst recovering from his heart operation in the South of France, Elton reportedly took the opportunity to break his silence over the recent split with long-time manager John Reid. The UK's Daily Mirror newspaper reported on July 16 that Elton phoned them with allegations of Reid's mis-management. He launched a stinging attack on his former manager, whom he accused of creaming off millions from his pop fortune with excessive management fees.

He sensationally revealed that Reid even secretly remortgaged his beloved 37-acre home, Woodside, in Windsor. And the trusted aide had also quietly sold off the rights to his first six albums - the most successful and lucrative work of his glittering career - for a paltry £3 million. "As far as I'm concerned John Reid's a liar and a cheat," Elton was reported to have said. "It all started in Atlanta a couple of years ago. I'd been with John for 28 years - five of them in a personal relationship. He was my first love.

"I figured out something was wrong so I asked my lawyer, Frank Presland, who's been with me for 18 years, to take a look at my finances. It was the first time I'd asked for an audit in all those years. I didn't know how much money I had. And what did we find? The biggest mess you can imagine. There were literally dozens of horrendous deals. It was a total mess and very alarming. I estimate £20 million had gone.

"I discovered £5.5 million worth of borrowings secured on the Windsor house plus two of my favourite paintings - a Francis

Bacon and a Magritte. He'd sold it off at less than favourable rates and he creamed a hefty commission off the top."

The Mirror reported that Elton has been angered by a series of highly inaccurate reports about the state of his finances and called The Mirror to put the record straight. And he apparently confirmed that he has taken out a £25 million loan to buy back all his assets and the rights to his own music and will have no trouble paying it back.

"There's a lot to sort out and that takes a lot of time and energy," said Elton. "For years the management of my finances was carried out behind my back and was disgraceful. As the full extent of the troubles were explained to me I literally went into shock, but I had a great support team with me and they are helping me now.

"It's ludicrous and untrue to say I'm in financial difficulty. I'm not skint, nothing could be further from the truth, but my team and I have one goal - to build for the future. I trusted John as a friend, but as a

business adviser I was always kept in the dark. When I discovered what had gone on it came as a very severe blow. It's bad enough to lose £20 million to someone you trusted, but the money really is of secondary importance. It's the act of betrayal which really hurts, especially a betrayal of someone I trusted. He used to hate me doing things for the Elton John Aids Foundation because it wasn't earning him any money."

Elton fired John Reid, 49, in May last year. Frank Presland immediately took over as chief executive for Elton's companies and began the long process of clawing the cash back.

Among the astonishing discoveries reported by the Mirror was that Elton had made a £12,000 loss on a sell-out 44-date US tour in 1980 while his manager had made nearly £600,000.

And Elton went on to comment about the recent rumours of his financial problems; "The truth is, I do spend a lot of money. I don't deny that. It's rubbish to suggest that I



"I thought we were friends"

Elton and John Reid

ANNOUNCING HERCULES FAN CONVENTION 2000

spend more than I earn although, that said, I do spend a lot. I believe in living while you're living. I've got nobody to leave it to, but my partner, David Furnish, my family and my employees. I'm very proud of my employees and trust them implicitly which is why John's betrayal hurts me so much. You know, I've paid off the mortgages of many of my staff so they didn't have to worry about their futures.

"All the stuff over the years of Reid discovering me as some kind of pub pianist and making me a superstar, well it's just bulls***. I got where I am today thanks to bloody hard work and Dick James, the man who first believed in me and made me a star in America before Reid was even in the picture. But we've moved on. It's interesting to see he doesn't manage anyone of any significance any more."

The Mirror said that Elton has not spoken with Reid since he fired him and has no plans to do so in the future. **"We were friends for a hell of a long time - or at least I thought we were friends."**

John Reid denied allegations of mis-management in a report run by UK's Daily Mail newspaper later that same week. Reid also told the Mail he is considering legal action for defamation against Elton. He added that if and when the case comes to court in London, Reid will be exonerated by the facts. Hercules understands that case (due this autumn) will be settled out of court, however.

This is an early announcement for a Hercules Fan Convention that is planned to be held in Las Vegas September 10-16, 2000. While Hercules is still negotiating with some of the Las Vegas' hotels, we would like to give fans an early chance to mark this date in their calendars.

We hope as many of you as possible will be able to come to our first ever International event. Its a great chance for Elton John fans from all over the world to get together. You have a whole year to plan for it - and as there will also be plenty of free time - make the trip part of your annual family holiday. For that reason we have scheduled a one-week program which is planned to proceed something like this:

Sunday

Dinner party with some special guests.
Elton look-a-like competition

Monday

All day convention with trade area, music, videos, seminars, contests and surprises

Tuesday

All day convention continued until 6 pm

Wednesday - Friday

Diverse activities in and around Las Vegas.
(e.g. Hoover Dam tour,
Grand Canyon tour, etc.)

Saturday

Departure

We're still working on the details which will be made available as soon as possible. You should expect a registration fee of approx. \$150 for the three-day convention (Sun-Tue). Room rates will be approx. \$100 single or double a night. Tours and other activities (Wed-Fri) will be charged separately.

If you want to receive future updates on the Hercules Fan Convention 2000, simply send a postcard with your complete postal address to Stephan Heimbecher, Hercules Fan Convention 2000, Orleansstr. 59, D-81667 Muenchen, Germany, or e-mail us at sheimbecher@eltonfan.com.

looking like a true survivor

HERCULES was delighted to welcome Elton's ex-drummer Charlie Morgan to the UK Convention in London, March 99. We continue here where we left it in the June issue, with the second part of this exclusive interview.

Before his departure from the band, Charlie was the only UK resident on board. "Previously there had been a time when in 1985/86 the entire brass section were UK residents, David Paynton the bass player was UK, all the singers were UK too, Shirley Lewis, Alan Carvell, and Gordon Neville. It was only Davey Johnstone and Fred Mandell who were US residents.

But that changed. "So I was always a bit on a limb because I was always dealing with the management in the UK, they were dealing with management in the US. I became separated from the rest of the guys. They were seeing each other socially all the time.

"The only time I did see them socially was for instance in September 1997. I went over to Los Angeles ahead of the tour rehearsals and John Mahon (percussionist) and Bob Birch took me up the Burbank Hills to do some mountain biking.

"I never saw much of them off the road. When we played in LA they were at home and when we played here, I was at home. You're not going to put someone up in a hotel if they live 20 miles away. It was different on the road. It's a false environment, and an extended family. I became separated and I had huge problems with my marital life for three years.

"It has to be a very strong relationship when you're on the road so much. My wife shut herself off. My (new) fiancée understands me and backs me all the way."



**PART 2 OF OUR
EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW
WITH DRUMMER
CHARLIE
MORGAN**

Charlie hopes to join her in the USA. He's applied for US residence, his Green Card. He already has a work VISA, and a house owned in Orlando, and hopes to work out of Nashville. "I think Elton is aware I will be US resident and I will be in touch with the guys in the band."

The rapport's still there. And will he return to the band? "The door's not been closed. This has happened before. It's not the first time I've left the band. But we're contracted on a tour by tour basis and there's always a chance I'll be picked up on the next tour."

Charlie, echoing comments to Hercules by guitarist John Jorgenson last year when the shock news of Charlie's release was announced, admitted: "Sometimes change is a good thing. Elton hadn't changed the

band for a long time."

The fans are choking to know, why did Elton release Charlie last year? Like Nigel Olsson, who was released in the mid-1970s and rehired in the 1980s, this is also Charlie's second exit from the band. Charlie briefly left in 1989 when "Sleeping with the Past" was recorded with another drummer.

In Charlie's own words: "I don't know. But being the only UK resident, I got caught up in a lot of problems over my salary. There was a period when I hadn't been paid for six months. The management had changed, and the money stopped coming in. I'd just left my wife, so she wasn't phoning up the management to ask where the money was, and I was on tour!

"I got angry and made noises I might not go on the next tour. The only wedge I could drive to get paid. It was all sorted out in the end by the new management."

Charlie thinks that a lot of it was misunderstanding. "And I don't think Elton was even aware of any of this. Elton was an innocent bystander to this, as indeed was I to a large extent."

Charlie feels the new management was left worrying he wouldn't tour. "But I didn't get a chance to tell them I wouldn't have left them in the lurch. When I was talking about leaving the band, I was talking about three or four months' notice."

Returning to his new love, Charlie admits he met her on the internet. Yes, there is hope for all you anoraks out there!! Charlie was the band's pioneer at setting up a web site in 1995.

"Yes, during the autumn of 1997 I had a well-established web site for a couple of years, and I was writing reports with a digital camera on a weekly basis. Several people knew my AOL screen name I was using at the

time, and when I went on at night I'd get instant messages for "Bob Barnett".

"There were messages from a lady called "Laura" who lived just south of Atlanta. She was 14 years old and a very keen Elton fan. She loved animals. She told me all about her life. Owned and looked after a horse. She said she was going to the Tallahassee concert on 21 November 1997. She told me her mother would drive her down, wait for her, and drive her back. I thought they must love each other a lot, get on well, especially for a 14 year old! She told me they were very close." So impressed was Charlie by the family tie, he managed to reserve Laura's mother a ticket to the show!

He agreed to meet them in the hotel lobby before the concert. "I had no idea what Laura looked like, let alone the mother!" Charlie was already in the midst of marital problems. "Basically, we met in the lobby, Laura said to me she's a mad blonde. There was this dark-haired lady, Jerilyn, who is about the same age as me. After the show, we talked in the bar to practically three or four in the morning!"

Charlie thinks they'll marry. His divorce came through earlier this year.

At this stage, we open the interview up to club members at the convention. Edinburgh fan Steven Betts asked how Charlie gets on with fellow Scot Davey Johnstone. "Very well. He's a good musical director, able to smooth over troubles. He tries to translate what Elton wants from us before shows."

Paul Goddard asks is Charlie friends with Bernie? "Don't see much of him. We respect his low profile. He turns up for opening nights in the US, and anywhere near LA.

Charlie admits that although Nigel Olsson was also a big influence on Charlie, and he had to try to follow closely Elton's back catalogue to Nigel's original beat, their styles were very different. "I wouldn't call it trying to mimic Nigel. I'd say it was more of a tribute to him. Certain drum fills had to be played the way he had done them. In others, I introduced some of my own style."

Charlie says that on "Don't Let the Sun" and "Someone Saved My Life Tonight" he had to match Nigel's style: "It's the huge great slow rock ballad style which

Nigel pioneered with Elton's music."

Like Nigel, who continues to play sessions, Charlie has no Bitter Fingers either! As well as supporting the Papa George Band, he does session work. Two weeks ago he did a session for a film soundtrack which Iceland's Bjork is scoring.

Prior to Christmas, Charlie supported old friend Tom Robinson for a couple of weeks at the Birmingham outpost of Britain's most famous jazz club, Ronnie Scott's. "We've also recorded some tracks in my studio for Tom's new album."

Among his association with Tom 20 years ago, Charlie recorded with him the Elton/Robinson classic "Never Gonna Fall In Love Again" - a disco version in 1979 for a Gay Pride week album. They also toured the US and Europe that year.

Closing off the interview, we return 'back to the future'. Internet-enthusiast Charlie has some advice for Davey Johnstone. Davey told Hercules in Zurich last June that he's not much interested in web sites and will be enjoying a cool drink on January 1, 2000, when computers crash and users freak out.

"He'll be enjoying a nice cool drink, while his fax machine blows up, his air conditioning unit goes to town, while his cellular phone ceases to work, and the gas, water and electricity stop working, failing to chill his drinks because the local company provider hasn't got its system Y2K compatible. So I'm not sure about that!"



"Anything you can do..." (Photo: Mark Swinden)

KALEIDOSCOPE

PART FOUR OF
OUR COLLECTORS
SERIES ON
ELTON'S TV AND
VIDEO
APPEARANCES

by George Matlock
and Sharon Kalinoski.

VIDEOS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE FOR THE PROMOTION OF A SINGLE.

(Directors credited where known)

*Continued from previous
issue, where we itemised
the videos up to 1980*

*Please be aware Hercules
is unable to supply any of these
recordings to you!*

1981 Donner Pour Donner
with France Gall /
Franco-Deutsch Single

1981 The Fox album. Each
track produced as a video -
Dir: Russell Mulcahy

1982 Blue Eyes / Jump Up! -
Dir: Stephen Priest,
filmed in Australia

1982 Empty Garden / Jump
Up! - filmed in Australia

1982 Ball & Chain / Jump Up!

1983 Cold As Christmas / Too
Low For Zero

1983 I Guess That's Why
They Call It The Blues/
Too Low For Zero -
Dir: Russell Mulcahy,
filmed in south of France

1983 I'm Still Standing / Too
Low For Zero -
Dir: Russell Mulcahy,
filmed in south of France

1983 Kiss The Bride / Too Low
For Zero - Dir: Godley &
Creme

1984 Sad Songs (Say So Much)
/ Breaking Hearts -
Dir: Russell Mulcahy

1984 Passengers / Breaking
Hearts - Dir: Simon Milne

1984 Who Wears These Shoes
/ Breaking Hearts

1984 In Neon / Breaking
Hearts - Dir: Bernie Taupin

1985 Act Of War with Millie
Jackson / Ice On Fire

EYES

Should you be able to add the missing Directors, or know of any video singles which aren't listed, please email HerculesUK@aol.com or write to Hercules UK, PO Box 315, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 3QX, England. Thanks to Wayne Martin.

1985 Cry to Heaven / Ice On Fire - Dir: Ken Russell

1985 Nikita / Ice In Fire - Dir: Ken Russell

1985 Wrap Her Up / Ice On Fire - Dir: Russell Mulcahy

1986 Paris / Leather Jackets

1986 Slow Rivers / Leather Jackets

1986 Heartache All Over The World / Leather Jackets

1986 That's what Friend's Are For / Dionne Warwick's "Friends"

1987 Take Me To The Pilot / Live In Australia - Dir: Mark Fitzgerald

1987 Flames Of Paradise w/Jennifer Rush / Heart Over Mind

1987 Candle In The Wind / Live In Australia - Dir: Mark Fitzgerald

1988 I Don't Wanna Go On With You Like That / Reg Strikes Back - Dir: Russell Mulcahy

1988 A Word In Spanish / Reg Strikes Back

1988 Town Of Plenty / Reg Strikes Back

1989 Club At The End Of The Street/Sleeping with the Past

1989 Healing Hands / Sleeping with the Past - Dir: Russell Mulcahy

1989 When We Was Fab / George Harrison's "Cloud"

1989 Through the Storm with Aretha Franklin

1989 Japanese Hands / Reg Strikes Back

1990 Sacrifice / Sleeping with the Past - Dir: Alex Keshishian

1990 You Gotta Love Someone / "The Days of Thunder" soundtrack Dir: Andy Morahn

1990 Easier To Walk Away / New Song From the "To Be Continued"

1991 Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me with George Michael Dir: George Michael & Andy Morahan

1992 Runaway Train with Eric Clapton / The One

1992 The One / The One - Dir: Russell Mulcahy

1992 The Last Song / The One - Dir: Gus Van Sant

1993 Simple Life / The One - Dir: Russell Mulcahy

1993 Don't Go Breaking My Heart with Ru Paul / Duets - Dir: Randy Barbato & Fenton Bailey

1993 True Love with Kiki Dee / Duets - Dir: Vadim Jean

1994 Can You Feel The Love Tonight?/"The Lion King" soundtrack - Dir: Matthew Amos

1994 Circle Of Life / "The Lion King" soundtrack - Dir: Mathew Amos

1995 Believe / Made In England - Dir: Marcus Nispell

1995 Blessed / Made In England - Dir: David & Raphael Vital-Durand

1995 Made In England / Made In England - Dir: Marcus Nispell

1995 Please / Made In England - Dir: Howard Greenhald

Part 5 continues in December 99.

JUST FOR FUN

LYRIC QUIZ

How well do you know your Elton lyrics? Test yourself with the following - we give you a line - can you name the song title? (Answers on page 26)

- 1 I see the storm approaching
Long before the rain starts falling.
- 2 Just stare into space
Picture my face in your hands
- 3 Hollywood created a superstar
And pain was the price you paid.
- 4 Beneath these branches
I once wrote such childish words for you.
- 5 Tell Monday I'll be around next week
I'm running ahead of my days
- 6 Window frames capture
Moments in time
- 7 Well they've locked up their daughters
And battened the hatches.
- 8 I was killing time with Jesus
When the wedding bells began
- 9 You're a bluebird on a telegraph line
I hope you're happy now
- 10 There's a downtown smell of cooking
From the flame on an open grill
- 11 I don't whistle at you down the street
I would if I could, but I can't whistle you see.
- 12 And I don't want to be
The son of any freak

JUST FOR FUN

take.me.down/to

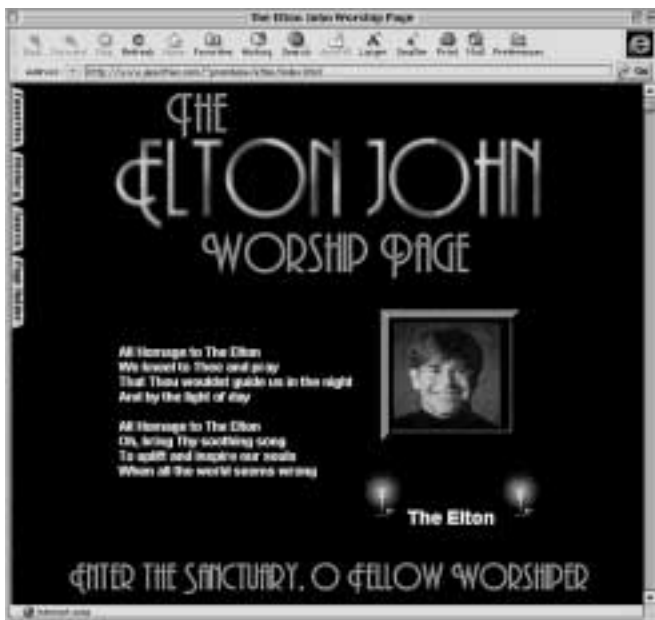
a.web.surfer's/guide/to.finding/ej/on.the.net

by Reggie Zippo (rszippo@iname.com) All websites are rated from 0 to 4 Royal Waves.

THE ELTON JOHN WORSHIP PAGE

<http://eltonworship.virtualave.net>

To some fans, Elton John is THE greatest singer and songwriter of all time. To others, he is merely an outlet for social and personal expression. To the webmaster of "The Elton John Worship Page", however, Elton is the basis of a religion where EJ reigns supreme. As the main page of this site loads in, the visitor is met with a very sombre and reverent atmosphere. "All Homage To The Elton". This website is steeped in spirituality! As you venture forward, this theme is quite prevalent throughout all of the subsequent "worship" pages. The black background of the main page, however, is replaced with pure white for the rest of the site. This change gives you the feeling of basking in his divine light and wisdom. While most EJ sites are created with a particular theme and the best of intentions in mind, the purpose is usually lost on all of the subpages. The same, though, cannot be said of this uniquely constructed site. In the sanctuary of "The Church of Elton Worship" there are "Holy Cards", "Sacred Chants", A hymn book, worship events, sermons, worship resources,



testimonials, and fellowship pages (to name just a few). Concerning the text of each section, the webmaster is quite careful to keep the content in line with the theme. The "usual" EJ information is a refreshing change from the normal repetition that the other sites provide. You must read the EJ prayers too. They are all very well written. Before leaving, be sure to download your very own "All Homage To

The Elton" worship graphics. Needless to say, after fully exploring this site, I am able to offer 4 Royal Waves to such a deserving EJ religious experience. "All Homage To The Elton"!



/the.ocean

Please keep in mind that these reviews do not reflect the opinions of HERCULES, its staff members, nor its supporters.

THE HEALING HANDS ELTON JOHN WEBSITE

<http://members.tripod.com/HealingHandsSwinger/index.htm>

Directly after visiting "The Elton John Worship Page", I happened upon "The Healing Hands Elton John Website" almost immediately. "This could not be just a chance encounter", I thought. As the main page loaded in, I was met with the same solemn reverence that the first site provided. That is where the similarities ended, though. While the webmaster of this site had the best of intentions, the "Healing Hands" theme ended after the "To Be Continued" photo loaded in at the beginning. So much could have been done to expand on the title of the website. As with all "tripod" websites, that pesky popup advert reared its ugly head as the main page loaded in. This is no fault of the webmaster, though. Since this site does not provide any navigational links on any of the subpages, you must go back to the main page every time to access each section. This is a major turn off. Additionally, there are no "back to the home page" links either. The content provided is exceptional in that there are updated news and concert dates, discography and charting information, a few cool concert photos, and even an EJ poll to cast a vote. Concerning the overall construction, typical EJ webmasters try to "window dress" each page with graphics

to distract the fact that their content is amateurish at best. Not so here. The information was very professionally researched and the pages are presented in a simple, no nonsense manner. My only gripe is the lack of the navigational links on all of the subpages. So, until that error is corrected, I must reluctantly bestow 2 Royal Waves for this site.



Ludwigshist, Germany, June '99
(Photo: H Reppel)





UNITED KINGDOM

by George Matlock

This was due to be a pre-concert convention in a pub near to Leeds Castle, on the day of Elton's first open-air UK show. We had heard just a couple of days before that the show would be postponed, so naturally disappointment and concern for EJ's health were the main feelings for the day. But thank you to those of you who made the effort to keep your Saturday free and

come down to the Castle on July 10. We had a great time, as fans from Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand and Japan joined British fans for a jamboree at the George Inn pub.

Naturally, fans were hardly in the mood for a sing-a-long, and their thoughts were with Elton following the shock health news. However, Hercules sales manager Alan from Wrap It Up! was able to provide a few gift ideas for the fans, and a fun event was enjoyed by all.

The weather was superb, full sunshine, about 28 degrees, and a light breeze. Some fans went over to Leeds Castle to inspect what might have been, and to soak up the atmosphere of an aborted midsummer concert. Excitement soon built up again at the thought of the postponed shows taking place in just a few weeks time!

Media interest was high, and local press published reports of the event. It was even briefly mentioned in The Sun newspaper!

(photos: G Matlock)



Leeds Castle - where are you EJ??



The George Inn - spot the Hercules logo!

BETWEEN 17 AND 20 · BETWEEN 17 AND 20

ANOTHER VERSE OF OUR REGULAR COLUMN FEATURING TRIVIA AND

HERCULES

On the 13th of this month (Sept.) it will be exactly 19 years since Elton dressed up as Donald Duck for his concert in Central Park, New York.

On March 7th 1976 Elton was the first rock star since The Beatles to be immortalised in wax at Madame Tussaud's in London.

HERCULES

The Album '21 at 33' was so called because at 33 years of age it was Elton's 21st album.

The first piano that Elton ever bought was a black Steinway grand which he has subsequently had painted to look as though it is made of Walnut. To have had a new one made in actual Walnut would have been too costly.

HERCULES

On 23rd December 1974 The Daily Telegraph reported 'no amount of spangled gimmickry, clowning or noise can hide his great talent as a musician and a performer of good songs' (we could have told them that!!)

HERCULES

James Galway, the classical flautist includes Elton's 'Little Jeannie' as the final track on his album 'James Galway - A Portrait', recorded in 1996 (BMG/RCA Victor). We think it was included on the album as a thank you to Elton for writing the award winning film score song 'Basque' which Galway performed.

speaking



GERMANY

by Stephan Heimbecher

After a long break, we finally had the chance to organise another fan meeting in Germany. This time, we took the chance of Elton's solo show at the Gerry Weber tennis stadium in Halle/Westfalen to meet in nearby Bielefeld prior to the show. Since this was a Saturday (June 26), more than 50 fans made the effort to drive to the hotel in Bielefeld so they could participate in the "warm up" event for the following show. However, this would have been better scheduled as a "cool down" convention as outside temperatures were exceeding 30 degrees Celsius.

It was obvious that many fans

were happy to meet "old pals" again after such a long time. Many people who were present have been with Hercules since the very beginning in May 1988, and so the meeting had many elements of a "family re-union". But there was also Elton-stuff to look at, including our German Elton look-a-like, Andreas Herr.

Later in the afternoon, the group made the 15-minute trip to the stadium where a block of more than 100 seats had been reserved for Hercules members!



German fans let EJ know how they feel.



FINLAND

Have you seen The North?

The hot and sunny weather caused a lack of people at the inaugural convention in Finland on July 10. Still a few brave, loyal fans gathered to meet each other and to have fun. We had a long, interesting discussion about Elton's recent activities. However, we didn't yet know about his pacemaker operation, so there was a lot of guessing about his condition of health.

Some rare videos were also watched, and everybody refreshed their memories about Elton's last summer concert in Helsinki. Everyone agreed that it was the best day of their life. After having a 4-hour Elton Party we went out into the beautiful weather to see the town.

It was fun, but next time we will do it at some cooler time, when it's more like Finland!

For future Finland fan activities, contact Urpu Kallio, Hercules Nordic Representative.

BETWEEN 17 AND 20 · BETWEEN 17 AND 20

GOSSIP ABOUT ELTON - FOUND OF COURSE, BETWEEN PAGES 17 AND 20!!

HERCULES

Elton has a green and white Sydney tram nestled in the gardens of his house in Windsor which he bought in 1984 whilst touring in Australia. David currently uses it as his office.

HERCULES

I'm sure Elton's ex-wife Renate has a good singing voice, but on November 4th 1987 at a children's charity concert in London, Elton said he would donate £7000 if Renate was stopped from singing on stage with Jonathan Ross, Bob Geldof and a host of other stars.

HERCULES

On the 9th September 1988, the banners advertising the Sotheby's sale of the 'Elton John Collection' sold for £550 each. They had been hanging outside their front door and were added as an extra lot at the end of the auction. The auction raised £4,838022 - well in excess of the estimated £3 million.

HERCULES

The famous giant Pinball Wizard Doc Martin boots from the film Tommy sold at the Sotheby's auction in September 1988 for £11,000.

JJ'S TOUR DIARY



JJ JOHN JORGENSEN

Yet another overnight drive...

Extracts from John Jorgenson's tour diary

THIS ISSUE'S FEATURE: ELTON & BILLY TOUR AUSTRALIA, 1998

5th March 1998
Perth, Australia

We got down to Perth last Saturday after a long flight from L.A. to Sydney, then another to Perth. We had a half day to recover from jetlag before it was time to start rehearsing and soundchecking. We did a little each day, some with just EJ's band, some with Elton and the band and some with Billy Joel, Elton and both bands! The show starts with EJ and BJ doing "Your Song" and "Honesty" with just their two pianos. Then EJ's band comes onstage for a 90 minute set in which BJ guests on "..The Blues".

Then BJ and his band do a 90 minute set with EJ as a guest. Then BOTH bands join together for encores.

Then for a final encore EJ and BJ are back to just the two pianos for "Piano Man".

The audience was pretty laid back, it had been quite hot during the day, and since the show started at 6:30 there wasn't a chance for the temperature to cool down at all before the show. 33,000 is quite a big crowd for Perth though, and I think they all had a good time.

Right now we're on a chartered flight to Auckland, NZ with our crew, and Billy Joel, his band and crew. For about two hours we've had a big sing-a-long, led by Billy Joel himself. All the 50's, Beatles, Motown--you name it, they've been sung in the cabin by everybody who wanted to join in. The cabin attendants have been well entertained! We'll have a day off in Auckland before the two shows on Saturday and Sunday.

7th March 1998
Auckland, New Zealand (Day 1)

After a nice day off in Auckland, we had our first show here tonight. Although it was hot in the daytime, by 7:30 when the concert started it was very nice and cool with a breeze. The stage setup was a little better, and Davey, Bob and I were on a riser. I found it much easier to perform when I could see the audience! The crowd was much more energetic than in Perth, and people were up and dancing at the edge of the stage midway through our set, and just got better from there. After we did our set, I went out by the soundboard to watch Billy Joel's set. He and his band sounded great, and it was fun to see the lighting effects.

When we all got back on stage for the encores, it felt much more comfortable, as I've had a chance to start getting to know BJ's band members. It's much easier to perform onstage with someone when you know them a little! The strange part of the show for me is getting warmed up, then sitting around for an hour and coming back onstage again. Keeping the energy level up is the trick for me.

8th March 1998
Auckland, New Zealand (Day 2)

The crowd at the show tonight was even better than last night - up to the stage in the third number and rockin' out from then on! A very good-looking audience I must say too. We cut a couple of songs out to make our set more in line with Billy Joel's, time wise. I did miss them to be honest-- "If The River Can Bend", "Tiny Dancer" and "Believe". Oh well--they'll probably be put back in for the US shows, but there is only so

much time in the EJ/BJ show. Elton has been battling a cold for the past few days--it's hard to avoid when we go through these extreme climate changes. It's made his voice a bit gravelly, but he still gave the audience his all and no one is left unsatisfied!

**11th March 1998
Brisbane, Australia**

Lots has happened since my last report. Upon finishing up my reports after the second show in Auckland, I remembered that Oasis had checked into the hotel earlier, and so I went down to the bar to see if Jason (Noel's guitar tech) was there so I could thank him for helping me get tickets to their Manchester show. Well, when I got down there the party was in full swing, even though it was 2 am! I had a chance to let Steve Cohen know what a great job he was doing on the lights.

I heard some harmonising going on in the corner--Billy Joel's backup singer Becca Bramlett, guitarist Tommy Burns and percussionist Crystal Talifieri were singing with a couple

others that I didn't know. They sounded great and were soon joined by a gruff male voice that I recognised as Joe Cocker's!!! Then the piano got unlocked and a full jam took place until about 6 am! Amazing to think that Elton John's band, Billy Joel and his band, Joe Cocker and his band and Oasis would all be in the same hotel on the same night in New Zealand!

The next day was a bit rough after the late night, but the fun was worth the price. I sadly said goodbye to New Zealand for now. We took an afternoon flight to Brisbane, arriving there in the evening. The following day I went to the Lone Pine Koala Reserve. It was a very worthwhile experience, and I would recommend it to anyone who visits the Brisbane area.

The show in Brisbane went well--no surprises really, except for a guy who jumped onstage bypassing all the security guards and shook both Elton's and Billy's hands before jumping back off again. The Brisbane crowd was a little tamer than the Kiwis in Auckland, but seemed to enjoy themselves anyway.

Billy and Elton are both feeling more comfortable with the show now, and are starting to goof around with each other, trying to crack each other up during the songs. Billy succeeded when he started banging his piano key with a fly swatter during "Bennie and the Jets"! Billy, like Elton loves a good joke and never misses an opportunity to pull a gag.

**12th March 1998
Sydney, Australia**

Wednesday afternoon we took a flight from Brisbane down to Sydney. The weather is beautiful here. Spent most of the day wandering around the neighbourhood around the hotel, just shopping and sightseeing. The band bus was practically full on the way to the show, as most everyone's wives and children have come down to Sydney for a visit. It made for a different vibe--a little more like the Willie Nelson Family Band or the Grateful Dead! The caterers in Australia are excellent--we've all been enjoying some great cooking and creative selections





of food at the gigs.

Before the show, Elton called me into his dressing room to say hello and to introduce me to Lawrence Fishburne, who had come out to see the show. He is down here working on a movie with Keanu Reeves, and was a

very warm and friendly person. It shows just how good an actor he is--he was scary as Ike Turner! The sound onstage tonight was excellent, and that made for a very comfortable set. Elton is still battling a cold, but was in a great mood and performed well. Clive said from his perspective that we all played well, and he had a good night with the sound also. During the encore segment, Dave Santos (BJ's bassist) and I try to rock harder each night on "You May Be Right"--and tonight I think we outdid ourselves! We rocked so hard that we had to high five each other after that song. Tomorrow is a day off here in Sydney, and I'm looking forward to that after a good night's sleep.

**14th March 1998
Sydney, Australia**

Friday was a day off, and I did a little shopping at the Queen Victoria Building. It's a beautiful old building transformed into a shopping center full of specialty boutiques and shops. The designer Joe was there and told me that Elton had

bought some clothes from him, as well as Cliff Richard, Billy Connolly, and bassist Lee Sklar.

The Saturday night crowd was ready to party, and really gave us some great feedback. It started to rain during Billy's set, but that didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the crowd, who were all on their feet for the encore segment. Backstage the hospitality room was decorated like Bondi Beach, complete with waiters dressed in the lifeguard uniforms! Charlie Morgan put one on and played the encore set dressed as a lifeguard, with two of the waiters on either side of his drum set. We all were cracking up totally! You just never know what's going to happen next...

**16th March 1998
Sydney, Australia (3rd show)**

The show started an hour earlier than usual, so the first third of our set was still in daylight, eliminating the lighting effects. The audience was a little more laid back than the Saturday night crowd, but still got up on their feet by the end of the show. Elton was in fine form, and spent a good deal of one of the encore songs making some hysterically funny faces at me! Both Billy and Elton love to joke around, and Billy cracked me up during "I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues" to the point where I couldn't keep singing my harmony parts!

We've got two days off here in Sydney before we head over to Adelaide, so I'm looking forward to seeing more of this area and playing tourist for a couple days...

**19th March 1998
Adelaide, Australia**

After the last Sydney show we

had a couple days off, and I took advantage of the time to see a bit more of Sydney Harbor by taking a cruise aboard the Bounty. Then over to the Centerpoint Tower for a spectacular view of the whole city from up in the air.

This morning we said goodbye to Sydney and took a late morning flight over to Adelaide. The hotel was so close to the venue that I could see the stage from the window of my room! All of our audiences on this tour have been big - this one was no exception at around 37,000 or so. The stage was quite a bit higher than usual, and made us feel even more disconnected with the audience. I don't think the people standing up front could even see Elton! EJ decided to eliminate "Sad Songs" from the set tonight, and I have a feeling it might be permanently out of the set.

It was very casual and "camplike" backstage, and with the weather being really pleasant we all sat backstage and relaxed, listening to Billy's set while we waited to go back on stage for the encore set. Sometimes "the waiting is the hardest part", but it wasn't tonight! We head out early to fly to Melbourne - it's a pity that there isn't a bit more time to check out Adelaide, but that's life on the road!

**21st March 1998
Melbourne (1st show)**

Just back to the hotel after the first concert in Melbourne, and I have to say it was the most fun of any show so far of the tour. Elton was in a great mood and was joking around backstage between segments of the show. I heard that Status Quo had come to the show, so we did some rockin' and posing in their honor. The weather in Melbourne was quite hot and dry today, but by showtime was very pleasant.

Even though the stage was still quite high, the crowd was in the mood to party and let us know. During "Bennie and the Jets" Billy and Elton cracked each other (and the bands) up by quoting all kinds of songs during their "trade-off" solos at the end of the song- everything from "The Lumberjack Song" to "Pop Goes The Weasel"!

**22nd March 1998
Melbourne (2nd show)**

We said a collective farewell to Australia last night during Melbourne's second gig. The show went really well, and again Billy and Elton were in a great mood and joking around. Elton even got up from his piano and joined Davey, Tommy, Dave Santos, Mark Rivera and myself doing some "choreography" during "You May Be Right", and during "The Bitch Is Back" Billy Joel "played" my guitar with his red fly-swatter! I felt very much like the "closing night" of a tour, as we won't see a lot of the local crew again. We will sorely miss the caterers, "More than a Morsel" - they have been cooking up the best food that I've ever had from a catering company.

After the show, the promoters threw an end of tour party at one of the hotels. I was enjoying visiting with Billy Joel, his band and crew, and the promoter's staff.

I'll soon say a fond farewell as I get near to the end of my first trip to Australia. I know I'll be back soon- I've made too many new friends not to come back to this amazing continent. The next post will be coming from Japan- Goodbye from OZ!!!!

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**Even if you don't have PC at home or office...
read on for details of how to visit our Web site**

Whatever your worries are about not getting Elton news in between editions of THE MAG, Hercules offers a great Internet service, THE WEB - and a special new service since January 1999 - Hercules Web Member.

Hercules Web Member provides extra news, interviews and features exclusive to Hercules, called Hercules Web Specials. There's also an archive and search facility, allowing you to check for stories over the years, and exclusive video and audio clips for your enjoyment.

It's free to visit the Web site

and read about the latest news. And the special Hercules Web Member costs just \$20 (£14) a year, and you can join online.

Combine it with your subscription to Hercules THE MAG, and you enjoy a 25% discount on the WHOLE package - called the Hercules Gold membership. If you don't have internet access at home or in the office, then don't worry! Web Cafes are everywhere! These offer a coffee, bite to eat, PCs and friendly technical support. You can enjoy our web site at www.eltonfan.com

*Please be assured that despite the fascination of this new medium, Hercules will also give you the best service possible via the traditional ways of communication.
The Mag also continues to go from strength to strength!*

Watford atch

Hercules' regular Watford FC reporter, David Wright, looks forward to the new season;

After a shorter summer break than ever, Watford kicked-off their first season in the top flight for 11 years in August. Last season they played the likes of Bury, Stockport and QPR. This season it will be Arsenal, Manchester United and Chelsea.



Whilst some of their new opponents have been spending £10 million or more on one player, manager Graham Taylor has spent nothing – not a bean! He has brought three new players in by free transfer, but no-one who will set the football world alight. Elton has been true to his word in not spending his millions.

In these big money days it has been a fantastic achievement to get promoted, but it will be an even bigger task to stay up. Hopefully, Watford FC will not be

relegated in record time, but even if they do go back down, they will be richer for the experience, both financially and in footballing terms, and I'm sure they will bounce straight back for another go.

And Elton himself has said; "I think anyone who saw me on television when we won the play-off final on 31 May will have no doubt about what playing in the Premiership means. For those who didn't see it, yes, I got a bit emotional, and rightly so. This has been a massive achievement for Watford.

Yes, a big percentage of clubs who go up come straight down again, but since when have Watford, Graham Taylor, our players and our fans ever been put off by a challenge? We can do our best to run a professional, welcoming organisation. We have always tried to come at things from a slightly different angle and our challenge now is to see if we can stand out again - irrespective of where we are in the table."



SMALL ADS

EJ PHOTOS FOR SALE

For sale: 10 beautiful photos (EJ close-ups) taken at the Ludwigslust concert in June 99, price: DEM 20 (including postage). *Brigitte Obermaier, Ehegarten 4, D-88494 Neumarkt – St. Veit, GERMANY, +49 (0) 8722 / 1498.*

END OF SEASON SALE:

Vinyl albums, 7" & 12" singles; some rarities; from my EJ collection. Request a full list from: *Mireille Mölbert, Zaunweg 11, D-80805 Munich, GERMANY; e-mail: HerculesFA@bigfoot.com*

LOOKING FOR EVERYTHING

ABOUT ELTON JOHN

Esp. Recent videos from 1990 on (TV appearances, interviews, concerts), newspaper clippings, and so-called rare EJ-songs (b-sides, demo versions etc.): *Esther Kapohl, Dostojewskistr. 17, D-65187 Wiesbaden, DEUTSCHLAND.*

LIST OF ELTON JOHN ITEMS

FOR SALE

Small, but beautifully formed list of Elton John items for sale - including 7", 12", LPs, CDs, books and other memorabilia. Please write to: *Stuart Plant, 22, Paris Road, Scholes, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire, UK or e.mail:stuart@scholes.prestel.co.uk*

WANTED - ELTON CONCERT

PHOTOS

... of the Wembley Stadium concert in June 98 (without Billy Joel). Please write to: *Mark Snape, 6 Dundonald Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9TB, UK.*

HEART IN THE RIGHT PLACE...

Fan and Club Member David Wright gives us his views, with some interesting facts, about Elton's recent heart operation.....

Well, didn't Elton give us all a scare? When the Italian concerts were cancelled due to heat-stroke my first reaction was "silly so-and-so, he's old enough and ugly enough to know how much sun and heat he can cope with!" When he then had an ear infection I began to wonder if something was really wrong. Then the pacemaker operation was announced and I am sure many fans were seriously worried. The media coverage I saw gave some of the information but didn't answer all the questions I wanted to ask. So I spoke to one the world's leading heart surgeons, Dr Tony Rickards, for some help with the following facts:

1. Elton has had a long history of alcoholism, cocaine addiction and bulimia but this is not likely to have contributed to his recent scare.
2. If his heart problem had not been diagnosed, he would have started fainting with the danger of death.
3. I cringed at the thought of local anaesthetic for such an operation, but apparently this is normal!

4. I was concerned that Elton had gone back to Nice when his Windsor home is very close to the London clinic. However, there are complications with less than 1% of pacemaker patients.

5. Dr Rickards has patented several pacemakers himself but Elton is not carrying one of his.



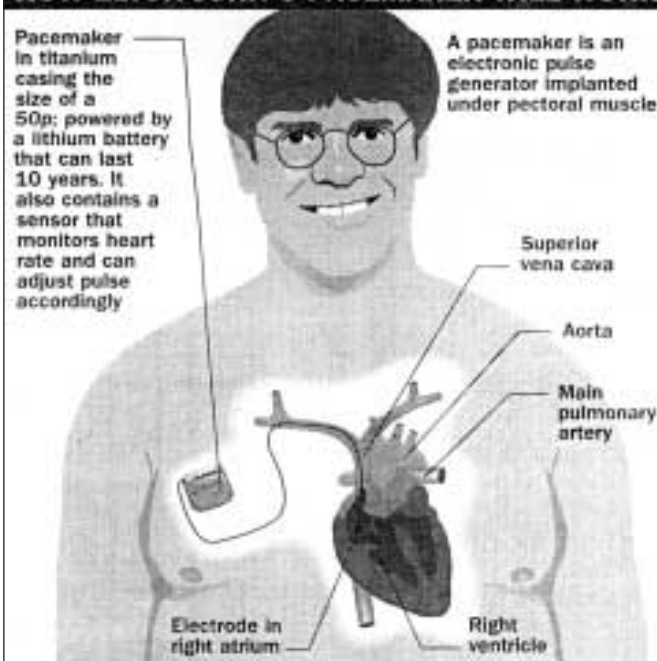
6. We were told that a simple movement such as brushing his hair could dislodge the wires. This brought images of him tiptoeing around forever, but it is only a concern for the first 48 hours.

7. A pacemaker lasts for 8 to 10 years and would then need replacing.

8. And now the big one. Pacemaker patients can expect to return to a normal life quite quickly. It concerned me that Elton does not lead a normal life! He has an incredibly busy schedule and hasn't stopped touring for several years. We have seen backstage footage of him fighting for breath. On top of that there have been film scores and musicals. Whilst composing and recording are probably not too stressful, performing is physically very demanding. It seriously worried me that if he doesn't slow his schedule down he could finish himself off. Should he slow down or stop performing? Dr Rickards says "Let him carry on."

9. Elton's life expectancy is no different than it was before.

HOW ELTON JOHN'S PACEMAKER WILL WORK



I would like to express my thanks to Dr Rickards for his help.

Also, if Elton reads this and thinks I am being intrusive or critical of his lifestyle, I hope I am not. Like all fans, I was simply concerned and, it goes without saying I wish him all the very best for a full recovery.

PUFFING LIKE A GRAND OLD LADY...

Hello. I love the new design and the name for the Hercules quarterly, now called "The Mag"! Thank you for a job well done. I did find one tiny error, though. In the last issue (#47), there was an article about Dusty Springfield ("You Don't Have To Say You Love Me" by George Matlock) which contained an omission that I think you and EJ's fans might have missed. Mr. Matlock stated that Dusty appeared as a background singer on one album (Tumbleweed Connection). I guess he forgot about when she, along with Clyde King, Sherlie Matthews, and Jessie Mae Smith, sang background vocals on "The Bitch Is Back" (Caribou). I'm sure that it was an honest mistake, but one that needed to be acknowledged. Who, besides me, takes the time to read and remember every little detail of the album credits anyway? Well, I'm looking forward to the next issue of "The Mag" with many more to come.

Dixie Lily (Ed's note: yes, really!), USA

**AND IT'S TIMES LIKE THESE WHEN WE ALL
NEED TO HEAR THE RADIO.....**

When I was asked to come on a radio show recently, I mentioned to them Hercules was the name of Elton's international fan club, when talking about Elton's full name. This was a 30 minute long interview on one of France's biggest radio networks - France Inter, on a show called "Hexagonal Pursuit".

I was interviewed as a fan and a specialist of Elton's career. The journalists were very impressed about how knowledgeable I am on this subject! They couldn't find any question I couldn't answer. It was a great experience.

Olivier Flous, France

Ed's note: Thank you Olivier for remembering Hercules. Many fans go to pieces when asked about Elton by media. If you're on radio, tv, or a newspaper, please remember to mention Hercules like Olivier did.

Send your letters to Tammi Law, Editor (address on page 2) or e.mail her at HerculesEd@aol.com.

LYRIC QUIZ ANSWERS

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Tonight | 7) Better off dead |
| 2) I guess that's why they call it the blues | 8) I never knew her name |
| 3) Candle in the wind | 9) Love lies bleeding |
| 4) Curtains | 10) Club at the end of the street |
| 5) Runaway train | 11) Amy |
| 6) Latitude | 12) Hymn 2000 |

PLEASE REMEMBER...

ALWAYS state your membership number if you send a cheque to Hercules, or pay into one of the Club accounts.

ALWAYS let us know the expiry date of the card, and the cardholders name.

Strong reaction to new-look Hercules Fanzine

Well, it seems as though you love your new-look Hercules fanzine! We received a great response from you after the June issue of The Mag was published - here are just a few of your comments...

I thought the last issue of Hercules was absolutely brilliant. It now has an even more professional look and it's certainly worthy of the musical superstar we all love so much. Keep up the good work!

D Hewett, UK

Nice job on the new Mag with better paper and color cover. My preference as an EJ fan is the Hercules Mag over any others available out there, which at present have no direction. Hercules contents are what EJ fans really want to read. Once again, good job.

Fooska, USA

Love the new look. I drooled when I took The Mag out of the mailing envelope. Impressive and a big boost for HERCULES. Very pleasing to the eyes and easier to read. Graphics are always a good reference point when trying to quickly find the text again. Looking forward to many more issues. Keep those printing presses rolling!

Reggie Zippo, USA

Thank you so much for the great coloured magazine issue for June 99. I appreciate you taking the time, and look forward to hearing more about Sir Elton soon!

E Perry, N Ireland

FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND

HERCULES is very sad to report the passing of a very dear friend of many Hercules members and staff, as well as many Elton fans worldwide. Keith Levine of New York City died on August 22, 1999 at the young age of 38. He has left many broken hearts among his friends. We will always remember all he did for us, in getting together EJ fans on many occasions in the 1980's and 90's. Keith, you will be missed so much.

Please note that if you have paid your Membership Fee by Credit Card, your card will automatically be charged again for the renewal fee, at the end of your membership year. If your card has expired in the meantime, or if you have switched companies, please forward your new Credit Card details to Hercules. Coordination in time for your next renewal.

TOUR DATES PLANS & RUMOURS

SOLO PIANO TOUR EUROPE

- 4-Sept-99 Maidstone, Kent, UK. Leeds Castle (open air)
- 5-Sept-99 Maidstone, Kent, UK. Leeds Castle (open air)
- 6-Sept-99 Maidstone, Kent, UK. Leeds Castle (open air)

SOLO PIANO TOUR USA

- 23-Sept-99 Jacksonville, FL. Coliseum
- 24-Sept-99 Atlanta, GA. Phillips Arena
- 28-Sep-99 Springfield, IL. tba
- 29-Sept-99 Rockford, IL. Metro Center
- 01-Oct-99 Champaign-Urbana, IL. Assembly Hall
- 02-Oct-99 Moline, IL. Mark Of The Quad Cities Arena
- 05-Oct-99 Madison, WI. tba
- 15-Oct-99 New York, NY. Madison Square Garden
- 16-Oct-99 New York, NY. Madison Square Garden

SMASH HITS / MISCELLANEOUS

- 21-Sept-99 Kansas City, KS. Missouri Municipal Auditorium, Smash Hits Tennis Tournament
- 25-Sept-99 Las Vegas, NV. MGM Grand Arena, Andre Agassi's Grand Slam

ELTON JOHN & TINA TURNER

- 30-Dec-99 Las Vegas, NV Thomas & Mack Center

TOUR 2000

- 18-June-00 Prague, Czech Republic, t.b.a. (postponed from June 30, 1999)

1999~2000

This is no official tour schedule, as it also includes rumoured and unconfirmed dates.

Smash Hits Auction Dec. '98
(Photo: Sharon Kalinoski)

A photograph of three men standing on a football pitch. The man on the left is wearing a white football jersey with a red and black logo. The man in the middle is wearing a light blue business suit. The man on the right is wearing a yellow football jersey with a red and black logo. All three are smiling and talking on mobile phones. The background is a red and yellow patterned wall.

For up-to-the-minute news about Elton,
callers in the UK can call the

HERCULES Hotline on 0906 888 20 20

Calls cost 60p per minute anytime