



The Return Of
Change Of Scenery
The James Fanzine



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Change of Scenery - The James Fanzine
Issue 14

Welcome to Change of Scenery, after a great deal of persuasion & much discussion, and the amount of e-mails received we have concluded there is still a demand for Change of Scenery in printed form.

We hope you like the latest issue and feel the inclination to contribute to future issues as we rely heavily on your input into the fanzine. We hope we reflect your views and opinions of James, please let us know any other topics you want included & we will try to accommodate them.

We would like to thank all the contributors to this issue (sorry about the short notice) hopefully we will be more organised next issue.

Hope to see you on the tour

Su

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The Beginners Guide to the James Studio Album Catalogue

By Tim Allan

Stutter (July 1986)

It is no wonder that the hyperactivity, chaos and downright silliness that runs through *Stutter* had the indie critics hailing James' creative talents as a breath of fresh air. The extent to which the album was ever going to have mainstream appeal is questionable, such is its extreme departure from the poodle perm pop of the time, but its diversity and quirkiness makes it fascinating listening more than 20 years on. Many of the songs have the signatures of ex-founders Paul Gilbertson (guitar) and Gavin Whelan (drums) written all over them, although the former had been replaced by Larry Gott prior to recording.

Few of the songs have what conventional songwriting wisdom would call a structure, many do the unexpected, and all they sound as if they have been glued together with Pritt-Stick. Think the first Coral album, but much more weird.

For those fans whose interest in the band is largely post-Sit Down, *Stutter* will be a real eye-opener. It remains to this day as far removed from any other album they have made.

Killer track: Withdrawn (or Johnny Yen)

Killer lyric: "I've been digging this grave/but now that it's made/I see that black is one hell of a colour" (Black Hole)

Strip-mine (Sept 1988)

Strip-mine was the second and final studio album made by the Booth-Gott-Glennie-Wheeler line-up. Not helped by an almost total lack of publicity and marketing by Sire (the band's record company at the time), it died a commercial death. To coin a much over-used phrase in music reviews, it was criminally ignored.

The album has a largely acoustic feel throughout and includes some of the band's first verse-chorus-verse-chorus constructions (What For, Ya-Ho, Are You Ready?). For this writer, however, it is some of the less conventional offerings, in particular Fairground, Vulture and Not There that touch near perfection, although it can't be denied that in terms of mass appeal, these can at best be filed under 'quirky'.

Strip-mine sounds today like a mature and polished version of *Stutter* – the invention and occasional randomness is still there, but the songs have been securely bolted together and given a bit of spit and polish for good measure. It is the perfect album to play to your James fan friend who has got everything from Goldmother onwards and thinks he's heard it all. He'll soon realise he hasn't.

Killer track: What For

Killer lyric: "Defects we're born with/but poisons we choose" (Not There)

Goldmother (June 1990, reissued May 1991)

Compare *Strip-mine* and *Goldmother* and it is clear that you are listening to two different bands. You are, literally. By the time James entered the studio to record *Goldmother*, Gavin had been replaced by the steadier but no less brilliant Dave Bayton-Power, Saul Davies had joined on violin and guitar, Andy Diagram was parping away on trumpet and, to complete the new septet, Mark Hunter had been appointed on keys.

In short, *Goldmother* is where it all went right. And where James went BIG. Gone are the twitchy and off-kilter moments from *Stutter* and *Strip-mine*, replaced by four-to-the-floor stompers like Come Home, How Was It For You and, of course, Sit Down (on the re-issued version). Although the album is rightly known for the aforementioned singles, its completeness is helped in no small measure by the softer moments – Crescendo and Top Of The World.

Although the big snare sound and guitars sound a bit dated today (especially on the sprawling epic that is Government Walls), they take nothing away from what was, and still is, probably the most important turning point in James' album history.

Tip: If you're buying *Goldmother* for the first time, seek out the original version with Hang On and Crescendo included. They made way for Lose Control and Sit Down on the re-issue, both of which can be found on the Best Of and Fresh as a Daisy compilations.

Killer track: Come Home

Killer lyric: "If I cannot be faithful/must accept betrayal/when your turn comes to leave me/I'll my free ways have failed?" (Top of the World)

Seven (Feb 1992)

James' 'stadium album' was viewed in the press as evidence of what happens when you get all big and successful. And granted, there's too much production, too many layers and too much fancy studio noodling for my tastes, but to dismiss it out of hand was shortsighted. Anyone who saw them on tour around this time well, I guarantee, have fonder memories of the gigs than the album, simply because they conveyed the quality and energy of the songs so much better, but *Seven* nonetheless has its moments.

Born of Frustration, Ring The Bells and Sound would become staples of the live set for years, albeit in various different guises, and it is with these in mind that I make my point: the songs on *Seven* were largely great but the recorded versions didn't quite do them justice.

Seven is the album I would most like to see them re-record today. Free from the shackles of trying to justify their status as major league indie players and with a few less studio toys to play with (not to mention the constant press and publicity distractions that hampered the writing and recording), the results could be stunning.

Killer track: Born of Frustration

Killer lyric: "Climb out of your well/it's not so deep/always wanting help/will make you weak" (Protect Me)

Laid (Sept 1993)

Around the time of *Laid*, Jim said in the press that he felt James were reaching their songwriting peak. Even now, 14 years on, it's hard to disagree with him. At the risk of sounding a bit over the top, *Laid* is timeless. Unlike *Seven* and *Goldmother*, none of its songs give a clue as to its era and it sounds like no-one else that the press would consider to be James' peers.

Laid is the antidote to *Seven*'s grandeur: acoustic, understated and subtle. Unlike on *Seven*, the songs have space to breathe and there are no (or very few) studio effects used anywhere on the album. It's not as easily accessible as *Seven* or *Goldmother*, or perhaps the two most recent albums (*Millionaires* and *Pleased To Meet You*) but for me it will stand the test of time to a far greater degree. It is, dare I say it, James for grown-ups.

Larry's slide guitar is prominent throughout, as is Eno's insistence that the band should not seek perfection but should concentrate instead on capturing the mood of the songs. Whatever they paid him, he was worth double.

Killer track: Sometimes

Killer lyric: "I'm a member of an ape-like race at the arsehole end of the twentieth century" (Low Low Low)

Wah Wah (Sept 1994, with Brian Eno)

After *Stutter*, *Wah Wah* must be considered the most non-James album they have made. Largely experimental, part instrumental and in many places (deliberately) unfinished, it was recorded at the same time as *Laid* (see James websites or Stuart Macdonald's *Folklore* for a full insight into the whys and wherefores). It showcases the rough diamonds that arise from James jams and offers a view of the band that had never previously been seen. It is their version of Dylan's *Basement Tapes*.

Wah Wah contains few 'proper songs' but many 'pieces of music'. The likes of *Say Say Something*, *Building a Fire* and *Sayonara* are splendid, although it is the sort of album which will give you a new favourite with each listen.

If you are new to James, save *Wah Wah* for another day. It is the connoisseur's choice, to be enjoyed once the albums proper have been digested.

Killer track: Tomorrow (later to appear on *Whiplash*)

Killer lyric: "Hide your deep depression/face of self-control/show to the world all confidence/pray your fears won't show" (*Pressure's On*)

Whiplash (Feb 1997)

Forward wind three years: Larry has gone, Tim has done his solo album, inter-band relations are starting to fray and they're almost bankrupt. All things considered, *Whiplash* wasn't such a bad effort.

On the one hand, it offers *She's a Star*, *Tomorrow* and *Waltzing Along*, not to mention the beautiful *Blue Pastures*. On the other, it acts as a slightly embarrassing reminder of their foray into techno-indie (*Greenpeace*, *Go to the Bank*), which of all their musical adventures must surely be the most ill-advised. Tim dares not to have played it for years, such is his annoyance at the production. But whilst the *Whiplash* era was a heady one for a lot of fans, as it marked the band's comeback after a lengthy hiatus, my view is that the album's failings are in its lack of cohesion and, in simple terms, good tunes, rather than in its production.

Whiplash should be taken in context and remembered for the fact that it contained some brilliant singles. I doubt it is anyone's favourite James album, but then again it is in pretty esteemed company.

Killer track: *Blue Pastures*

Killer lyric: "My TV's telling me that all our money goes into the military" (*Lost a Friend*)

Millionaires (Oct 1999)

I never know what to say about *Millionaires*.... but as I have to say something, I'll say the same thing I said about *Seven*: some great songs, not too sure on some of the production. It almost does it for me (I know what I'm Here For, *Fred Astaire* and *Strangers* are great), but *Afro Lover*, *We're Going To Miss You* and *Someone's Got It In For Me* leave it a bit short.

It's very accessible (a good number of my friends and my wife discovered James through *Millionaires*) and it was received pretty well in the press. If you've already got *Laid* and *Goldmother* and you've got just enough money in your pocket for one more James album then look no further. *Millionaires* sits very nicely in the James catalogue, not at the top, but certainly not at the bottom.

Killer track: I Know What I'm Here For

Killer lyric: "We can cross the race divide/bridge a gap that wasn't really there/when I hold her in my arms/I feel like Fred Astaire" (*Just Like Fred Astaire*)

Pleased to Meet You (July 2001)

A fantastically well rounded album, *Pleased To Meet You* benefits enormously from the songs, or at least several of them, having been road-tested during the previous tour. Unlike, say, *Laid*, it doesn't have a constant theme or feel, but rather offers a bit of everything, from the wonderfully sparse *What Is It Good For*, through the funky English Beefcake and the electro shuffle of *Fire*. But it is the album's more moody moments that stand out, namely the title track and *Junkie*, both of which find Booth on fine lyrical form. Gaudi sees them veer off into *Afro Lover* territory again, but thankfully it is only a brief sojourn.

By the time the album was released, James' commercial stock (in record sale terms) was starting to diminish and it is unlikely that they would have troubled the very upper echelons of the charts, or found the support of the indie journalists, regardless of what they had produced. But these thoughts should be cast aside when listening to *Pleased To Meet You*, as it captures James in quite excellent condition, showing that they can turn their hand to a variety of styles and do all of them very well.

Killer track: *Pleased To Meet You*

Killer lyric: "Baby's Neptune's in your moon/Venus in your fur/she's in bloom from June through June/says love's no noun/love's a verb" (*Falling Down*)

JAMES at Hoxton Square Bar 16/03/2007

By Justhipper

On Halloween in 1992, at the tender age of 19, I saw the most remarkable thing I had witnessed up to that point. It was James' first U.S. tour and they were performing at the re-opening of a club called The Channel with the Tom Tom Club and the Soudragons. I can't remember much about what the other bands did that night but that James performance possibly changed my life. Seriously. In 1997, when James returned after a 3 year hiatus with their *Whiplash* album, I let a friend in England talk me into flying over for a couple of shows. So I talked another American friend into coming with me. On that tour I fell in love with Manchester, decided to apply to graduate school at the University of Manchester, came over to study, met The Ledge and never looked back (or went back, for that matter), all this because of my youthful obsession with James.

James simply are one of the foundations of my musical experience and even though they were never quite the same after Larry Gott departed to study design at Manchester Met in 1997, watching them play always gave me a thrill. So much so that I've probably done that around 70 times at this point. Along the way, with the help of a mate, I founded a [James website](#), made some amazing friends, and travelled the length and breadth of Britain with a group of like-minded people. At every James show between 1997-2001, wherever we turned up, there was always a group of people we knew offering us a bed for the night, up for a friendly drink and ready to enjoy the show. When Tim left in 2001, we made our final tour of the country after them, cried our eyes out at Wembley Arena and started taking bets on when the comeback tour would happen.

So, when the announcement arrived that the band were reforming with the 1994 lineup to release a new Best Of, a new album and, play a tour, intercontinental arrangements were hastily made, gig tickets bought and the anticipation has been rife. Bearing this in mind, imagine my excitement and my surprise when Dave over at [One of the Three](#) sent me a text at about 11am on Thursday morning telling me that James were playing a secret gig in London the following night and there was a link to buy tickets on his website. A hasty conversation with Su from the *Change of Scenery* fanzine and some minor pleading with my boss later, I had a bus ticket, a gig ticket and plans to make my way down south the following morning. The Ledge, on the other hand, told me I was mental and said that they only way he'd go all that way for one gig was if there was a chance they were going to play his favourite James track. 'If Things Were Perfect.' But, he said, we both knew that would never happen again.

So there I was about 30 hours later standing inside the Hoxton Bar and Grill with a group of familiar faces waiting to get into the room where the gig would take place listening to James soundcheck 'Seven' and 'Stripmining.' We knew it was going to be special, and not just in a watching-an-arena-band-play-their-first-gig-in-six-years-to-250-people sort of way.

Sure enough, we were in for a special night. Upon taking the stage, Tim Booth, wearing a sling on his right arm for a shoulder injury, told us that we were in for an unusual set as they were going to play a range of songs from their whole career, including a couple of new songs and a couple they had never played live. True to his promise they launched into 'Seven,' a track we're pretty sure they haven't played on stage since 1992. It sounded odd, a bit lacking in punch, but the band looked a bit nervous to be back on stage and the crowd did not quite know how to react, holding unusually way back for a James gig as there was none of the usual elbows to the head and chanting. 'Destiny Calling' saw the band pick up a bit of pace and some confidence, as Larry Gott in particular was finding it hard to disguise his enjoyment and Tim struggled to keep from dancing and doing himself further injury. By the time they reached the first new song in the set, 'Who Are You,' they were ready to reveal their future to the crowd. It opened with a serious rock riff, driven by Larry Gott, and sounded quite a departure from the muddy MOR pop-rock of the final two James albums.



The first real treat of the night, however, arrived with 'Play Dead,' possibly my favourite track off *Whiplash*, and one I do not ever remember having seen them

perform before. They followed it up with a rowdy version of 'Fine' off *Pleased to Meet You*, also receiving its first ever live outing. The crowd still seemed subdued but Tim gave us all a big smile as he announced an old song before launching into 'Stripmining.' And oh wow! Not only did I never expect to hear anything that old live ever again, but in such a manner, standing three feet from them as Saul twisted back and forth madly on his violin and Larry looked intense. They followed it up with 'Really Hard' off *Stutter*, just Tim, Jim and Larry, the rest of the band standing back and watching their founding fathers. 'S-O' was an absolute corker, despite being so serious and quiet, both Tim and Larry couldn't contain giant grins as they sang.



It was, surprisingly, 'Getting Away With It' that finally got the crowd dancing and singing along. Now, I don't know if the crowd were unfamiliar with the earlier songs, I'd be surprised if they were, but I never expected the biggest reception of the night to be for one of the later, poorer singles. It absolutely sparkled on the night as we all sang and danced in unison. The band used the momentum to throw in a second new song, called 'Chameleon' and tipped to be the next single released in conjunction with the new Singles package in April. It was another guitar-driven rock stomper with a catchy chorus and I'm looking forward to hearing it without loads of accidental feedback.

As the band brought themselves into the home stretch it was going to be hits all the way as they cracked on with 'Say Something' and 'Sometimes' before deciding to forego leaving the stage before the encore as they'd have had to

walk through the crowd to do so. So they went straight into, yes, 'If Things Were Perfect,' thereby making The Ledge eternally jealous and me incredibly gleeful. The electric version of 'Protect Me' followed, a song I'd only seen done acoustically during the Laid tour in 1994. They finished off with resoundingly joyful renditions of 'Ring the Bells' and 'Laid,' despite the set list indicating 'Come Home' instead.

This was such a surreal night in general that I don't know if I'm more surprised by the shocked and subdued crowd and band or the riskiness of such an unexpected setlist but even though it was one of the least wild James gigs I've seen, it will probably be one of the most memorable. On the basis of last night's performance, I am more excited about their upcoming gigs than I ever thought I would be because it looks like they've rekindled their love of just playing together. If they really make it about being on stage playing the songs they want to play rather than churning out the hits and trying to write top 40 smash singles then maybe we will see James make a return to form. On the evidence of the two new tracks, they're certainly trying something a little different and maybe the new material will show a bit of that old spark and see a real welcome return to form.



GLIDER REVIEW

By Geezer Pude

In 2001 in a garden shed three men – collaboration between Tim (vocals), Mike (guitars) and James (drums) - decided to have a go at making music and this is how the story of glider began. The three men and their carefully crafted brand of guitar based indie-pop. James were one of their biggest influences along with era-spanning icons such as Dylan and The Beatles, indie favourites The Smiths, The Stone Roses, and the more laid-back sounds of Crowded House and Coldplay.

They have recorded several demos and two EP's and are seeking a record label.

In the beginning, some now long-since forgotten cover versions formed the basis of the band's early offerings until All Left To Prove, their first self-penned effort, lit a passion for writing which continues to burn stronger with each new tune.

An honest admission about hoping you've found the right person for the long haul, All Left To Prove was the first song they recorded in the autumn of 2001 at Mushroom Studios in Essex and still remains a favourite.

They continued writing dividing their time between the band's Chelmsford base and Tim's then hometown of Sheffield.

Among the fruits of 2002 were Who You Are, their first ballad, and Blame. Both of which feature on the bands second demo, once again recorded at Mushroom Studios. This recording also featured the band's guest musician, Lucy on trumpet.

A move into performing live necessitated an expansion to the four-piece line-up at the start of 2003. This is where James lives a friend of Tim's from years back and Glider's newest member on guitar comes in. As well as adding depth to the live sound Jim was also a key member in writing new material.

In February 2004 the band returned to the studio to record the four songs that make up The Rumour Mill EP. Marking a significant step forward in terms of both song writing and production. The Rumour Mill EP was the best reflection to date of the mould the band has cast for itself.

Morning Sunshine and Sheffield Song received airplay at www.pulserated.com. Sheffield Song being a jealous call to people who are living their dreams. Headline News, a 'garden shed' original (my personal favourite) and The Storyteller, with Jim sharing lead guitar duties, bemoans the ageing and inevitable separation of your favourite bands.

Early 2004 also saw Glider welcome another member into the set-up, Loz, a drinking mate of Jim's, who took on bass guitar duties and brings many years' playing experience.

As the summer of 2005 dawned, the band once again entered Stag Studios in Witham to record their fourth EP, titled 'Go on the Hood'. This contained 4 new songs, Chances Which sounds very much like Tim Booth in my opinion, Scuzzy which is a very upbeat catchy tune, Lay Back the best track on the EP and Are You Warming To Me.

The band played their first live gig at Finnegan's Wake in Ealing Broadway in London on 29th July which went really well.

This then brings them to 2007 where they have written new material and are going to be recording this towards the end of July for release in August.

To find out more about glider, to buy their EP's or listen to tracks visit their website at

www.glidermusic.co.uk

2007 Tour Dates

TUESDAY APRIL 17 – DUBLIN OLYMPIA

WEDNESDAY APRIL 18 – CARLISLE SANDS CENTRE

FRIDAY APRIL 20 – GLASGOW ACADEMY

SATURDAY APRIL 21 – GLASGOW ACADEMY

MONDAY APRIL 23 – NEWCASTLE ACADEMY

TUESDAY APRIL 24 – BIRMINGHAM ACADEMY

THURSDAY APRIL 26 – LONDON BRITTON ACADEMY

FRIDAY APRIL 27 – LONDON BRITTON ACADEMY

SATURDAY APRIL 28 – MANCHESTER ARENA

SATURDAY JULY 7 – T IN THE PARK

SATURDAY AUGUST 18 – V FESTIVAL STAFFORD

SUNDAY AUGUST 19 – V FESTIVAL CHELMSFORD

WHAT JAMES MEANS TO ME.

A MULTITUDE OF PARADOXES.

By Johnny Yen

I am passionate about James, I don't just enjoy their music, as I do with most of the other bands that I love, I adore it. I espouse the virtues of James over and over again to anyone who will listen, and to most who aren't interested or have heard it all before. I want everyone I know to love James, but I want to keep them for myself.

I am frustrated by James too, I cannot understand their lack of commercial success or critical acclaim. They should be a global stadium phenomena by now, not touring small British venues, but I love the joy of experiencing them in this environment. Just when they appear to be on the peak of commercial success and global dominance they fade away, only to reappear years later without fanfare, seemingly to start again. Just when you think they have gone forever, they're back. James are a band not to be second guessed.

The music too, is paradoxical, songs can be both intimate and anthemic, personal and communal. Even in the biggest of their anthems, as Tim addresses the misfits, the drop outs, the individuals, he is also talking directly to you. You have felt the breath of Sadness, you have felt you're touched by madness, you have felt yourself ridiculous. In Sometimes, we hear the tragedy of a boy, struck and killed by lightning, the song is set within a huge storm. It's also an upbeat, joyous beautiful love song.

James can write songs as diverse as Greenpeace, If Things Were Perfect, Fine, Gold Mother, Born of Frustration or Five-O. These can consist of Drum'n'Bass, a simple acoustic guitar accompaniment, or a multilayered orchestral arrangement, and all are instantly recognisable as James, and are labelled classic James. No other band is capable of doing this without reinvention and a huge outcry from the fans. They can write lyrics as meaningful as "When you let me fall, grew my own wings, now I'm as tall as the sky" alongside seemingly nonsensical lines such as "Cut the Herman Free from the Hesse!"

I'm 35 now, and have been a James fan for about 19 Years. When I heard they were back I shared my joy with everyone, and grinned like a Cheshire Cat for weeks. I lap up any snippet of news like it's the Holy Grail, and the thought of extending my cd collection past Getting away with it on the singles front and Pleased to Meet You on the albums front excited me like nothing has for years.

JAMES : LONDON NAMBUCCA

12.4.07

By Oneofthethree

So, after shoulder issues, James finally made it to the stage for their second comeback show in the rather oddly shaped Nambucca venue on the Holloway venue. As at Hoxton, they started off with an extended instrumental introduction to Seven, leading off with Dave on drums before going into Play Dead, one of the survivors from the Hoxton setlist. New single Who Are You sounded much more composed and was met with appreciation and no little singing now it has had some good radio play around XFM and Radio 6.

The first of the bigger hits played was Say Something with its new muted, but effective, opening verse which emphasises the power of the chorus. She's A Star was played later in similar vein and it will be very interesting to see how this approach translates from the two small rooms in London to the wider, more open spaces of next week.

Chain Mail followed, an unexpected surprise, and in a rearranged version (well, hey it's been twenty one years) felt odd. It didn't crash into the chorus where it was expected to, the pace of the delivery of the lyrics was slowed down. Did it work? - to be honest, it was like hearing a totally new song and I'm not sure you can ever really tell with them in a live environment. Really Hard had no such issues. A totally gorgeous, dreamy song hidden away on Stutter and One Man Clapping, for me this is the highlight of the first phase of James and hopefully its resurrection will lead people towards Stutter and re-evaluate it.

She's A Star followed, the first time in a live setting Larry played the slide guitar section that characterises this song. Saul and Mark left the stage for a song as Riders was performed as a four-piece in the way it was nearly twenty years ago.

Another new song came next, provisionally titled Upside. A fast tempo track with a definite improvised feel with Tim reading the lyrics from notes made when they were finished earlier in the day. A return to old James - I remember them performing Say Something in Hamburg in 1992 (still my favourite ever James gig) in similar circumstances. It sounded fresh and full of promise and bodes well for the full album due "in a long time" as Tim responded when asked.

Heavens followed, another addition to the set from the back catalogue and another single that wasn't (although by my reckoning, we'd have had seven singles off Seven).

Chameleon got its second airing tonight and sounded much much better. The improved mix and sound at Nambucca meant the lyrics came through clearer and the band had pulled together the music so it made more sense in the live environment. Can't wait to hear the recorded version.

As if the delving into the past hadn't been enough, Don't Wait That Long made an appearance. Not wishing to criticise Adrian, but this is where Larry really couldn't be replaced. Hoxton had been such a buzz and there had been an air of disbelief about what we were witnessing that tonight really drove home just how great a set of musicians the band are. The whole interaction of the six of them was something that anyone not coming on board until Whiplash or later would have witnessed. For an oldie like me, it was emotional stuff but the fears of whether this would work now seem banished.

How Was It For You was everything it has always been. Fast, frenetic, exciting, passionate, until the lights and sound went out close to the end. Fortunately this was restored very quickly for the appropriately titled Getting Away With It (All Messed Up). Although the single didn't set the charts on fire and the album it came from not really picked up by many except the hardcore, it has survived as a real James anthem, a latter day Sil Down.

Onto the encore, which started with a wonderful rendition of Gold Mother, dedicated to Phillip Shepherd (who worked with Tim on Manchester Passion) who'd just become a father. Old James (or new new James depending on which way you look at it) was very much to the fore, the song structure allowing improvisation, both musically and vocally. To finish, Tomorrow and Sometimes hopefully placated some of the dissenting voices (of which there were fortunately only a couple) who were looking for more of the bigger hits.

So, a real success, but it'll be interesting to see where this goes from here, how much of this set and Hoxton's, will make it into the setlists for the main tour and what the audience reaction will be to a set that isn't the Best Of played cover to cover. But last night is what James are about, or always have been to me - taking risks, played the unexpected songs, pulling a totally new one out of the hat and going with it. It's great to have them back and hopefully they'll stay. I suspect it won't be an easy ride and there will be backwards as well as forward steps, but James have refound the spirit that drew me and so many others to them in the eighties and early nineties. Roll on Dublin.

SETLIST : Seven, Play Dead, Who Are You, Fine, Say Something, Chain Mail, Really Hard, She's A Star, Riders, Upside, Heavens, Chameleon, Don't Wait That Long, How Was It For You, Getting Away With It, Gold Mother, Tomorrow, Sometimes.



Fresh As A Daisy - The Singles

Released 30th April on 2x CD, DVD and 1x CD editions.



The Complete Singles Collection 1983-2007

Disc 1

1. What's The World
2. Folklore
3. Fire So Close
4. If Things Were Perfect
5. Hymn From A Village
6. Chairmail
7. So Many Ways
8. Johnny Yen
9. What For
10. Ya Ho
11. Sit Down
12. Come Home
13. How Was It For You?
14. Lose Control
15. Sound
16. Born Of Frustration
- 17.

Disc 2

1. Ring The Bells
2. Seven
3. Sometimes
4. Laid
5. Jan J
6. Say Something
7. She's A Star
8. Tomorrow
9. Waltzing Along
10. Destiny Calling
11. Runaround
12. I Know What I'm Here For
13. Just Like Fred Astaire
14. We're Going To Miss You
15. Getting Away With It
16. Who Are You
17. Chameleon



1x CD Edition

1. Ring The Bells
2. Sometimes
3. How Was It For You?
4. Come Home
5. Destiny Calling
6. Laid
7. Born Of Frustration
8. Chameleon
9. I Know What I'm Here For
10. Seven
11. Just Like Fred Astaire
12. Waltzing Along
13. Say Something
14. Who Are You
15. Lose Control
16. Sound
17. Getting Away With It (All Messed Up)
18. Tomorrow
19. She's A Star
20. Sit Down

How Was it For Me?

By Chris Orton

I can't be the only James fan who found themselves just a little bit despondent back at the end of 2001. Tim had announced that he was leaving, and nobody knew quite what was going to happen. Rumours of discontent in the band had been circulating for some time, and Tim's departure seemed to confirm that. We were told that the band would continue in some form, possibly with a new singer, but things just went quiet for a long, long time. Some members of the band said that James had split, some said that they had left the band and some said nothing. Added to this, there just didn't look like there were many other up-and-coming bands around who could try to fill the void left by James' disappearance from the music scene. This curious state of limbo continued for five long years, with only Tim's solo album (which was pretty good in itself), a B-Sides album and the live album in between to sustain us. Those years were bleak for the dedicated James fan and it was hard to get used to the idea of there not being any fresh music from the band again. The lack of information coming out from official channels was exasperating: it would have been better if somebody had just come out with a statement saying that the band had split. And then, all of a sudden, everything burst back into life. A cryptic message posted on Oneofthethree's website (which had always kept us up to date more than the official band site for the previous five years) hinted at a reformation. Nobody saw it coming at all: a new tour! A new Best Of album! A new DVD! A new single! A new album! What on earth persuaded Tim to rejoin the band? And what convinced Larry to return to the fray after so long designing his chairs?

The release of another James Best Of album inevitably takes me back to the release of the previous one back in 1998 (nearly ten years ago now folks!) when I finally, belatedly, discovered the band. Up until that March I was only vaguely aware of James, with, predictably *Sit Down* the song that I was most familiar with due to the media seemingly being unwilling to showcase anything else that they had ever done. However, I decided to take a punt on the album and soon found that it was the best bit of shopping in a music store that I ever did. The album was a revelation and made me wish that I had discovered the band much earlier than I did. A combination of football and school had made me completely miss out on the glory days of the early 1990s.

The aforementioned *Sit Down* soon became my least favourite track on the album. Not for me the overly familiar crowd-pleasing piece of pop, the other stuff in the track listing was more like it. *Sit Down* was just too familiar, and I soon began to appreciate the lesser-known material. Its difficult to put my finger on why, but James's music rapidly captured my imagination in a way that no band had ever done before or since. There were plenty of other groups that I liked the odd song by, but none of them had made me want to listen to everything that they had ever done. James's lyrics and music just sounded so right and everything worked together well. There wasn't really one bad song on the album. The impulse to snap up as much of the rest of their output as I could quickly kicked in and I set about getting all of their previous albums and as many singles and bootlegs that I could find, searching market stalls and internet auction sites for the rarer material (and I still have only managed to find a bootleg of *One Man Clapping!* I like James a lot, but couldn't afford to pay the £100 asking prices that some sellers were asking for an original copy). Lyrically, Booth's work is head and shoulders above most of the other musicians of his generation and it was interesting to start to spot the recurring themes in the songs – the sea, falling, love and illness are all familiar elements that keep cropping up. The band seemed to be willing to take the kind of chances that a lot of others would never do. Not many mainstream groups for example, would have a violinist and a trumpeter alongside guitar, bass and drums.

Apparently a number of fans of the band tend not to like the stuff from the era immediately prior to the split as much as the earlier work, but for this listener it is the other way around. While I find the early stuff a little too folk-y, I think that the *Millionaires* and *Pleased to Meet You* period produced some of the finest, most memorable music of James's entire lifespan. A quick glance through my library of songs on iTunes reveals that it is the *Strip-Mine* and *Stutter* age music that I find myself listening to the least, whereas I never seem to tire of anything post-Seven. In fact, *Seven* (the song) is my favourite James track ever – somehow it is the kind of song that makes you feel good every time that you hear it. It is an incredibly uplifting piece of music, and it is great to see that it looks like it is going to be back on the set-list for the forthcoming tour. *Millionaires* threw up some top tunes: *We're Going to Miss You*, *I Know What I'm Here For*, *Strangers* and *Shooting My Mouth Off* all rank highly for this listener.

I'm not quite sure why some fans have such a downer on *Pleased to Meet You* (it's even been described as "karaoke music"). Out of the thirteen songs on the album, there are only two that don't do it for me (*Pleased to*

Meet You and What Is It Good For). Adrian Oxaal's guitar work on some of the tracks really stands out and it's a great shame that he isn't involved with the new incarnation as he is a fantastic guitarist. Its been said that he couldn't hold a candle to his predecessor, but he seems to have been a more than adequate replacement, contributing his own embellishments to long-established music – particularly in live performances. But lets face it, without Larry the band wouldn't even be getting back together. There truly are some cracking pieces of music on the album, from Tim's goodbye note that was Space, to the trippy Fine, to the underrated single Getting Away With It (All Messed Up) to the hauntingly beautiful closing track Alaskan Pipeline. There were some great B-sides from the 1999-2001 period too, particularly Tim's duet with Sinead O' Connor for I Defeat. The rest of the band played their hearts out on the later albums too, with good use of Saul on violin on a number of tracks, while extra impact was made in the backing vocal department, by latter-day recruit Michael Kulas.

The reformation appears to be a genuine attempt to do something interesting with the band again. Often, old bands getting back together and gigging are merely cynical attempts to tempt the notes from the wallets of fans. It is easy to go over the old hits, but from the set-lists that have been played at the James warm-up gigs for the spring tour it seems that they have chosen a good, eclectic mix of their work, coupled with two or three of the new songs. Also, the familiar songs are not being presented in a familiar way – new stuff is being done with old pieces of music in an attempt to keep things fresh. It would have been much easier for them to have chosen a dozen or so of the big tracks from the back catalogue to compliment the new best of album, but thankfully they have taken the brave decision to do something different, more challenging and infinitely more interesting. With Larry back in the band there seems to be a renewed enthusiasm for the sextet, even from Tim who I never thought we would ever see singing with James again.

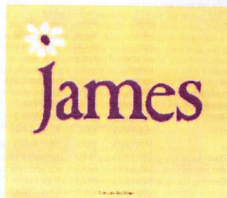
So roll on James and roll on the new album. The new single – Who Are You – is a rollicking good track that rattles along and quickly becomes as catchy as anything else that the band has ever done before. The music press will never truly be in favour of a band that seems prepared to take so many risks in their career and the new single probably won't get very much play on the mainstream radio stations, but the fans will always know the true value of James. Hopefully it won't be long until the album appears as I am in desperate need of some fresh songs to be able to sing along to in the car.

james release discography and chart positions

SINGLES

TITLE	LABEL	CAT NO	RELEASED	CHART POS
JIMONE EP	FACTORY	FAC78	NOVEMBER 1983	-
JAMES II EP	FACTORY	FAC119	MARCH 1985	-
VILLAGE FIRE EP	FACTORY	FAC136	JUNE 1985	-
SIT DOWN - THREE SONGS BY JAMES EP	SIRE	JIM3	MARCH 1986	-
SO MANY WAYS	SIRE	JIM4	JULY 1986	-
WHAT FOR	SIRE	NEG31	MARCH 1988	-
YA HO	SIRE	NEG26	SEPTEMBER 1988	-
SIT DOWN	ROUGH TRADE	RT225	JUNE 1989	77
COME HOME	ROUGH TRADE	RT245	NOVEMBER 1989	85
HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?	FONTANA	JIM5	MAY 1990	32
COME HOME (FLOOD MIX)	FONTANA	JIM6	JUNE 1990	32
LOSE CONTROL	FONTANA	JIM7	NOVEMBER 1990	38
SIT DOWN	FONTANA	JIM8	MARCH 1991	2
SOUND	FONTANA	JIM9	NOVEMBER 1991	9
BORN OF FRUSTRATION	FONTANA	JIM10	JANUARY 1992	13
RING THE BELLS	FONTANA	JIM11	MARCH 1992	37
SEVEN	FONTANA	JIM12	JULY 1992	46
SOMETIMES	FONTANA	JIM13	SEPTEMBER 1993	18
LAID	FONTANA	JIM14	NOVEMBER 1993	25
JAM J / SAY SOMETHING	FONTANA	JIM15	MARCH 1994	24
SHE'S A STAR	FONTANA	JIMCD16	FEBRUARY 1997	9

TOMORROW	FONTANA	JIMCD17 APRIL 1997	12
WALTZING ALONG	FONTANA	JIMCD18 JUNE 1997	23
DESTINY CALLING	FONTANA	JIMCD19 MARCH 1998	17
RUNAGROUND	FONTANA	JIMCD20 MAY 1998	29
SIT DOWN APOLLO 440 MIX	MERCURY	JIMCD21 NOVEMBER 1998	7
I KNOW WHAT I'M HERE FOR	MERCURY	JIMCD22 JULY 1999	22
JUST LIKE FRED ASTAIRE	MERCURY	JIMCD23 OCTOBER 1999	14
WE'RE GOING TO MISS YOU	MERCURY	JIMCD24 DECEMBER 1999	48
GETTING AWAY WITH IT (ALL MESSED UP)	MERCURY	JIMCD25 JUNE 2001	22



MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS ARENA 2001

By Peter Hilton

Whilst on the way to the MEN arena I was wondering what to expect: would be it be GMax of 1990 or 1993? Would it rate as one of the best of the 16 James gigs I've seen? At that moment I did not know whether it would be one of those gigs where I would be proud to brag that I was there? How would the return of Larry and Andy look and sound? I did not know or care.

My wife had a little smile on her face as she said to me, "Well, enjoy, as this is the last one we will go to." I don't know whether she was relieved or sad. One of our first dates was to go to see James at Liverpool in 1997. That night they played "Out To Get You" and it seemed as they were playing it for us. I know they weren't, but that's how they can grab you with their heartfelt lyrics.

I had been studying the arena, pondering the night and already the atmosphere was so different from other shows that I knew that I would not wait the night to end. James have been a part of me since late 1986 when a work friend gave me a copy of *Stutter* which I loved so much that I went on a hunt to get the original vinyl of the *Factory* stuff.

Entering from behind a curtain, the band seemed different to me. Even though Larry and Andy were on stage during the show for the first time in years, this did not account for the sense of strangeness. It came to me when Tim wanted to leave when Saul's equipment broke, and Jim went up to Tim and said something. The band stopped on stage to perform "Hymn from a Village" and "Johnny Yen." Jim was smiling, yet all the band were smiling at first for some time. The thing which I could put my finger on was that they were happy and enjoying the moment.

The set started with "Say Something," "Sometimes" and "Laid" and they followed this triple-whammy with "God only Knows." This is what I can remember of the set list but the set list went out of the window with technical problems when Saul's equipment broke. As I said, Tim wanted to leave but the band played on, just like on the *Titanic*!

The highlight of the show for me was "Top Of the World," when Tim and Saul emerged in the seats on opposite sides of the arena and held the crowd captive with Tim's singing and Saul's violin playing — it was truly a magical moment. My favorite song on the night, however was the unique rendition of "Tomorrow" which was performed with Andy's trumpet accompanying the rest of the band, making this another first.

James did two encores and brought the evening to a close with "Come Home" and "Sit Down." The band didn't want to finish, but finish they did, a whopping 2 hours and 15 minutes after starting the show. They left the crowd wanting more and if they could have played all night, in the crowd, we would have sung and danced and screamed until we dropped.

The best way for James to finish any show is to leave people wanting more and this is what they did.

I could not believe it was over, but when they finished but as time has told, the spirit of James never died and has risen again, looking always to the future.

ALBUMS

TITLE	LABEL	CAT NO	RELEASED	CHART POS
STUTTER	SIRE	JIMLP1	JULY 1986	68
STRIPMINE	SIRE	JIMLP2	SEPTEMBER 1988	90
ONE MAN CLAPPING	ONE MAN	ONEMAN1	MARCH 1989	-
GOLD MOTHER	FONTANA	846 189-4	JUNE 1990	9
GOLD MOTHER (RE-RELEASE)	FONTANA	848 595-4	MAY 1991	2
SEVEN	FONTANA	510 932-4	FEBRUARY 1992	2
LAID	FONTANA	514 943-4	SEPTEMBER 1993	3
WAH WAH	FONTANA	522 827-4	SEPTEMBER 1994	11
WHIPLASH	FONTANA	534 354-4	FEBRUARY 1997	9
THE BEST OF	FONTANA	536 898-2	MARCH 1998	1
MILLIONAIRES	MERCURY	546 386-2	OCTOBER 1999	2
PLEASED TO MEET YOU	MERCURY	586 146-2	JULY 2001	11
ULTRA	FONTANA	548 440-2	DECEMBER 2001	-
GOLD MOTHER (RE-ISSUE)	FONTANA	548 785-2	DECEMBER 2001	-
SEVEN (RE-ISSUE)	FONTANA	548 786-2	DECEMBER 2001	-
LAID (RE-ISSUE)	FONTANA	548 787-2	DECEMBER 2001	-
WHIPLASH (RE-ISSUE)	FONTANA	548 788-2	DECEMBER 2001	-
GETTING AWAY WITH IT LIVE	SANCTUARY	SANDD119	JUNE 2002	-
THE COLLECTION	SPECTRUM	982 480-8	OCTOBER 2004	-
20TH CENTURY MASTERS	UNIVERSAL		JUNE 2006	-



Carlisle Sands Centre 18/04.2007

By Dave Brown

Arriving on stage fifteen minutes later than scheduled, James opened the set with a medley of singles. Eschewing normal opener Seven, they opted to crash in with Destiny Calling, an excellent choice to get the crowd into the mood. Against a screen backdrop of different colour daisies opening and closing, the crowd hollered back every word in unison. This continued through an impassioned Come Home. Immediately noticeable, and a real theme running through the evening (and hopefully the rest of the tour) was the different arrangement from the previous night's show in Dublin. Mark, in particular, was higher in the mix than previously and the subtlety of some of his keyboard playing was marked across the set. Maybe it's the superior sound system in Carlisle to what had been heard before, but the music took on a life of its own tonight. Stood in front of Larry at the side, you could stand and watch in awe at his guitar work and hear exactly what he was playing without everything muddying into one. Tim urged the audience to have unadulterated fun, un-English fun. Seven found its way back into the set next and fitted in more comfortably away from opening the set.

Tim introduced Who Are You as the new single which was getting radio play. An extended opening from Larry is the highlight of the song, the crowd reaction was great though for a song many of them would not yet have heard.

One of the highlights of the set followed. Play Dead appears to have cemented itself into the set and gives the band the chance to show the more electronic side to their music. Backed with swirling blue lights, Tim lost himself in the song, dancing, albeit gingerly with his still-injured shoulder before the stunning crescendo of Tim, Larry and Saul singing in unison.

The new version of Chain Mail benefits each night from the familiarity of the new arrangement and gets a good reaction from the crowd, most of whom, it has to be suspected, are here for the hits. Saul comments that the song is a very old song played by very old people except him who has never aged. Must be something to do with the magic stone he was showing to fans at the airport on Wednesday morning.

The Laid track, Lullaby, gets its first airing of the reunion, and the crowd pay the track due respect. It appears to be played a little faster than the album version, but still demonstrates that James do have mastery of the slower songs in their canon as well, despite this really being the first outing so far for any of them.

Really Hard is simply stunning, the real success of all the songs that have been resurrected to date. There are lots of shouts for Johnny Yen tonight, but I'd gladly not hear it again if it meant this was played in its place. Again, it sounds different. Mark's keyboards add colour and edge, Jim and Larry's guitar

playing ekes out every possible emotion out of the song. Similarly, Five-O demands similar emotions from the listener. James were in their peak (for me 1991-1993) about so much more than just the big hits. Set highlights were the tracks you didn't expect or that they didn't play that often or were unexpected.

Tim, sensing a little unease in the crowd at the lack of hits, addresses it by telling them that the reunion isn't meant to be a dead thing, that it needs to be alive. The new song Upside Downside positively breathes life, vitality and the promise of a glittering future to come, artistically if not commercially. With the lyrics bedded down a little more and the sound clearer, the chorus appears to be about missing a loved one "Upside love you, downside miss you, I'm still here, you're out there. Musically, it's stunning, we get another different arrangement of it tonight, the end section doesn't soar in the way of previous nights but goes off in a different direction that is no less effective. I just hope that once this tour is over, the band do get the time Jim has alluded to and get back into the studio and give us a new album by the end of the year, because that's what this reunion is really about.

Honest Joe was pretty much everything those of us campaigning for its inclusion wanted it to be. Against a very minimalist lighting background with some stunning strobework, the song built to a fantastically frenetic conclusion with Tim spinning around with his microphone, Saul playing violin and Dave holding the whole thing together. Even the annoying prick who thought we wanted to hear his whistling throughout most of the rest of the set couldn't spoil this one.

Still worrying about the audience reaction, Tim tells them that they only have to wait a few more minutes before. It actually took a bit longer as we got an extended opening from Larry which was sounding fantastic until they stopped as there was some confusion as to how the rest of the band should start it. The song itself grows with every play as the band get more familiar with it, and Tim is less confined by needing lyric sheets so can make use of the wider spaces of the stages they're playing on.

The band end the main set with three triumphant singles - Getting Away With It (All Messed Up), Ring The Bells and Sit Down. Tim amusingly turns down requests from the audience by informing them they won't change their path by people shouting out random songs for them to play. The songs get the rest of the crowd going, although it's relatively subdued compared to the final years of James. Although the band are fresh as a daisy, to excuse the bad play on words, the audience has got a little older, and I think a little wiser. Sit Down, apart from an extended intro from Mark, is pretty true to the original (well the 1991 original) and benefits from not being the communal singalong that it could very easily become if the band were there for a greatest hits, let's pretend it's 1991 set.

Taking seemingly forever to come back for the encore, they come back and change the order of the encore. They open it with She's A Star. The version they play is gorgeous, slowed down, emphasising Larry's slide guitar, but for me, doesn't work in the live environment. It isn't the band's fault, you can't really play such a huge hit slowed down like that without the crowd hollering back every word and thus taking away the intimacy that the delivery is giving the

song. A real real shame, but hopefully the band will use this approach to the song if they do radio sessions to support the album release.

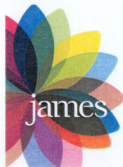
Gold Mother follows, completely different in approach from the previous renditions. It almost stagnates in the middle section, but the improvisation of the band pulls it back from the brink and the ending is triumphant.

Laid is introduced as "the Mexican one" and is probably the straightest rendition of any song tonight, with an extended ending that's familiar from the past. The song is so simple and so effective as it is, I'm not sure there's much you could do with it. The crowd go bonkers.

Tim starts off talking to the crowd about asking them to leave emails before breaking into laughter, Saul joins in the banter, Tim asks everyone to "support their local band" so everything doesn't end up sanitised like Westlife. He berates security for telling a girl to get down off someone's shoulders and then declares he will go and stand on her shoulders (not really a good idea, Tim!), then decides it's a bad idea because it's difficult to sing. The band start playing so he decides to go in anyway and climbs onto the barrier where he gets mobbed by the crowd. It's a sign of the times that he also has digital cameras and mobile phones inches from his face recording the moment. Given he's got no minder to protect him as he had in the past and that he's nursing a damaged shoulder, it's maybe not the smartest thing to do, but it shows that the fire is still there, and tonight demonstrates that, not just with Tim but the whole band. Throughout the set, backing vocals appear to be added by Jim, Larry and Saul when they feel like adding them. It works brilliantly, it's spontaneous, and most importantly of all it's JAMES! Sometimes ends with Tim jumping back on stage (ignoring the step that's been made for him) and the band improvising and extending the song.

And then they're gone. James 2007 triumph in a way that negates fears that this is a reunion simply to fill bank balances. Throughout the set, they take risks, they play almost an hour in the middle without a hint of a single, the songs are structured to allow improvisation and with the lighting and improved sound of these venues, the quality of the songs and the musicianship radiate through.

The setlist was Destiny Calling, Come Home, Seven, Who Are You, Play Dead, Chain Mail, Lullaby, Really Hard, Five-O, Upside Downside, Honest Joe, Chameleon, Getting Away With It (All Messed Up), Ring The Bells, How Was It For You, Sit Down, She's A Star, Gold Mother, Laid, Sometimes



The Videos (DVD Edition)

Promotional Videos

1. Laid
2. She's A Star
3. Come Home
4. I Know What I'm Here For
5. Born Of Frustration
6. Waltzing Along
7. Just Like Fred Astaire
8. Say Something
9. Seven
10. Lose Control
11. Tomorrow
12. What For
13. Runaround
14. We're Going To Miss You
15. Ring The Bells
16. Getting Away With It (All Messed Up)
17. So Many Ways
18. Sound
19. How Was It For You?
20. Destiny Calling
21. Sometimes
22. Sit Down



Bonus Material

1. Say Something (Original Version)
2. Sit Down '98

Extras

The Old Grey Whistle Test

- If Things Were Perfect

Top Of The Pops

- Sit Down (25/12/91)
- Sound (28/11/91)
- Sometimes (TOTP 09/09/93)
- Say Something (31/03/94)

Later... With Jools Holland

- Runaround, She's A Star, Sit Down (24/04/98)
- Just Like Fred Astaire, Someone's Got It In For Me, I Know What I'm Here For (16/10/99)

Plus:

- Full Interactive UK Discography, [weblink to wearejames.com](http://weblink.to/wearejames.com).