‘We have a psychotic need to express ourselves with James. Someone asked me yesterday what’s our drive? And I said personality disorders. We all suffer from personalities. I just need to hit myself on the head a few more times! Then I’ll be all right!’

Tim Booth
IT took over eight years for the band once dubbed "Manchester's best kept secret" to finally become public property. Eight years in which a combination of bad health, bad drugs, bad judgement and an outrageous amount of bad luck conspired to make James’ step from obscurity the longest march in pop history.

James may have thought they were the world’s most talented band, but Tim Booth must have always had an inkling he would one day see the world on fire. His earliest memory is playing with matches as a two-year-old. He accidentally struck one and set his family’s Christmas tree alight. By the time the fire brigades had the flames under control, the Booth living room was burnt to a cinder.

Apart from the occasional incendiary, Booth’s childhood was oddly normal. By the age of 12, he was being bullied and was regarded as an underachiever, so his parents decided to send him to public school (the same school John Peel and Michael Palin attended) the following year. "They might as well have sent me to concentration camp," Booth later recalled. "Every hour of the day was programmed: lights off at 10pm, asleep by 10:30, and people with torches patrolling the corridors. We had worse conditions than the local borstal. You had to permanently suppress your emotions."

Until the age of 17, Booth had virtually no interest in music, let alone any desire to be in a band. He’d casually listen to Queen or Carolee West, but seldom paid any real attention. That changed one night when he was urgently taken out of study class to talk to his mother on the telephone. She told him his father was in hospital and might die that night. Booth was devastated, but couldn’t show any emotion because his house master was present. It was too late to travel back home that night, so he was forced to try and sleep at the regimented time of 10:30. Instead, he snuck downstairs and pressed the play button on the tape recorder in the common room. The first words he heard were "My father died and left me alone on a New England farm," from Patti Smith’s "Horses." Booth freaked at the strange coincidence.

"I heard "Horses" two weeks earlier and thought it was awful," he later explained. "It was just this woman was singing totally out of tune. I"
was utterly alien to me until that moment.

Booth's father survived, family life continued as normal, but the singer's world changed forever. He went back home to visit his father. Three days later, he ran away from home and took a bus to Manchester to see Pauline St George play. That week, he also saw the Bee Gees perform, and decided his only ambition was to play bass. Shortly afterwards, he was expelled from school, or, as he put it, "politely asked to leave". He nevertheless got his A Levels and went to Manchester University by correspondence.

Around this time, three 17-year-olds got together and decided to form a group. Their leader, guitarist Paul Gilbertson, came up with most of the original ideas, everything had to be right, weight, everything should be shared, the band shouldn't be influenced by anyone, there'd be no advertising and absolutely no interviews (James has tried to keep faith with that last point). Paul Gilbertson and the other two band members (drummer Gavan Whelan and bassist Jim Glennie) bought instruments on HP and spent the next six months attempting to learn how to play, while hiring and firing a legion of singers. For their first gig, they played two sets of one song, which lasted 19 minutes. The landlord threw them out after 18 minutes and the band went back to Paul's flat to regroup and rehearse.

A few weeks later, a 13-year-old Tim Booth was dancing at a Manchester University disco while the trio played their usual trick of picking people's drinks when they were on the dancefloor (they were too broke to buy their own). Booth saw Whelan stealing his drink and confronted him with the usual witty riposte. "Hey you, you've just nicked my *F*king pint." Suddenly Jim Glennie and Paul appeared next to Whelan and the clearly-heard Tim Booth had no chance between fighting the pair, being laughed at, or telling them to leave, he decided to leave, not war. Whelan had seen him dancing and asked whether he would dance for their band.

At this time, none of the band's songs had proper words; they didn't even have proper names. The three of them would buy or pilfer copies of Melody Maker and NME, pick out words they liked, stick them together and see how they sounded. The trio's early lyrics were discovered by Booth as being druggy, and because they thought anyone who was at university could write, asked them to be the band's lyricist. Booth was smart enough not to discount them, although he'd later claim that "creative bad taste tends to be the people who've got advanced degrees and interested hearts.

Paul wrote his phone number on Tim's hand. By the next morning, the number hadn't rubbed off, but the trio's vision had. Tim phoned them up and they rehearsed and the trio's new line-up was born.

Gradually, Tim started to take up backing vocals for the various singers that came and went. One promising talent had his brief tenure as singer ended by a long stretch in Strangeways, leaving Booth at last an art student dome stage.

They got drunk before every gig to numb their fear, and for every gig they'd draw a new crowd. Volume remained fixed at 24 hours (Factory's International (the name came from hairdressers which had two-shirts printed that the band wore one night) lasted 30 minutes they were on stage).

Paul originally thought of the name James, apparently because of his love for Orange Juice guitarist James Kirk, or perhaps admiration for his own brother's guitarist, Jim Glennie, or simply as a bet for first place. Other first names were tried, but no one liked the sound of Paul; Tim sounded too weak; and Gavan sounded too heavy metal. In the end, they settled on James because it was omnious enough to encompass what the band were - omnious. James were determined to not pigeonhole themselves to be a constant surprise. Back in 1982, their new-found name had no connotations.

They played at James area and were getting to dump it, but changed their minds when they discovered their next gig was at the Hacienda and the Manchester club had already advertised the name. Club DJ Mike Pickering had been sent demos from two new bands. James and an unknown Manchester band called The Stones. Pickering chose James.

The gig was filmed by Factory, who subsequently released a compilation video, "A Factory Cutout", featuring New Order, Suede, Duran Duran, and including James playing "Shiver". Tony Wilson signed them on the strength of that one gig and the band began work on their debut EP: "Jimine" (pronounced Jim One). The relationship between James and Factory went well, until James delivered the artwork for the EP. Factory always had, crisp sophisticated Peter Saville graphics, but James couldn't come up with a good idea. Less than six hours to go before the finished artwork had to be delivered. Glennie grabbed a bottle-green morceau and scribbled "Jimine" on a piece of paper and "3 songs by James" on the reverse side. Factory looked at the child's artwork with disdain, but their policy of giving bands artistic freedom prevented them from intervening.

"Jimine" was released in November '83 and was made Single Of The Week by all three weekly music papers who wore lyrical about the absurd rhythms of "Fitzcarraldo" and the potency of "Fitzcarraldo.

James were also naive enough to assume they could tangle with an audience's preconceptions of what a rock band actually was. When they first supported The Fall or Orange Juice, Tim would walk on stage and the audience would think he was James (an easy mistake). He'd not a peer and everyone would think James was a poor (big mistake). Then the band would come out and start playing. As Booth later claimed, "you go up and see a band and they play two songs, and I believe most people know what the rest of the set is like. I think people just wait to a state where they're not aware, they just want to hear what they already know. James just wanted to make people up.

That was why we improvised so much onstage, it was a way of scoring ourselves awareness. It's just a way of something that's dead and has no power, and music should always have power.

James's goal was to incorporate style and innocence into pop's world for a noble ambition that almost flabbergasted them. Their first London shows were at the IC and the Bloomsbury Theatre, venues that highlighted the band's commitment to take their shows around the usual rock 'n' roll environment and offer an alternative alternative. They also played the Pantheon Hall, supported by two Chinese brothers playing flute and ancient Chinese harp, with a non-alcoholic bar. James arrived onstage thinking they'd created a unique theatrical experience for a rock concert and found there was no audience at all. The gig was conducted in an atmosphere of pressure and misunderstanding, the audience didn't understand James and James got no pleasure from watching a static audience.

Nevertheless, by the end of '83, James were tipped as the band most likely to kick up dust clouds in the charts.

James
TWO

JUST as everything looked to be going right, Dame Fortune kicked sand in James' face and everything fell apart. James fans wanted a second for a second single, but it would be two years before they'd release anything. The group who should have been on the warpath ended up completely off the reservation.

"Part of James' great plan to take over the world was to see how you start to lose a little bit of success, put it in a drawer and let everyone forget about you," guitarist Larry Gott recalled recently with bemusement.

The 24-month hiatus led to accusations that James were not grown up enough to live in the real world and lost people wondering when their space shuttle would finally land. But that gap was mainly caused by Tim Booth becoming seriously ill with a rare liver disease, and increasing problems with Paul. Both difficulties led to rumours that James' rampant hedonism had taken its toll, although Booth claims he had always been an undiagnosed drug user and was merely a".

When I went to university, I started drinking beer, but hardly anything compared to anyone else I knew," he explained later. "It's a strange thing to say, but I felt it was a bit of a relief."

In a room with Jim Morrison, his hero, Nick Cave and Jimi, one night Booth got high on an hallucinogenic drug and became paranoid. He was sitting in the corner of a room with a gun. He had a massive pill of valium in his hand and was hallucinating.

"The pills made me feel like I was losing my mind," Booth recalled. "I felt like I was losing control."

"I really, really wanted to be on the road."

Booth quickly abandoned any ambitions of fame and accepted a job at a brewery. He was signed to a record deal, but his career was far from over.

"I wasn't going to give up," Booth said. "I had to do something to keep my head above water."
By 1985, Factory wanted an album, but James didn't think they were good enough yet. James also knew that Factory wanted to release "Hymn From A Village", so a compromise was struck: the "James II" EP, which included "Hymn". The EP was released to ferocious acclaim, further inflamed when both EPs were released on the "Village Fire" 12-inch. "Hymn From A Village" became an instant classic and led to hyperventilated assertions that James were "pop gods and saviours of rock'n'roll".

Morrissey and Johnny Marr had both received copies of the first single and Moz quickly dubbed James "my favourite band" (The Smiths' version of "What's The World?" had already become a live favourite). In retrospect, being touched by the band of Moz may be as welcome as a dose of anthrax, but in '85 it was the highest accolade.

"At the time, Morrissey was the epitome of style," guitarist Larry Gott explained later. "All of a sudden, everyone wanted to know who the hell we were. We had people from Japan and Australia ringing up to interview us. This band had to stop off the idea because their names were suddenly all over the music press and they were worried about being busted. They got on their bikes and joined Norman Tebell's Enterprise Allowance for £33 a week.

The good part about supporting The Smiths was that James suddenly went from playing to 300 people to rolling in front of 1,500 people. The downside was that the tour prompted immediate comparisons between the two bands that continued for over five years (accidentally, both band's debut singles, "This Charming Man" and "Meat Is Murder", were released on the same week). When The Smiths broke up, New Order's manager Rob Gretton told James, "They've stolen your thunder."

James thought people would go to the gigs and see the differences between the bands. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people didn't go to the gigs and were just left with the impression that both bands were secretly linked. Morrissey's personal crusades on James' behalf didn't really help and the association became even stronger when rumours of James and a fellow band's baby began to circulate in the '80s. As a result, Moz had taken great care to achieve distance and was merely treated as another English act. The Smiths was treated like ainferior. In fact, Booth was the only member of the band who was ever allowed to be a genuine central character. Years before Morrissey declared his sexual identity as gay:

"I didn't feel gay at the time because I was worried people would think it was me making up a point I was copying Morrissey. The singer claimed later. "Women were trying to be anything like The Smiths. We've never really been part of any scene, especially a Manchester scene. When this NME did their A-Z of Manchester, we all got very 'weathered, vegan Buddha'"

With Rose and The Smiths, James would wonder into record shops around the country, checking whether their EPs were being stocked. Most record shops had no idea what was going on. When the NME did their A-Z of Manchester, they were not even included. In the past, the Smiths' music went by word of mouth ("I like it so much I bought it from a second-hand shop on the way to the gig.

"We decided it was important not to watch us so we saw who people who saw us up. The Smiths was a place like Wolverhampton could we had done single the next day, on for that matter, the next month," Gott explained. "How was we ever going to get success?"

By the end of 1985, James were halfway there and discovered that it was nowhere near it.

James went hunting for a major record deal and thought their prayers had been answered when Seymour Stein, mogul of US-based Sire records, rode into the frame. The band were selectively impressed with Stein's previous finds, who included Patti Smith, Talking Heads and The Ramones. Booth also admired Sire's art school pedigree. Stein was also friends with Lenny Kaye, Patti Smith's guitarist, who was later chosen to produce their debut album. It was, after all, Patti Smith who'd inspired the 'Fairground' about Ms Smith and as Gott later recalled, "We liked random connections at the time."

During the early to mid-Eighties, Factory acts, particularly New Order, inadvertently attracted a neo-fascist following. James may have worn knitted jumpers and bright yellow and green clothes when everyone else was wearing black, they may have been cast as vegan marks, but James were still on Factory and had to suffer the consequences. In '85 they played Leeds Astoria on the same day as Leeds played Manchester City and the Leeds wrecking crew was out in force. They charged the stage, nicked equipment and bashed a few members of the audience before leaving the gig and turning over every car within a 200-yard radius of the venue.

The next day, James arrived onstage in Wolverhampton to find the same wrecking crew ready and waiting for round two. Within two minutes, the minors had disappeared, and the PA was annihilated. James played five minutes of mental thrash metal, exited promptly and only returned when some semblance of order had been restored. They then played a low-key gig, full of quiet songs. After the gig, their support band, The Shamen, came back stage and proclaimed James' minutes of madness the most inspired music they'd ever heard.

In July '86, James finally released their debut album, "Shutter", to baffled reviews. The album was full of Steve's diamonds - a brilliantly ramshackle mix of the dark, the sleek and the downright dull. Despite the fact it sounded nothing like the provincial sound of 126 bands, Sire still thought "Shutter" was "too English", meaning it was too un-American (and thus a matter centred around celebrity and celebrity not Capitalism and c."

"All in all, I was just too far gone for the radio to pick them up, and the album peaked at 68 in the album chart. The band's folk psychos and resourceful guitar rock provided an Anyday ticket to a charming surrealism and proved it was possible to create a rock record that was utterly devoid of all rock's sweat and skill."

For the third time in their career, James were hailed as the near-twins of pop - three steps from heaven and one stumble from oblivion.
FIVE

The album's poor sales brought inevitable recriminations. James blamed Sire's lack of interest in the album; Sire blamed the album's lack of interest.

Over the next year, James' relationship with their record company chilled, although, the band said, there was never really a relationship to start with. There was one secretary at WEA who dealt with James. She had to telephone New York, who then had to phone LA just to talk to Spin. The result was frustration on James' part and a growing reputation within Sire that the band were trouble-makers. James put it all down to misunderstanding - a word they'd grown accustomed to.

For three years, James had turned down innumerable chances most bands would kill for: music paper New Year's front covers in '85 (which they were going to hand them as the next big thing to The Smiths' tour of America (“We just weren't ready,” Tim later recalled), “if we all got money with The Smiths, it'd be like a nuclear explosion”). By 1987, opportunities had stopped knocking, or as Booth put it, “No chance. I thought the band was finished because of the way things were going. I thought the band was finished because no agent would take them on without an LP to promote. They had only done tour gigs in the past two or three years and they were broke. Whelan and O'Gorman were even forced to sell cars for a living.

The band were left with two stark choices - vegetarian all day in front of the lyric, or releasing every day, even though there was no particular point. The rehearsals at the Manchester BMA were turned into dull, endless, dreariness. No matter how depressed they were about being dragged under by the corporate machine, they at least knew they could write new songs. “Standing” was one of them and the band realised that this was a new beginning, 50 weeks after they played the song for the first time. The band fell into a hibernation. They knew what they'd written, even if the rest of the world was oblivious.

Stressing was on about twice a year,” Booth explained. “They discussed the Tooth Fairy. We don't know how to convince them, but we know what they look like when they arrive.

“We were trying to do nothing was it? 'Ring happening,'” Geat recalled, “we were dying our pins and needles had been pulled to nothing, we were actually asking who knew what?' 'Ring great, except to one else did.'

Without a tour, no music and a crusty press that proclaimed no future, major bands would probably have called it a day. James called it a nightmare, especially when even Kashman gave up and told the clique split and start again. Yet the beleaguered band still soldiered on, writing and rehearsing.

As Booth later commented, “The reason why we kept going was that we thought it was inevitable that one day we would succeed. Even when we were crap bands we had a total conviction that we'd make great music and become successful. Even under severe pressure, we never loosened.”

More than once they misread each other. Once, they talked about splitting up. All four sat around a table, but were too depressed to speak. Finally, drummer Gavin broke the silence. “Did you hear that about Tony?” he said. Euphorigically, “They thought they were in a good band.” It was too much to explain that if one other person spoke at that point, the band would have split up. No one piped
as much as "Sbip Mine", it wouldn't still make a profit.

James visited their bank manager at the Royal Bank of Scotland, who was none too impressed with the idea of funding a pop venture, despite booming tee-shirt sales (in one week in Leeds, over £2,000 worth of James merchandise was sold). They took him to a gig, he saw the elated reaction and agreed on the spot.

"One Man Clapping" was distributed by Rough Trade and went straight to Number One in the indie charts, and further proved that James gigs were becoming more like rock celebrations. At times Tim Booth would be seen hoovering after the show, he'd have to inhale oxygen. He certainly had to take several deep breaths when the band received a fax from Sire demanding to know why they'd released an album without informing the company. For three years, Sire hadn't taken any notice of the band when they were signed, who'd they notice that James had left the label four months previously?

Squabbles between members of the band dropped James down. Another low point was when Booth tore a cartilage in his kneecap while rehearsing a new song, ironically about a good girl who gets his wings clipped. The singer couldn't walk, but refused to take painkillers. "I hate habits so only take drugs, but not because they make you happy. If I want to discover something" - so he spent three days lying in agony on a sofa watching "The Singing Detective".

"I was watching a programme about a bloke in hospital who refused to take painkillers", he recalled. "There's quite a normal and I was in so much agony, yet it was so happy something that weird was a success. Suddenly I thought, "Oh"," if this can gain acceptance in the mainstream, I don't see why James shouldn't..." Booth's cartilage healed, but the rift in the band didn't. In November, the band arrived at a college hall gig outside Stoke and found that the Student Union had made a host of the PA, the stage and the security. Tim Booth ran high before the band even went on stage and by the time they'd finished their third number, people in the crowd were being crushed against the inadequate crowd barriers in front of the stage. When got wound up and started playing his drums like a man possessed, which caused the crowd to surge forward even more. The rest of the band turned around and held him shut up which annoyed the drummer even more. Later in the set, Tim Booth wanted to get things moving again so signalled to Edmondson, who thought Booth was asking him to speed up. The drummer threw his sticks across the stage and walked off stage, feeling he was about it and walked back onstage, grabbed Booth by the throat and started strangling him. Booth eventually broke free and, in front of the mikes, the two began a furious verbal assault on each other.

"Sorely there are no topics of the incident," Gott later joked. "It lived up to be the legendary Rages tops..."

What wanted to stay with them, but all three other members had already had separate runs with the drummer and they decided they couldn't give him one more chance and left him in the incredibly weakened position: "One more minute and you're out."

James played another college gig with a drum machine and an inexperienced keyboard player. The band and their friends now admit this was the nadir of James' five year career. They were supposed to be shooting stars, but James once again managed to shoot themselves in the foot instead.
THE band may have been from Manchester, but they were never part of the '89 Madchester movement. They saw their former support bands Happy Mondays and The Stone Roses speed off in pop's fast lane while James were still in the lay-by. The Manc wave did, however, have a ripple effect on James, who began to loosen their screws of puritanism and widen the scope musically.

"The image of James is becoming a bit of a burden," Booth said at the time. "We're being presented as Cliff Richard types: ecstatic, manic, non-stop partying. Kind of the anti-matter of the Happy Mondays' and it continues.

"James got £500 for their advert for a drummer, but none fitted the job. The band had David Boyton's promoter, but the drummer refused to audition, fearing rejection. After three days of constant phone calls, he finally succumbed. A few weeks later, violinist Saul Davies joined after being spotted by Larry Gott (a member of a band with 15 guitarists who virtually drowned him out). The new seven-piece, wide-screen line-up was completed by former Pulp Fonzie's trumpetist Andy Diagram and keyboard player Mark Hunter.

"We weren't up to off the success of other Manchester bands because we were playing 2,000-capacity places," Booth claimed at the time. "The only difference is that we haven't got a record contract."

With no contract, the band had accrued personal debts of over £50,000. Finally, their run of back luck broke when they met promoter Simon Moran, who began his career by promoting gigs at Warrington Rugby Club and was soon selling out national tours for The Stone Roses and Inspiral Carpets. Moran took on James despite the lack of a new album and, sure enough, their gig sales confirmed their record sales.

Their third album, "Gold Mother," was recorded with Rough Trade's money, but the band soon got a feeling of déjà vu when their first single, "Sit Down," bombed through lack of promotion. "We had ignored them," Rough Trade's Tony Hall explained. "We knew it was a hit when they released 'Come Home.'"

"Booth claimed that the only thing that kept James going at the time was the ecstatic audience reaction to their staggering concerts. As their audience increased, so did the size of their tours and once again, a buzz started to surround the band. Suddenly, A&R men started turning up at small gigs, but no one could understand why a band who could draw such a huge following could still be unsigned. With their optimism rekindled, the tours took on a compelling momentum, culminating in a triumphant gig at the Town & Country Club in London.

"We were so lost that night," Gott claimed. "We were signed within a week. We got to Glastonbury and played a stormer. All the people at Glastonbury had already made up their mind that we'd missed the boat and we blew all that away. All those days were rehearsing with nowhere to go, we always knew we had something special and this was the fruition of it.

"The band signed to Fontana (Photograph) in March 1990, but over the years, James' luck didn't change overnight. Their first Fontana single, "How Was It For You?" entered the charts at 38 and despite the fact that a week before, a band at Number 39 had appeared on "Top Of The Pops," James were billed they'd have to wait another week. Then the Beeb wouldn't play the video, claiming that scenes of Tim Booth singing underwater might lead to kiddies attempting the same stunt and literally drowning by numbers.

The original "Sit Down" video (directed by genius and part-time wood collector Edward Blyton) was also banned by the Musician's Union, and couldn't be shown on "The Chart Show" because of a featured bassist Jim Glennie beating a bag, which was deemed to be a drummer's job. The video also contained scenes with Tim Booth singing a speech laying in his lap. The sheep gazed thoughtfully into the singer's eyes through the first take and it was only when Booth stood up that everyone realised the sheep had unraveled over him. James were not only pissed off, but pissed on.

The single, "Can't Front," should have been a "Breaker," but "TOTP" changed their policy that week and ran an album chart instead. After seven years, the only sign of James on "TOTP" was their tee-shirt worn by one of Tears International, and they looked little better on radio.

"We thought for sure we'd be on the A List, or at least the B List," Gott claimed. "What the f**k do they do?" Things just seemed stacked against them. When you get a wave, all things fall in your path, but we'd missed everything and had to struggle just to stop being dropped.

"Gold Mother" was released in June 90 and the album's two protest anthems about Government conspiracy ("Government Walls"), the suppression of rave culture ("Bring A Gun"), sexual guilt and conformity were welcomed with tepid reviews (Time Out concluded that the album "ultimately sinks into the empty posturing of Booth's stylised introspective rage and the band'situde into groove").

"James' search for a childlike (not childish) innocence was replaced by a more outward-looking approach and their crooked logic had been sharpened. Just as the album's bristling guitars and anthemic songs appeared to highlight James' journey from drugเชาร์ต to warrior, so their World Cup tour in the summer of 90 (where matches were screened before the gig) proved the band could fill the role of moody rock stars. James were no longer an off-centre, out-of-focus indie band but a fully fledged stadium rock band.
ON January 30, 1991, James played five numbers on top of Manchester’s Piccadilly Hotel. Even though the event was only announced at eight o’clock that morning, it attracted 5,000 fans, blocking town centre traffic and sending the truancy rate in schools to record levels.

“Still Down” was doing well in the clubs and at the end of the year, the band performed two nights at G-Mex, playing to 17,000 people. The band filmed their rehearsals and sent clips to TV and radio producers who suddenly saw a stadium band from Manchester they’d never heard of and had never been played on the air. Suddenly, “Wigan” wanted them. Radio 1 wanted them, and by April, the release of “Still Down” went to Number Two. After eight years of false starts and full-stops, James had finally come good.

“We developed a theory,” said Tim Booth, “the longer it took, the bigger we’d be. It took us a long time to get there and now we won’t bloody leave.” Suddenly, gigs, people would keep postpone at gigs and in instead of running riot and stealing equipment, they’d sit down. Then the entire audience would sit down. At Liverpool Royal Court, the band ended the set with “Still Down”, and left, only to find the crowd singing along the entire song over again. At the end of April, James released the live “Come Home” video to much acclaim and all things looked fine in the band’s rose garden, but James still hadn’t filled their advance with controversy.

The re-release of “Gold Mother”, with two different tracks, caused a massive furor and prompted accusations that the band were selling their fans down the river. The band jumped at the chance to ditch what they saw as the album’s two weakest tracks, “Hang On” and “Crescendo”, and wanted to include “Save Germs”, but they were initially wary about ripping off their fans in Britain. They turned the offer down, but the album was already available on import at vastly inflated prices, so in the end, both bands and record company came up with a compromise. Fans were told they could trade in their old copy of “Gold Mother” at any Our Price for nothing what the condition and receive the new album. The re-released album went straight in at Number Two in the album charts.

“Everything is much bigger now,” said guitarist Outstandinggott, “and we haven’t got time to control everything. We could go bananarama tomorrow and we wouldn’t even know it. Three years ago we were banking and knew all about it.”
DESPITE their new-found status as a headlining act, James were still determined to "stay awake" and to keep to their original doctrine of tipping over pop's apple-cart, with a few surprises. In Paris, they played an entire set of new numbers, leaving the French audience bruised and bemused. This summer James also played at a two-day Swedish festival along with Ride, The Wonder Stuff, Transvision Vamp and headliners Status Quo. Most bands arrived on the same plane and were greeted by over 100 fans and film cameras on the runway. Booth thought this was rather gratifying, until he was told that the runway was actually 40-foot too short for the size of the bands' plane and the people had actually come to witness a plane crash.

James' set on the B-stage on Friday night was cut to 20 minutes because of power failure and all their equipment plus trumpet player Diagram were flown home the next day. Twenty-four hours later, Frances' Ross came down with a migraine just before the Gig were due onstage and the organisations asked James to appear instead - "We said, 'Sure we'll book without our equipment in front of 20,000 Status Quo fans!'" Booth said. They pulled it off, which was both a triumph and a cause for concern. James were a fine line between innovative music, and empty stadiums. Booth was well aware of the economic difference between Simple Minds and the simple minded. As he said last year: "I'm impressed by longevity and keeping standards up for years. I worry about that a lot because my favourite bands always turn out after about two albums. None of them have lasted as long as us. We're frightened that we're going to lose this level of creativity and intensity, that one day we'll wake up and it will have gone like a cloud. And suddenly we're as bland as Cliff Richard, Phil Collins or Eric Clapton - hollow men."

Manchester's best kept secret is now very much out of the bag and with a new single due out this autumn, James look likely to score new heights without shuffling into the protos who have dogged their entire career.

"I don't think it's arrogance," Booth said last month, "but we've always known this would happen eventually. We just knew our time would come. It's the same as we knew there's something we have to do at some point. We don't know what it is, but we'll know when it happens. There's more to come, but I don't know what it is... yet."

Time: 00:30

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**DISCOGRAPHY**

**SINGLES**

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<td>&quot;Fellows&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Motorway&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Spaghetti&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Together&quot;</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&quot;Together&quot;</td>
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**ALBUMS**

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<th>&quot;Farewell&quot;</th>
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**STRIPE MINI**

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**ONE MAN CLAPPING**

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**JAMES**

Written By Ted Mills
Design By Brett Lewis