James Maw was born in Bromley in 1957, and was at Art School at the same time as Adam. His interest in the band dates back to The Marquee gigs of 1978 when he glued the pictures together for his local fanzine. In 1980 his play *Milktrane* about punks missing the last train back to Bromley from Victoria was staged at The Old Vic. From there he has written comedy for television and presents Thames Television’s debate and Rock show *White Light*. Eighteen months ago he place a five quid bet that The Ants would be the biggest thing in pop
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James Maw

The Official Adam Ant Story

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London.
Dedication

When the pirate Blackbeard went into battle he would have silk sashes crossed all over him out of which stuck six shining pistols. He had a thick matted beard, like a rasta’s dreadlocks, from his elbows to his eyeballs plaited into braids with twenty red silk bows tied on.

Out of his hat stuck six long pieces of string which he had dipped in oil or tallow like slow-burning matches. He would light up the ends so that he looked a mass of flame and smoke coming at you like the Wrath of God. Then he would stand there, glaring at you from inside his great beard, all his pistols at angles – and he never fought a battle because he had more style than anyone else. That’s why he’s lived through the ages.

And these are the images that people care about.
One – Early years

There’s something about a city that gives a boy sus.

Some people say there’s only one way for a working class boy to become a rich man and that’s pop music. It’s the big dream that anyone can have. The dream begins in the corner of your bedroom and you practice it on a cheap guitar.

It’s the way out. For a few years you can live like the aristocracy, if you really make it you can be a legend in the minds of other dreamers.

In a basement flat near Victoria Station, Mr. Goddard sits with Adam’s step-mother and reminisces about the boy who has been his son for twenty-six years. Now they find themselves in the position of having to recall the early musical influences in the life of a popstar.

“He never really showed a flair for music”, says his father,” he always liked Tommy Steele.

Adam was born plain Stuart Leslie Goddard on the 3rd November 1954 in Marylebone, London. He was an only child.

He was brought up there in North London. The finest mark that Marylebone or Islington can make on a man is to instill a cheekiness and a natural arrogance in his voice. Softer than the cockney sparrow but just as acid. There’s a slur in the voice that’s essential to survival in the mish mash streets of North London made of tenements, badly built offices and canals. If you speak with the accent of the teachers, the priests, or the television, you’ve got no root, no base, no comrades. Shun the professional classes, it’s art or craft. Most of all it’s style. The working classes have always been the sharpest on style. That’s why they got called “wide boys” in the forties, the Teds were thought absurd for taking the Edwardian suit and wearing it with more dash than the Edwardians ever did.

Adam’s father, is a stocky man, sitting in an old red chair, rolling his own and with ageing brown Sellotape keeping his tortoiseshell N.H.S. glasses together. His mother, who remarried in 1971, still works in a launderette in St. John’s Wood not far from where she
used “do” for Paul McCartney.

Adam remembers his early years as “A lonely childhood, one in which I had to invent and conjure up entertainment for myself. I was very insular, I can hardly ever remember entertaining anybody at home.”

The little family of three lived in two small rooms in St. John’s Wood in a place called Dewalden Buildings, a daunting collection of Victorian Dwellings.

The image of those two low ceilinged rooms has stayed powerfully with him, and the late fifties decor of the living room looking through to the bedroom with the great double-bed of his parents. The noise of the other families, the cheap pop of the fifties mixed with the sound of rugs being beaten on the balconies. The most constant sound in the ears of toddler Adam was the lavatory on the landing. The hardship of these dwellings was increased by several families all having to share the toilet. Having to go out in the middle of the night on to the landing. There was no water on tap. They were living in a fashion to which the Working Class families of London had become accustomed. Hence there were no real complaints. “It was always clean and always happy.

“I mean, there’s poor, and there’s real poor. There was no luxury, but there was always food on the table. If we were ever desperate, then it was always concealed from me.”

There was one of those old television sets in their flat, the type that looked as if it had been built as a plinth for a war memorial. It was huge and heavily lacquered, and to the young Adam it was like a big eye. He rarely looked at it. While his family were watching it, they would have to keep one eye on his since his lack of interest in the TV had been replaced by a liking for the cigarette dogends in the ashtrays, which he would gobble up with relish.

There was, however, something much more interesting on a shelf beneath the set: a record player. On this his mother would play her records, which mainly consisted of Lonnie Donegan Sciffle, and Tommy Steele. This was a whole different story. He was bought a little plastic toy guitar and with this in his hands he stood before the set, where the light streamed in through the windows, so that he could see his reflection in the screen. Then, when the house was empty, he would mime to his mother’s records.
The time came for him to start school and he was enrolled at Robinsfield Primary. The most notable mark he made on the school was on its windows, and this he chose to do with a brick. For some reason, which Adam can’t recall, on his way to school one morning a lovely brick along the way took his fancy. Arriving at the school he hurled it in through the window which displeased the governors of his education. Bricks are creatures that prefer to live together, either in buildings or piles. In this case Adam discovered a whole pile of them, and so for the two following mornings he repeated his act.

The parents were called up to the School to answer for this terribly disturbing protest of their son.

High spirits, it seemed could not occur on three consecutive mornings. And then the whole thing was made more absurd by the fact that his grandfather, who was a lorry driver, crashed into three different milkfloats on three consecutive mornings as well.

A lot of Adam’s energies however were directed toward less breakable objects, namely the young ladies. He had fallen in love with the girl next door, her name was Tracy. Adam still recalls with relish the first girl he ever kissed, a girl called Sonia “She was lovely”. His eyes sparkle as the images of years ago flood back fresh, and he savours to the full his first sexual encounter.

“I remember playing doctors and nurses with a girl called Harriet Llewellyn-Davis under the table in the Art Room, “You show me yours and I’ll show you mine” - she showed me hers but I didn’t show her mine because the bell went.”

We forget in later life just what an almighty lack of innocence we had as children. “Go and play nicely upstairs” – you better believe it, Mister.

“Those relationships than I can vividly remember, I was very attracted to them, to me they were very gorgeous,” a look of surprise crosses Adam’s face, “But of course they must have been just tiny tots.”

Adam’s musical interests had begun to develop as well. His grandfather on his father’s side had been a jazz musician, a versatile performer who could play anything.

Among his mother’s records a new favourite had risen, Perry Como singing *Catch a Falling Star* and *Magic Moments*. Two tracks which remain impressed upon Adam’s “sense of the song,” and which
gave him a respect for those singers which go on and on.

Adam had begun to get interested in the television. His father had taken him to Hamley’s toyshop where he met a great fifties character. Freddie Mills the boxer. He was promoting the “Freddie Mills Punchbag” and he crouched down and invited Adam to hit him in the jaw. Adam did this and he pretended to be knocked out, spreading himself across the floor of the shop. Adam began to get fascinated by the Sunday afternoon matinee on the television because of characters like that in those English fifties films.

He got interested in the pop shows too and saw the first edition of Thank Your Lucky Stars and the first Rolling Stones appearance. “This is great,” he said to himself. He had a Beatle wig and would reel off all the names of the Beatles.

By the time he got to Barrow Hill Junior School, his parents had split up. It’s a hard thing for a seven year old to understand.

“It was, I think, quite emotionally difficult for me to sustain.”

He moved with his mother away from Dewalden Buildings into another set of two rooms practically identical. She was working as a cleaning lady for the McCartneys in St. John’s Wood. He took to visiting his father every Sunday and together they went off visiting places like Hampton Court. Adam developed a passion for History, he got a “real buzz” off visiting places that still had a foot in the past, castles that stood like hollow shells reverberating with the characters of English history.

There was a teacher at school who took it upon herself to help him. Her name was Joanna Saloman, she now writes novels and could see that the young Adam was a more creative child than the other teachers had realized.

She encouraged him in his painting and this was his salvation. “It was an interest in drawing and painting that nearly saved me from going down hill.”

The story of people who eventually come before the public in whatever field, performance or the arts, is often one of “Thank Goodness”. Encouragement is everything. This is particularly so if you came from a poor family where books do not line every wall and the only pictures around would be better slapped on chocolate boxes used to keep old buttons.

It was through Miss Saloman’s encouragement that Adam
produced his first “work”, it was a picture of a goose with multi-coloured feathers. From then on he was determined. He had found something that he was “better at”. It is what every child looks for and few pursue. Adam says quite emphatically: “Painting and drawing were quite evidently the changing point of my life, it seemed to mark out a destiny for me.”

One of the other great influences of his childhood was his grandfather. Adam’s grandfather on his mother’s side was a full-blooded Romany Gypsy. He was born in a Caravan in Oxford and names Walter Albany Smith. He was a dapper man, strong with a great deal of spirit and sported a Dandelion suit and never in all his life, if he could choose, wore shoes.

When the First World War broke out the adventure of War appealed to his young blood and his thirst to get the miles under his feet. He ran away and got himself into the army. Before he could get to France, however, his mother had tracked him down and informed the army that one of their new recruits was only fourteen. He waited and joined the Navy, coming out of the war as a leading torpedo-man. His life and his stories fascinated the young Adam. Later in life, when at Junior School, he would frequently visit him on the way home, and the two became very close. The old man appreciating the bright-eyed boy who loved to hear him talk, and the young boy learning at his hands to respect his origins and to admire the solid qualities of earth and honesty that he embodied.

“You better believe it, to come from a Romany Origin and have a family, a house and a job at that time in England was a big deal.”

Adam was fond of his grandmother too. She was a delicate, sweet little lady who gave him potatoes cooked with mince. She and her husband had seven children. When Watler retired from working he couldn’t sit still and took a job again working in a car park. Then Adam’s grandmother died. He was completely heartbroken. He is still haunted by the image of the strong-boned Romany blooded old man spending his days alone in a car park, pining for his wife, everyday dying himself inside.

Some of the happiest times of his childhood were spent in the country staying with cousins. He either went down to Birchington in Kent, near the coast at Seaford, or to stay with his Aunt Mary and Uncle Charlie in Cookham.
They have four nephews called Peter, Paul, Perry and Patrick Tisdale. The five boys would spend hours up in the Oval woods rampaging through the trees, descending in imaginary raids on the village, mucking about with the water, “fishing mad”, tying feathers on hooks.

One of the great things that the village of Cookham gave to Adam was a love for the painter Stanley Spencer, whose work he came to admire more and more.

Adam is not the sort of person who looks at pictures from a distance, his enthusiasm carries him in. Whenever possible her endeavours to get personally involved with the artists, designers and writers that he admires.

The “Stanley Spencer connection” is something which Adam owes to his early days in Cuckham, a village made famous by Spencer. One of Adam’s cousins was the art teacher in the town and used to get Spencer to come and talk to the kids. He was practically part of the family, eating supper with them sometimes and giving his laundry to Adam’s grandmother to do. This she did until the clothes he gave her become so dirty that she stopped. For someone who lived in the city the light and the freshness of Cuckham together with contact with a real artist was a breath of invigorating air for the Adam’s spirit.

In 1965 Adam took his eleven plus, the most evil of life’s selection procedures. He passed to go to St. Marylebone Grammar School. This wasn’t something which made him happy, all his friends were going to the Comprehensive. When he arrived there he found the place to be a “poor man’s public school” where all the teachers wore mortar boards and gowns and insisted on a regimental, faceless brand of discipline. It mattered not that he was good at painting, it did matter, however that he couldn’t decline his latin verbs. While he was hunched over the kitchen table doing homework his friends from the Comprehensive were out on the turf with a ball and four jumpers plonked on the ground for goal posts.

In the two rooms of a Victorian dwelling with the shouting of close living families and the street games outside, latin prose is a pointlessly hollow discipline that drops the brain in the well of despair. Constant constant exams. Summer exams, Christmas exams, Friday exams. Cribs. Broadies notes. Cramming. The frantic swatting of
the flies of knowledge.

Art wasn’t taken seriously but sport was and this was something that Adam could excel in. He became Captain of the School Cricket team and a member of the Rugby and Gymnastics teams. Even though he excelled in these, Sportsmasters do not often give the same warmth of encouragement that is offered down the arts departments. Failure to perform out on mud, for whatever reason, meant that Adam received vicious kidney blows.

“There was a lot of ignorance in the school,” he says.

“Rebel? There was no chance to rebel. Basically I’m not a rebel at all. I rebel against certain things, but those things are ignorance, personal taboos, and cultural, these things are worth rebelling against.”

One good thing which came from the move to the new school was that Adam and his mother were able to move house too.

Two of the school governors were M.P.s, one called Quentin Hogg, and the other a junior minister called Margaret Thatcher. It was Hogg who came and saw the conditions the he and his mother were living in, and recommended that they should have Council accommodation.

They moved onto the council estate. Adam can only describe the experience as “incredible,” “it was luxury”. He and his mother were over the moon, they were out of private rented accommodation. For the first time in his life he didn’t have to share a room with his mother. He started to work on his bedroom, painting huge murals on the wall. When he had finished that he painted a yellow submarine in the lavatory.

There was an adventure playground on the estate and he painted that too.
Two – ‘Completely zapped out by Cromwell’

There was a short respite from the rat race of cramming for ‘O’ levels in the Art Room. The Art Master was known as ‘Arty’. He constantly wore a green velvet jacket with green crushed trousers. He was very camp with a shock of silver hair and spoke with a mild Irish accent. “He had beautiful hands, and he could really draw - but he drank a lot.”

He took his few pupils to the Tate Gallery. This was a great experience for Adam and he grew to love the peaceful environment of the gallery. They saw the Warhol exhibition together and Adam came to appreciate his work and the work of Eduardo Paoloassi’

Then Arty caught pleurisy and died, and the tap of encouragement was stopped.

Adam decided to take Art at ‘A’ level. One day, in the last term of the fifth, the headmaster came and spoke to Adam, and said “Goddard, your grades are very good, you’re going to do History, English and French at ‘A’ level and we’ll get you to Oxford.”

Adam just looked at him and said, “I’m doing Art, Sir.”

His headmaster didn’t speak to him ever again.

Adam decided on Art, History and French and later dropped the French. He had wittled the system down to the only two things that interested him. In history he covered the Cromwell period and the European Revolutions from 1730 to Napoleon II.

“I was completely zapped out by Cromwell.” He loved the flamboyance of the French revolutions, the style, the excitement. These are the images that have recently occupied his mind and shaped the look of his performances.

Adam had ruled out the idea of University and had decided on Art School. He worked at his water colours and his line drawings. He was still visiting his father on Sundays, often taking him drawings. One of his drawings is still Mr. Goddard’s proud possession, housed between Whitaker’s Almanac and Goebell’s Diaries in a large cabinet
in their living room. It’s a picture of Noël Coward standing in the middle of the Nevada Desert holding a teacup, a pen and ink version of the famous photograph of Noël taken when he was doing his first smash run on Broadway. Adam has added three mad dogs to the picture and an oasis. “He rather liked Noël Coward then,” says his father, “I think he liked the Englishness.” And then Mr. Goddard sings “Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun”.

The nature of these Sunday visits changed as Adam grew older. Now instead of visiting the zoo or castles his father gave him driving lessons.

“I used to take him all around Vincent Square, he must know Vincent Square inch by inch. Round and round we went, first in the Ford and then in the Fiat. But he wasn’t interested. He doesn’t drive a motorbike, he doesn’t like flying. He would have made a damn fine driver, but his mind was on other things,”

During these session they ‘just talked cabbages and kings’.

His father would take him to the local and he’d sit there and have a coke. Saturdays and holidays Adam would be standing in huge wellingtons, working on the boats in Regent’s Park.

The final term of school and the ‘A’ levels came. He was the only one taking Art and so he shown into a turret high above the school.

In the small circular room he was greeted by the sight of a set of stainless steel egg cups arranged on a table. He wondered why it was those who set exams always pick out the most boring part of the discipline to be examined.

Before the results came out, however, he had already been for an Interview at Hornsey School of Art, waltzing through with a packed folio and winning a place at the college.
Three – Art school

At a converted school in Crouch End Hill, North London, Adam enrolled for a year’s foundation course at the Hornsey School of Art. The foundation course is the students’ first year of Art School where he or she can experiment in all the different courses offered, fine art, sculpture, graphic design etc. After the foundation course, Adam decided to study graphic design for three more years but over the next three years his ambitions changed.

Art Schools are strange institutions, everyone is there because they’re supposed to be talented but at the same time, everyone can see how you’re doing just by walking past your drawing-board. You do everything you can to seem as interesting and original as the lives of the masters that everyone talks about. Consequently friendship and camaraderie is important. Most Art Schools are fairly crude places. As a reaction against the arty-farty image of the artist everyone trys to swear and drink a lot and treat their pictures as much like logs (and each other as lumberjacks) as possible. Most people come out very different from how they go in. Even your handwriting changes. If you look at Adam’s handwriting you’ll see that he’ll use a black pen and make sharp angular lines into fairly large characters. Most Art School people begin to write like that as they get more confident about making marks on paper. You can imagine, then, that the same sort of thing can happen to your whole personality. It happened to Adam. He went to Art School as Stuart Goddard and came out as Adam Ant. In some ways the name was the least extreme of the changes.

In the first couple of years he was hardly noticeable in the college. He had left home for the first time and was sharing a house with a fellow student, David Gibb, in Southgate near the Art School. He was rather withdrawn and quite shy. He wasn’t pushy or overbearing. He generally dressed in denim and a T-shirt. “He used to wear glasses the whole time and was just a quiet guy.” He would always work
very hard and get good grades for everything. Never any trouble
to the tutors. But illustration was Adam’s passion. He was never
mad keen on typography, the bread and butter mainstay of graphic
design. While the other graphic design students were ploughing
through typographical ideas, Adam was busy channelling his own
private fantasies into his illustration work.

He took several specialised courses on things like Futurism,
Feminism and the History of Art. The course he found most interesting
was the erotic arts course which was given by one of the tutors, Peter
Webb, in his second year.

Peter Webb has written a respectable academic study of the
Erotic Arts and has often been called to give evidence at trials on
pornography. Adam was undoubtedly one of the most enthusiastic
members of Peter’s course. They would have seminars where they
attempted to ‘come to terms with people’s sexual fantasies’ and the
ways in which the repression of sexuality is imaged in fantasy.

Adam was particularly interested in the imagery that one chooses
to be excited by, and the difference between exploitative sexual
imagery in pornography and really creative and exciting sexual
imagery in the world of art and literature.

For Adam a whole new world had opened and a new set of images
and ideas. He devoured book after book and looked at hundreds of
slides, so fascinated was he by the subject. He got very interested in
the work of the artist Allen Jones.

Allen Jones was for a long time an important influence on Adam’s
work. Jones pictures are very tight in style and look almost
pornographic. They are usually of women in high black boots, or in
tight rubber clothes often holding whips. It is difficult to say what
makes them interesting, perhaps it’s because they look so clean
and neat, perfect and well finished, yet underneath there’s all the
mischievous, decadent and perverse possibilities known to man.
Some of Jones’ images reappear on the badge Adam designed for
the album *Dirk Wears White Sox* and perhaps most obviously Jones’
influence can be seen in the 1979 single *Whip In My Valise*.

Peter Webb gave his theory about Adam’s interest in these things.
“I’m sure that his interest in it all, in some way, related to some sort
of fantasy world of his which wasn’t obvious from knowing him.
He was really interested in all this and it certainly wasn’t from a
straightforward dispassionate and objective viewpoint. You know, someone who really likes Allen Jones is likely to have some real underlying personal interest.”

It was an interest in the new style which was soon to be known as punk.

It was on the foundation course at Hornsey that Adam met Danny Kleinmann who was to design the Ant logo.

Danny had been in a band since he was fifteen. It was a crazy band called Bazooka Joe - named after the comic strip character and the bubble gum. This band was made up of a “bunch of nutters” who had renamed themselves Danny Angel, Robin Banks, Mark Time, and the most lunatic of them all, Willy Wurlitzer (also known as “Upright Willie” because of his preference for a certain type of piano), and Dan Barson.

Adam however, was still using his first name, Stuart Goddard. Both he and Danny were interested in the same part of the course - illustration.

The way in which Danny dressed and the way in which he behaved in college was much more that of an early popstar than that of Stuart. Danny was more of a personal illustrator going his own way rather than someone doing a course at college. Danny’s drawings were very powerful and disturbing. He was, then a much more independent type of spirit than Stuart and I think that’s possibly why Stuart got to know him and they became friends. They were kindred spirits though Danny had developed his individual stype more that Adam at that stage.

“Thinking of the two of them,” said one of the tutors from Hornsey, “One would have expected Danny more than Stuart to have ended up as Adam.”

Danny Kleinman, Willy Wurlitzer, and the rest had been gigging with Bazooka Joe. Then Pat Collier, the bass player, began to get more interested in recording than playing and was working as a tape operator in a studio.

Danny thought immediately of Stuart as a replacement on the bass.

“It was more like a friends’ band,” says Danny, “Just have a good laugh, get drunk and fall over, go wild...Adam and I were
good mates so I asked him.”

He went along to the first rehearsal and picked up the songs straight away. Before long the band was back on stage, playing local pubs.

Bazooka Joe had quite a following which rose to its peak when Adam was with them. On stage they would appear to suddenly break out into a fight and then blood would suddenly spurt from Stuart or Danny’s mouth. The idea of staged fights and blood capsules was something Stuart had got from a now obscure sixties band called Vince Taylor and the Playboys, who later became one of the punk “idols”. Stuart’s childhood appreciation of Tommy Steele came to the front as well. The band included in their set Steele’s number Cannibal Pot.

Willie had a small bedroom but an enormous organ and it was there that he and Danny wrote and arranged most of the Bazooka material. The songs were all predominantly comic, ranging from Rock in A Flat to Nelly the Elephant. Stuart began to play about with his name using a different name from gig to gig - the one that everyone remembers is “Eddie Riff”.

Adam’s obvious song writing ability soon began to take over however. He would bring whole ideas for a song to the rehearsal, beginning with the lyric and going right through to what “act” they should do with it. One of these very early songs was called Take Away Rock, The Pancake Roll. The lyrics ran:

“I know how to rock, I know how to swing,
I know how to do it when there’s nobody in,
I’ve done a whole lot of reggae and a whole lot of soul,
But I’m buggered if I can do the pancake roll.”

It was good time rock’n roll, the type of well-crafted fun music of a band like Madness who later recorded Bazooka Joe’s Rock in A Fiat on their first album.

Adam also brought along a song called Cardiac Baby. When the band had rehearsed it he mooted the idea to Danny that perhaps they should pretend to have heart attacks on the climax of the song on stage.

On one celebrated occasion at Adam’s request, the band decided
to make the most out of this song. And the crucial point, Danny began
to cough and sputter, eventually sinking to the floor almost going
purple in his pretend paroxysm of cardiac failure. The audience who
usually joined in the humour of the songs had gone quiet and before
Danny knew where he was a worried looking six footer had jumped
on the stage to help him. He picked Danny up in a fireman’s lift and
rushed him out of the pub to give air and artificial respiration. The
astonished band just stood and gaped as their lead guitarist vanished
out the door.

The band’s “set” included Apache (a song which The Ants might
well do now) Walk Don’t Run and some duets with Danny.

Danny was rather fond of his lead guitar solos when he would
come to the front of the stage and show off a bit. The band didn’t
really care for too much solo ambition so one night before they went
on Adam whispered to all of them separately in the dressing rooms.
When Danny’s solo came round he stepped forward and began to
take up his Jimmi Hendrix pose. Suddenly, at a nod from Adam the
band dropped a key. Danny was out of tune and was so annoyed that
he missed his cue and was thus left silent and looking a bit of a fool.
All the band looked on grinning underneath their pretended dismay
at their guitarist’s incompetence.

During intervals in the bands sets, when all the others were
backstage at the Stapleton Hall Tavern near the Arts School where
they used to play, Danny and Adam would do “a turn”. For this they
used accoustic guitars and sang songs like Four Legged Friend and
A Cowboy Needs a Horse the lyrics of which were:

A Cowboy needs a horse, needs a horse, needs a horse
a cowboy needs a gun,
a cowboy needs spurs, shiny spurs

Then Adam would do a verse of yodelling and continue with:

A cowboy needs a bra, a bra,
A cowboy needs a skirt, shiny skirt

And all the audience would be thinking “What’s this, what’s this?”
One night they played a gig at St. Martins School of Art in Charing Cross Road. Supporting them was a new group, whose songs and stage act made Adam rethink his whole attitude towards performing. He wanted to do something totally different, and told the other members of the band how impressed he was with their support band that night. They didn’t share his enthusiasm, thinking they were a load of tossers. The band was called The Sex Pistols. The Sex Pistols fronted by Johnny Rotten, so named because of his teeth, were staging onslaughts throughout London in the smallest music venues, “causing sensations with audiences everywhere.”

Malcolm McLaren had been in the audience that night and had witnessed a scuffle between Danny Kleinman and Johnny Rotten. At the end of The Sex Pistols set Rotten had announced cynically over the microphone “And now for some real music,” referring to Bazooka Joe.’ Danny was very angry and immediately grabbed Rotten by his drapecoat, smacked him against the back wall and said, “What did you say?”

“Nothing,” said Rotten.

But Adam began to lose interest in Bazooka Joe the more he began to think of new ideas. He phoned up his friend Tom, who later changed his name to Lester Square, and became the founder of The Monochrome Set. He told Tom of his idea for a completely new band. “He wanted to get away from what he was doing, so he phoned me because I wasn’t involved.”

By the time he made his first phone call to Lester, Adam, in characteristic fashion, had already thought out the whole approach. He told Lester that the new band was to be called The B - Sides, and the aim was to be a “Losers” band, just to see where it got them. Lester liked the idea and so Adam placed an advert in Melody Maker to attract a bass player. Adam, who had previously played bass himself, had decided to become the front man and just to sing from now on. The Ad. was answered by Andy Warren, and Adam met him outside the Marquee in Wardour Street for an addition. When Andy walked into the audition room, he took one look at Lester and thought he was a Ted. Adam was wearing pink Chelsea boots and a jacket which had belonged to David Bowie. Adam sat behind a table for Andy’s audition, and Andy went and sat behind the table too. Adam was joking the whole way through, making the whole
affair “fun, very frivolous.” Andy asked him what kind of music the band would be playing, and Adam replied, “We will be playing the B sides to singles that were never even hits.”

Adam and Lester had really got to know each other at college because of an exhibition they had done together. The theme of the show was ‘kitsch’ – cheap fifties ornaments and graphics. This together with their interest in late fifties and early sixties rhythm and blues music formed the style of the band.

They were like a mod band, not akin to the recent manifestation, but much more stylish and “Art School”. Even thought they were, strictly speaking, a pre-Punk band, they seemed more like one that had come after. The band rehearsed at the flat in Muswell Hill where Adam had moved when he married Carol. Towards the end of his time with the B - Sides, Adam had begun to write songs to be introduced into the set, which would later become the basis for The Ants music. For all the ideas and enthusiasm, all the B - Sides ever did was rehearse as they were always held back by the fact that they never had a drummer.

While at Hornsey School of Art, Adam met and fell in love with a fellow student called Carol Mills. She was blonde and slim with a lively sense of humour: she later changed her name to Eve. She was a fashion student, and designed some of the clothes The Ants wore on stage.

Adam proposed to her, and they were married in the Parish of St. Marylebone in the summer of 1975. Eve wore the traditional bridal white and Adam wearing a double-breasted gangster suit from Burtons, a white carnation and a white shirt with an enormous collar encrusted by a striped huge knotted tie. He didn’t wear his glasses for the wedding, for he had already adopted his now familiar use of contact lenses. They settled down to life with Carol’s parents, the Mills, at their home in Muswell Hill, North London, within sight of Alexandra Parade. Muswell Hill is an intensely suburban area – every street stifling passers-by with clipped hedges and neat little gardens. Adam took to married life like pasta to the pot. He was an ideal husband; during the day both of them spending their time at College together, and then in the evenings Adam doing odd jobs around the house, both for his young wife, and for her parents.
Shopping was also Adam’s domaine, and he would happily cook and share the responsibilities of housework which is so often left solely and unfairly to the woman.

Meantime, at College Adam was entering his third and final year. He had to decide upon a subject for his degree thesis and went to Peter Webb to discuss it. He had decided that he wanted to carry on his interest in the Erotics Course. Adam decided to use Allen Jones as his lynch-pin in a long essay about fetishism and bondage. He had met Jones when he came to lecture at the College. He briefly discussed the matter with Peter Webb and the thesis began on good form.

But back home in Muswell Hill, the newly married husband had begun to act strangely. He began eating less and less, and whenever Eve cooked anything, he would use the excuse that he had eaten out. She noticed him getting thinner and thinner. His life was divided into two parts, the young suburban husband doing the shopping and jobs around the house, and the illustrator that he was at College, dealing in exciting images and watching the emergence of the new Punk style in London. Music was pulling him, and he’d begun to get more and more interested in exploiting his musical ideas. He went and had a talk with Webb, saying that he was considering giving up his thesis and leaving Art School altogether. Webb advised caution and tried to persuade him to finish the degree which he had begun. “But of course he was very eager to get on with really making something of his music, and he went through this whole sort of rethinking of himself, and I think he must have decided to make a complete break.”

Adam stopped going to college completely and none of his friends saw him anymore. He wasn’t eating at all, and in fact became medically ill with a disease known as anorexia nervosa. One night he overdosed and was taken into hospital; he had taken a huge quantity of tablets, and had to undergo professional psychiatric treatment. When he came back home he told Eve that he no longer wanted them to live together as man and wife and he moved a bed into another room and from that time on they lived separately within the same house.

Adam was now Adam. The change was so total that his friend Danny could not even think of calling him Stuart anymore. Stuart
Goddard was not his real name, but only his first name. Everyone recognized that there was something much more real about Adam Ant. He gave one of his friends an empty scrapbook and wrote inside the cover “This is for you to keep the cuttings that will make history, Adam Ant (nearly B.A.).”

Later that year he returned to College to see the degree exhibition of his friends. Peter Webb was standing by one of the paintings, when he saw a strange looking young man moving towards him. The man was wearing heavy make-up dressed in black; he turned and grinned, “Hi Pete.” Peter Webb just blinked, his mind a blank, he couldn’t work out who it was. Then the young man said, “It’s Stuart!” He talked enthusiastically about everything he was doing, he really thought he’d got a good chance of getting into the music business. He was very pleased with the way his new life was going. Adam had realized he had done the best thing at the right time. Peter Webb found conversation with him there at the Art School show very difficult indeed. This wasn’t the Stuart he knew. It was somebody completely different. Here was a man on the threshold of a career. “He had left the world of College, which was Stuart Goddard and moved up to the new life which was Adam Ant.”
Throughout Art School, Adam’s socialising had been at best, fitful. At times he’d be genuinely one of the lads, going down to the pub, having a laugh, and at other times he’d be almost a recluse, talking to no one, totally absorbed in his work. It was soon after he had left Art School when no one had seen him for weeks that he phoned Lester Square out of the blue. “Hey Lester, I want to start a group called The Ants.”

And that’s how it happened. (The name had been inspired by an incident one night when Adam and a friend of his, known as “Our Kid” were on top of a Multi-Storey Car Park. The Kid looked down at the people below and said “Look at the Ants!” The B - Sides weren’t doing anything much so Lester thought, “Why Not?” and went round to Muswell Hill to hear the songs Adam had recorded on a four-track recorder. All the songs were to be original, no more B - sides but A sides. Hits. Adam was also just entering his “total leather” period and so it was obvious from the start that the new band would not only sound different but look different. They booked a rehearsal room at Scarf Studios in the East End of London.

Adam arrived first. He was fully dressed in his leather outfit - he always rehearsed in his stage costume so that he could get used to the way it moved as he moved, leaping and jumping around on stage. No one had turned up. So he zipped his eyes and mouth leaving a flap to breathe through and waited. He heard the door open, people wandered in, plonk down their instruments. He didn’t seem to be getting much reaction so he unzipped his eyes and peered out – it was the wrong band, he was in the wrong rehearsal room. Adam eventually found his band in another room a few doors down the corridor, sitting waiting.

The new band got on faster than anyone who knew the B – Sides could have imagined. The B – Sides had rehearsed for two months without playing a gig. The Ants began playing immediately. Adam
began writing letters to people in the music business, threw himself into getting gigs and a manager, and getting the band established. He was determined not to waste a second. The band had all the energy of punk, it didn’t really matter if the music was ready, he was ready, and that was that. Something new was happening to Adam and fortunately he was in London when something new was happening to rock music.

The reason why Adam’s new band was immediately more successful than the other musical adventures he’d begun has a great deal to do with the Punk movement as it was at that time. The atmosphere surrounding him was one which enabled him to strip everything back to bare essentials, to use a whole new language of images and symbols which before had just simmered under rock music being marmalized by the over-dubbing of bland image upon bland image. It must be understood that what has come to be known as Punk was not a street movement at all, but something which grew very much out of the art schools and the soul clubs that were in London at that time. All of the young people in London who were most concerned with style moved directly from funk over to The Sex Pistols. A rather strange transition if you think of funk as being over-embellished mish-mash of West Coast radio music which provided a back-drop to advertising.

What Adam got out of Art School then was not a degree given by the tutors, but a sense of style which had been bubbling under and came to fruition among his contemporaries.

It was an energetic time in London, and Adam knew that he had to strike while the iron was hot. He had to go professional immediately, leaving everything of Art School and his old life behind him. It was for this reason that Lester Square couldn’t stay with the Ants for more than a couple of weeks, because Lester had decided to complete his course at Art School. Adam’s impatience was not just blind ambition, but indicative of the fact that he was there right at the beginning of Punk in the mainstream of the adrenalin that pile-driven a new style into the nation’s consciousness.

Punk is not an easy thing to write about because it was more a feeling than a set of ideas. It is interesting that the symbol that was taken by the media to mean Punk was the harmless safety pin, more associated with babies’ nappies that with youth revolt. The very
word safety pin is paradoxical. When the Mods added more flaps to their pockets and more buttons to the jackets, they were making a statement about the whole absurdity of fashion; they were taking clothes to an extreme which then sent up everybody’s idea about what they should wear. In ancient times, people in tribes believed that if you wore an animal skin, then you would take on some of the characteristics of that animal. So if you were to catch a bear and you wore a lion’s skin, then you would probably have a pretty good chance. The bondage outfits that Adam was wearing, predominantly made from leather, follow in much the same vein, except of course that it’s in a much more self conscious way. People were pretending to take on the world, but with the animals of the mind and the spirit, which live within us.

Of course, this is all the creation of an image, not unlike Cat Woman and Bat Man and all the rest of them that we find in comic books. Eventually, of course, this went to the absurd extremes of people wearing dog collars which actually says the opposite when you think about it. The whole thing about Punk that interested Adam was the mixture of the aggressor and servant, that you were both a wild animal dressed in an animal skin like leather, and also society’s lap dog dressed in a dog collar and being led by the State.

Although Adam was poor and working class, he was never drawn towards the dole queue bands that proliferated the Punk movement. A lot of people felt that the Punk movement was political; this wasn’t true at all in the case of the people that actually created the style. There is nothing political about the song _Anarchy in the UK_ – it was a feeling. It took middle class kiddies like Tom Robinson to attack the establishment in language the establishment understood. The vaguer and more desperate images of Siouxsie and the Banshees, The Sex Pistols and Adam himself in actual fact were more of a challenge and more subversive in a way because they dealt with the gut feelings of the powerful individual.

The focus of the movement was not only the music clubs but also the fashion shops. It was the shops that became the springboard for the new image and the testing ground for the new ideas.

Perhaps the most important shop of the period was Malcolm
McLaren and Vivienne Westwood’s shop SEX. Situated in London’s Kings Road, Chelsea, it had, since the early 70’s been a fashion focal point: in 1971 the shop, then known as LET IT ROCK, had marketed Teddy Boy fashions; a few years later it had been renamed TOO FAST TO LIVE, TOO YOUNG TO DIE and sold bikers’ chains and fringes; but in 1974 with the establishment of SEX, Malcolm and Vivienne had finally hit on the idea that would not only create an extraordinary popular fashion but would also revolutionise a generation. They in effect had created the punk image.

At the time Adam wandered into the shop in 1976 Vivienne was busily working on the punk look, and Malcolm was managing that most notorious of groups, The Sex Pistols.

The shop itself was painted an extravagant garish pink on the outside and had lavish window-boxes crammed with fake mink. It boldly displayed its name in padded pink letters above the door - SEX. Inside, rubber curtains hung from windows, rubber clothes and bondage trousers hung from chicken wire, an old hospital bed covered in a rubber sheet stood in the corner, and foam rubber walls were covered in aerosol sprayed graffiti. An old jukebox in the corner drummed out fifties music. The whole shop felt decadent and daring. It was like going to a live sex show. It was the strangest of places to wander into and it attracted the strangest - and most fascinating - people.

Firstly it had attracted an astonishing looking young lady called Jordan, who had moved up from a sleepy south coast town to work there. And it was Jordan, London’s most extraordinary shop assistant that attracted Adam.

He had first seen Jordan modelling the shop’s clothes in various magazines and had been attracted by her appearance: enormous white bouffant hairstyle, plastic mini skirt covered in car stickers, fishnet stockings, black leather thigh length boots, heavy, black or red eye make-up. Adam tore out one of these pictures and xeroxed dozens of copies. Over the next three weeks these copies began arriving at the shop addressed to Jordan, covered in cryptic messages, smothered in lipstick kisses. Postmarked, Finchley. Signed, Adam Ant. They were arriving at the rate of three or four a day.

This caused much hilarity in the shop. No one had the slightest idea who this Adam Ant character could be until Michael Collins,
who also worked at the shop, began to have his suspicions about
the mysterious customer with dark curly hair who seemed to have
started frequenting the shop.

So when Adam next came into the shop Michael approached
him.

“Where do you live?” he asked.

Adam paused for a moment, then replied “Finchley.”

Whereupon Michael erupted into screams of laughter.

“Why, where do you live?”

More hysteria, and Michael made for the door. Adam shrugged
his shoulders and picked up a t-shirt, and while the laughter from the
street continued to rock the shop, tried it on.

“So you’re Adam ant!” said Jordan.

“Yes,” replied Adam.

It was to be the beginning of a very fruitful relationship.
In fact, the first time Adam and the Ants played before anybody at all, was in Adam’s bedroom in Muswell Hill, Poly Styrene, the singer from X-Ray Spex, was there.

Poly ran a stall in the Beaufort Market with which she shared her name. She was selling clothes and accessories and lots of plastic knick-knacks. It was a very colourful stall situated between The Man in the Moon and a row of shabby little shops. X-Ray Spex and the stall were started at the same time. The band was in its early stages and the stall was a kind of centre for getting some of the ideas and seeing the style beginning to work. Poly made the jewellery. ‘She was the first artist to dress up in different clothes for every concert, wear different hats and turbans. That was her version of the new wave. She was really the originator of that aspect of the new wave which has only now finally appeared because everybody else was going around in sex and violence clothes, heavy bondage in black.’ Her song, *Oh Bondage, Up Yours!* was a send up of the kind of things that were coming out of SEX, or at least to point out that they shouldn’t be taken so seriously.

Adam was a visitor to the Beaufort Market and, although he wasn’t interested in the things on Poly’s stall, he was interested in the people milling around it. It was on one of these visits he met Falcon Stewart, the manager of X-Ray Spex, who was also serving on the stall. They got talking, Adam made it clear that he was looking for a manager; Falcon was on his list.

You wouldn’t have known from looking at Falcon, an ex film maker, that he was at all involved with the new music in London at the time. Adam was obviously attracted to him because he was promoting the gigs at The Man in the Moon and he was hoping that they would play there.

Even though Falcon was obviously on the other side of the fence
Poly Styrene and X-Ray Spex being the complete extreme from what Adam was interested in - Adam asked for an audition. Falcon agreed to come along and see the band play. Adam booked a rehearsal studio called The Alaska. He wanted to launch his career very formally, with everything properly organised. He had even typed out a little programme of the numbers they were going to do and then a sheet with the lyrics on. They did six numbers and Falcon was impressed. More with Adam than anything else.

‘He was very serious and genuine and that is something that I find attractive because he was direct and he was genuinely trying to do something and he was putting a lot of effort into it.’ There was one song that he particularly liked, it was called Deutscher Girls, later recorded in Jubilee. ‘It was the nearest to being a song.’

But Falcon did not agree to be manager at that time because Adam was using the black leather bondage image very heavily. ‘Adam went along with the Malcolm McLaren trip.’ Falcon said Malcolm knew that the whole thing was something that the establishment would get very worried about. He understood that where nobody else did. He realised this was the one way to get at the British Establishment really at it – which in fact worked like a treat. A sensation. But it didn’t have that much to do with music. His was an image, a headline-grabbing operation. But what happened was that lots of kids got involved just in the look, nothing wrong with that, but it may as well have been fancy dress. For Adam it wasn’t fancy dress at all. Falcon could see from his performance that he had ‘picked up on it in a very real sense. He took it for real. Not being actually a teenager any more and having been too Art School he found it very fascinating, in a slightly more tortured kind of artistic sense.’ The whole thing about punk was a stance, a pose which took the form of sexual aggression. Falcon didn’t believe that this was a saleable commodity, nor that it would transfer successfully on to record, and even if it did, people wouldn’t understand it let alone buy it. Also, Falcon was committed to X-Ray Spex, who were starting to be successful and since they were the first band he’d ever managed he was still finding his way.
The next few days were spent in frantic preparation for The Ants’ first gig which was booked for May 10th in the cafeteria of the ICA, an art gallery and theatre. Adam had phoned them up and told them The Ants were a country and western group so he had managed to get the booking.

The audition at Alaska had been on the 7th. The next day Lester Square, now with The Monochrome Set had left the Band. On the 9th they got a replacement guitarist who didn’t even last a whole day. Mark Ryan joined as guitarist only on the day before the première.

Adam had got himself a complete punk-bondage outfit. He was totally unrecognisable in it. Black leather from head to foot. Even his head was covered in what is now known as a ‘Cambridge Rapist Mask’ with a flap for the nose and a zip across the mouth. He was drawing very heavily on the type of Allan Jones image he has studied in Art School. To him it was an art form he took very seriously. He took his art with a very big capital A. He was struggling for his medium. His graphics. And because of that he was very extreme.

The day of the ICA première came and they turned up with their meagre equipment and set it up in the canteen. The serving ladies looked with horror as they began to move the tables back to set up the drum kit. The management had obviously been expecting some kind of folk band to provide a polite ceilidh while the punters for the gallery drank their coffee and tucked into vegetarian salads and wholemeal open sandwiches.

The panic nearly set in when a hoard of desperate looking punks turned up in the foyer to see them. They weren’t too interested in sitting at the benches nibbling rabbit food.

The management delayed the start of the gig. This made things worse because the first Ants audience weren’t too interested in browsing through the racks of feminist and agit prop literature while they waited either. They played one number, Beat my Guest and were thrown out. There was no way that the band could be allowed to beat up the canteen with their music. Everyone was upset.

John Dowie and Victoria Woods were doing a show in the theatre at the time. Before they went on Adam went up to Dowie and asked, ‘Is there any way we can play in the theatre during your interval?’

Dowie agreed. ‘There was no way I was going to say “no” to someone dressed head to foot in black leather with several hundred
punks behind him.’

Everyone settled down to wait and the Institute of Contemporary Arts continued to ply its bean shoots and date tarts. Dowie and Woods finished their first half and finally the première of the Ants took place. It went well, Adam leaping about and pumping up the songs with unsurpressed energy. Dowie watched the show from the wings and when Adam came off dripping with sweat and tearing off his mask, Dowie said to him, ‘And what am I supposed to do for your encore?’ The ICA returned to its former self.

The next night, the band were on at The Man in the Moon supporting X-Ray Spex. Although Falcon wasn’t interested in the type of image Adam was using, he had decided to put them on after all. He could see that Adam had something. Even though he hadn’t become manager, Falcon decided then to keep an eye on Adam for the future. He felt that he ‘had an exceptional quality. Totally unidirectional. But that’s what you find in the most original people. They have that ability and that total stability to totally concentrate, totally dedicate themselves to one thing, in a most ruthless kind of way. They can withstand all kinds of criticism and slagging or disappointments, otherwise they couldn’t survive. They are extremists in ways. What they do is they feel so strongly that they just do it, regardless of the costs”

And, in fact, the months and even years ahead would be full of all kinds of criticism and ‘slagging off’ and times when it seemed impossible to continue.
Six – The man in the moon

Adam asked Jordan to The Man in the Moon gig. He had high hopes that she’d agree to manage the band after she’d seen them play.

The pub put a board outside announcing which bands were playing and about forty people filtered down to the basement. Among them were Jordan and Steve from The Banshees.

Adam came on wearing his black leather mask and black leather briefs over his trousers (just as The Slits used to wear their knickers over their jeans). The set started and Adam began to terrorise the audience, wrapping himself in the microphone lead, crawling across the floor, grabbing people by the ankles. It was an ordinary pub audience and they were somewhat disconcerted to say the least! And the equipment was so bad that some poor bloke had to sit onstage and holding two wires together to keep the electricity flowing.

Jordan remembers the gig well. ‘This bloke came out with this blinking leather mask on and these pants … and they did one song, which I think … “Jordan” or “Send a Letter to Jordan” or something. Something to do with me anyway. They did it three times. And then the equipment blew up!’

By this time only Jordan and her friends were left - the rest of the audience had given up in despair. But it was Jordan that Adam wanted to impress, he wasn’t bothered about the others. Jordan was a bit of a celebrity in her own right at this time; apart from her influence on punk fashions she was also a friend of The Sex Pistols, a red hot media property. She was interviewed on TV a number of times, and on one celebrated occasion a pompous TV presenter had asked her what she was going to do for Christmas, and she’d replied, ‘I’m going to lay naked in bed eating bananas, and if I get drunk enough, kill my mum and dad.” It was the sort of thing Adam loved.

Just as Adam was impressed by Jordan, so she was impressed by him. She liked the fact that he’d asked her to be manager of the group because of the way she looked rather than going for the
average common or garden type of manager who knew all the ins and outs of the music business. She had never done anything like this before, but she reckoned it was a question of having a bit of sense and your head screwed on the right way. She was dead right, and she was ideal for the job. Unlike Falcon she was convinced that Adam was a ‘real saleable commodity’ - he looked the part and acted the part.

When she told him she’d take the job, ‘he went berserk!’ she remembers. Leapt around like a lunatic, and then the lot of them went off to a friend’s house to have a cup of tea and discuss plans for the future.

Jordan’s first job was to get them the gigs. The Man in the Moon was the lowest of the low in the gig hierarchy and the sooner she got them out of that rut the better. So with admirable energy she was on the phone to people like Dave Woods, who ran March Artists. She would says: ‘I’m Jordan, I’ve got this band …’ And that was that. The Ants were almost instantly jumping queues and getting to gigs at places like The Vortex. And then there were the other bands Jordan knew like The Banshees and The Slits, and she’d talk them into giving Adam their support slots.

Although she never saw herself as a financial manager, Jordan also took over the money side of the group. Money was pretty low at the time but she cushioned the band from the paltry sums they were earning by giving them her share. She felt it was important for them to have money in hand at the end of each day to keep morale and energy high. To this day Adam is unaware of this.

Next on the list of priorities was rehearsal space. It was vitally important for a band to rehearse in order to get their set together and get the gigs - but the terrible truth of the matter was that it cost more to hire a piece of rehearsal space than the group could earn doing a gig. But, ever resourceful, Jordan got a friend of hers that ran the Screen on the Green in Notting Hill to ask for help. And he agreed to letting the band store their equipment at the cinema and rehearse in it all night - free!

So the four members of the band - Adam, vocals, Paul Flanagan, drums, Mark Ryan, known as ‘The Kid’, on his lead Rickenbacker, Andy Warren, bass - and Jordan began rehearsing there. Most of the equipment they used was hired, but Paul had his own drumkit
which was a great asset (In fact the Banshees who didn’t have a drumkit borrowed it for months on end.) ‘It was quite a special time,’ remembers Jordan. ‘When I think back on it I think, Oh God, if that energy was still there!’

Things were definitely going very well for them and, largely thanks to Dave Woods who fixed them up with venues through March Artists, they played a gig virtually every week.

While the band rehearsed in the cinema, Adam and Jordan would go up to the local, The Rosebuck. Adam of course sticking to his coke, and Jordan indulging in her customary drop of alcohol. They would work on the lyrics of songs here, and it was on one of these nights that they wrote ‘Lou’, which was later to be recorded for the John Peel Show. But Jordan’s style of lyric writing was very different to Adam’s, and he insisted there was no way he could sing ‘Lou’. She insisted, he stubbornly refused, so they came to a compromise: they would both sing it.

And that was how Jordan came to sing with the band. From that day onwards she would be totally involved, singing as well as managing. She became a sort of acting manger.
Seven – The Queen’s Jubilee

In the summer of 1977, two sensations caught the imagination of the people: the Queen’s Silver Jubilee and punk. One meant that people wrote things on the pavement: ‘Royal Walkway’ and the other that people wrote on the wall: ‘God Save the Queen’. This latter slogan did not refer, of course, to the head of State herself, but to the record by the Sex Pistols which rose to No 1 despite the silence of the BBC. In W H Smith’s stores everywhere there was a blank left on the No 1 slot of their charts. Overall punk was the biggest thing since Beatlemania. Everyone in Britain stared at the outrageous looking kids, kids who were modelling themselves on people like Jordan, Johnny Rotten, Siouxsie Sioux and Adam. It got everywhere. In Stratford-Upon-Avon, for instance, the Royal Shakespeare Company were doing a production of Measure for Measure. When it got to the line ‘Marrying a punk my lord is pressing to death’ the line got the biggest laugh it had received for four hundred years.

Derek Jarman, a London film director, was planning a short super 8 movie. It was to be called Jubilee. Derek had begun making the film mainly about Jordan. He had seen her by chance when she had first come up to London from Seaford. He was in Victoria Street when he was stopped dead in his tracks by the vision of Jordan coming towards him. She was looking like a sort of ice-cream lady gone hopelessly mad with a bouffant hairstyle like a vast strawberry ice-cream and a mini skirt covered with white car stickers. He was completely stunned. A month or so later he met her at a party and finally spoke to her. Now he was beginning to make a film with her.

One afternoon Derek was going down the King’s Road looking in some of the ‘punk’ shops and reading the fanzines. He was researching the film. Suddenly he caught sight of a young man walking in front of him. He had dark hair, leather trousers, and a great rip in his shirt which revealed the word FUCK cut into his back with a razor blade.
Jarman thought he looked great and would be very good for the film. He considered plucking up enough courage to ask him but when it came to it he just let him go walking through the shoppers, dodging through the traffic and away.

Derek visited Jordan to talk about the type of people he wanted to find for the film.

‘Well we’re looking for someone at the moment to play the popstar” Derek told Jordan. ‘And I know just the sort, I saw this really great looking kid walking along the street who looked really very good for the film.’ Derek went on to explain to her what it was the ‘boy’ had, the way he looked and moved, the type of attitude in his face, then Derek said, ‘And had his shirt ripped open with FUCK written on his back.’

Jordan looked at him unsurprised and said, ‘Well, he’s in this band and I’m in it as well – I’m his manager, he’s Adam’

Jordan decided immediately to use the band in the film. He was making videos of a few other bands and he decided to include Adam and the Ants. The videos were done very simply, just two small cameras, one doing close-ups and the other doing long shots. The whole process was cheap and cheerful, Derek made videos of Siouxsie and the Banshees, Wayne County and the Electric Chairs, Chelsea and Adam and the Ants all in the same afternoon.

When Derek looked at the video he could see that Adam had something very special, he was convinced that he was a natural actor. ‘He would never do what I expected which was actually rather good. Instead of forcing him to do what I wanted, as one could have done, by saying “Do it again until you get it right”, I just let it drift the way he was doing it.’

The writing of the script for *Jubilee* was total chaos but this meant that Derek could write in a bigger part for Adam because he was obviously so good on film. Jarman recalled one incident when Adam played absolutely against the whole thing. It was when they were filming a scene with Carl Johnson and Ian Charleson on the roof. Adam was just supposed to stand there and be lectured at. Instead he burst into giggles over the whole thing, finding the very serious speech very funny. It wasn’t Adam’s scene at all but his laughter stole it. He upstaged both the professional actors and they had the good grace to let him. It actually turned out to be one of the
best scenes in the film because Adam had turned it completely on its head.

Jarman felt that Adam approached the whole thing with a degree of scepticism which was probably right.

It was very much a family affair, most of the filming being done in Jarman’s warehouse, which was also his home. Adam was always there when he was writing a new scene, chipping in and entering into the fun that everyone experiences who works with Derek. The only person who wasn’t totally happy was Adam’s associate from the beginning, Siouxsie Sioux, who couldn’t decide if she wanted to be in the film or not. Consequently, the Banshees part ended up being pushed to the back, just a few incidental glimpses of them on a TV screen, even though Kenny, the drummer, designed a lot of the sets.

The Buzzcocks, who The Ants worked with at the Marquee, should have been in it too, but Jarman couldn’t afford to bring them down from Manchester and put them up in hotels.

Paul Flanagan, the drummer, didn’t turn. If you look closely at the scenes of the band playing in Jubilee, you will notice that seated behind the drumkit is Kenny from the Banshees. Standing in. Unfortunately for Paul it was the end of the road for him with The Ants. Adam and Jordan already had their eyes on a new drummer.

At the beginning of June, Adam had returned to his Art School, to play a gig supporting a band called Desolation Angels. The Angels were a band, rather unusually, led by their drummer, Dave Barbe. He had formed it, dreamed up the name and was the main force behind it.

After they had seen them play, Jordan covered her mouth with her hand and whispered to Adam, ‘We’ve got to nick him.’

He was ‘quite a rock ’n’ roll’ drummer then’ but Adam and Jordan felt they could change him because he was young and enthusiastic. They both had pangs of guilt about asking him to leave the band because without him it would be bound to fold.

Dave joined, however, and stayed with the Ants as drummer for two and a half years. He brought with him the guitarist from Desolation Angels. He turned out to be a real comedy character and one of the people Adam has most enjoyed working with. When
he joined he was called John Becket, but changed his name first to Johnny Germany and then to Johnny Bivouac. The first thing Jordan said to him was Right, haircut tomorrow.

One of the high points in the film is when The Ants play on the stage at the Drury Lane Theatre. They had hired the theatre for the day in which to record The Ants. When they walked in there was a fantastic set already on the stage. It was for a rather awful musical playing on there at the time but the set was a magnificent contraption of spinning mirrors. But because of copyright reasons they weren’t allowed to switch it on and use it even though it would looked great behind The Ants.

Then some of the theatre technicians happened to wander in and someone happened to slip them ten quid and suddenly the whole thing lit up and began revolving and they had an unbelievably expensive shot in the lenses.

The Ants began to play ‘Plastic Surgery’, Adam leapt about doing handsprings the lights and mirrors flashing, the cameras rolling - and then Adam dislocated his knee. Suddenly the thought of plastic surgery didn’t seem so appealing.

The film was enormously hard work for everyone in it, often working long into the night. It wasn’t all glamorous. One of the actresses, Paoula, was actually brought to tears over this. Derek told her that she was going to be playing a waitress who gets assaulted. Somehow she thought it would be very romantic, dying gracefully with her best profile to the camera. But when it actually happened she got showered with tomato ketchup.

But this was in the same scene that did bring out Adam’s natural ‘glamour’, he’s laying on a mattress when she takes off his glasses and says very simply:

‘You’re beautiful.’

Toyah Wilcox was in Jubilee too, and like Adam was just beginning a career that lead to hit singles and popular success. It was in Jubilee that she sang for the first time. When she started working on the film she had long hair and flaired jeans, but Jordan got out the scissors. One day they were sitting talking, Adam, Derek and Toyah. Toyan was playing a head-shaven character called ‘Mad’, when Derek said to Toyah:
‘Why don’t you sing something?’
Toyah had never thought of singing at all but Derek said it would be a good idea if she had a go as she wasn’t in a band or anything. He thought it would nice if other people in the film did a bit as well as Adam. ‘And since it seemed to be the order of the day that anyone could get up and sing, I said “Toyah get up and sing”’.

So Adam went away and spent the weekend writing a song for her and rehearsing it. On Monday morning they filmed it, and everyone was amazed because it was ‘actually rather good’.

The song was finally put in the scene where Adam makes his big entrance to this prophetic announcement.
‘The new Garbo - this kid’s going to be Number One.’
Jarman was always convinced that Adam would be ‘The top of the hit parade’ – ‘It was just a matter of time.’

*Jubilee* didn’t end how it should have done because the last scene, involving Adam was dropped. The scene involved him being attacked by two policemen in a photobooth. One of them took photos of him while the other raped and murdered him. But Adam didn’t fancy this at all.

Derek was very enthusiastic about the scene which was to take place in a tube station but in the end he had to ditch it for three reasons.

One, they hadn’t got the money to get a photobooth; two, it was late at night and all the tube stations had shut down; and three, Adam flatly refused to do the scene.

In the end, they made it up as they went along and Adam got covered in stage blood.

After that last night’s filming Adam went home to visit his parents where they were living as caretakers in Chelsea. He knocked on the door and his father came down to open it.

Mr. Goddard just stood there and looked at him, as he was covered in blood. He brought him inside thinking he’d fallen off a motorbike but it was just ‘Kensington Gore’ and exhaustion from filming *Jubilee*. 
Eight – The Creep

Because of the film Adam met a whole lot of new people. They were invited by Andrew Logan, the artist, to play at a party of his in his warehouse down by the Thames. This was his introduction to the ‘Chelsea Set’ a group which has always existed on the intellectual, trendy side of London; only the personnel changes.

This wasn’t in the long run, a good thing for the band for, however useful and interesting you were, it stained them with the mark of poseurs. People naturally presumed that Adam was a rich boy of traditional English stock, slumming it in punk, trading an expensive account for cheap effect, something against which it is very hard to defend yourself. This is part of the reason why the rock press pilloried him and made him a figure of ridicule.

One of the people who he did meet at this time, however, was Stephanie Gluck, who has been described as ‘one of the four women in Adam’s life’. She’s full of enthusiasm for everything, and punctuates her conversation with howls of laughter. She’s naturally outrageous and the greater part of what she says is performed as if by characters in a very romantic movie.

Stephanie met one of the producers of Jubilee, Guy Ford, un a pub and he said to her, ‘Would you like to be in a film?’ They were looking for an all girl band to be in one of the scenes. He asked her if she played any instruments ‘Oh yes!’ she said, although in fact she couldn’t play a note.

He said that he’d sent a guy to see her, who was doing all the music. So guy gave Adam the address of a clothes shop in South Moulton Street called Browns, and asked him to go and see Stephanie there.

Adam walked into the shop, the whole place dripped with money, standing there he saw a girl dressed in a long, ‘Ethnic’ hippie-type dress with long hair. This was the shop was where ‘the very best people’ obtained their glad rags, the contrast with SEX was almost entertaining.
Stephanie, in her turn looked at the ‘apparition’ that was coming through the door, at first looking like just a black streak, rattling, with the sound of chains. As her eyes organised the ‘symphony’ of bondage in front of her she could see that his legs and arms were wrapped about with black chains, he had one red eyebrow and one black one, make-up all down his face, and National Health glasses.

‘I’m bound to get the sack,’ she thought to herself, ‘just because he’s in the shop.’

‘He was that dynamic, all this wonderful power and energy, but he’s really small, really cute, little and cute,’ I thought to myself.

Adam asked her to meet the other girls that were in the band at a rehearsal booked for that evening in a warehouse. She agreed, then he asked if she had a guitar, ‘Oh yes, yes’ she said, although of course she didn’t.

‘How long have you been playing?’ said Adam.

‘Oh, a little while, I think.

Stephanie got home as soon as she could and phoned everyone she knew who had ever seen a guitar. Call after call had produced nothing so she went off to the warehouse empty handed.

She walked in, and there was Adam in his black leather, and three girls looking much like Adam. She wandered across in her rather nice pink dungarees and pink T-shirt. Adam looked for the guitar, where was it?

‘Oh, unfortunately I lent it to someone and can’t get it back until tomorrow,’ she said. Adam looked upon her inefficiency with disdain, and Stephanie wished that somehow she wasn’t wearing pink dungarees, was there a convenient hole into which she could drop?

Adam gave her a guitar that was lying around and then picked up his own and played a fast set of chords very loudly.

‘Play that,’ he said.

Stephanie placed her hand around the neck of the guitar, trying to get each one of her fingers on to each of the strings. She wondered why the guitar had six strings and she only seemed to have five fingers. She looked up at Adam.

‘How does it go again?’ she said.

He could see that it wasn’t really worth him playing it again, but he did. At the end of her tether she gave in and said, ‘I can’t play
can I?’

‘It doesn’t matter,’ said Adam ‘because you’re going to mime.’

Stephanie was furious with him ‘From that moment I thought he really hated me’. Stephanie thought him a real creep ‘because he was so fucking cool’.

Next day she bought black string vests, leather jacket, trousers, chains, the lot. She called on a friend and persuaded him to lend her his guitar. He was reluctant to do so but once she had told him what had happened he felt obliged. She didn’t know that it was a very rare and expensive guitar, one of only two in the world.

She walked into the warehouse that night with the guitar proudly in her hand. Everyone turned and looked at her, aghast at the gleaming pedigree.

‘What have I done now?’ she thought to herself.

As the evening wore on things got better, she really got on well with the other girls in the band. By the end of their evening’s miming they had decided they were going to be a rock band, get big record deals, go on tour … so they decided to kick out the vocalist, Toyah, and replace her with Stephanie.

When they had finished she watched Adam going through his paces, rehearsing his numbers, in his customary fashion, full of energy.

‘What a creep,’ she thought. She did have to admit to herself, however, that he was a hard worker ‘but such a wally’ there was no doubt that he was good at what he did, even if he was a creep.

Adam finished his rehearsal and Stephanie spoke to him.

‘I know I’ve been a pain in the arse, but I thought you were very good – at what you did!’

‘Uh?’ said Adam, and went home.

‘Creep, wally, wanker.’

A couple of days she got a phone call, it was Adam saying ‘Can I come and see you?’

‘If anyone I hate that much wants to come and see me he must be worthwhile’, she thought to herself, and then, without thinking, invited him over to her house that Friday. Fridays nights in most Jewish houses is something which can’t be abused, the whole family is together for the Kiddush.

Adam arrived. As the door opened on the sight of a young punk
in chains and make-up her mother’s mouth opened in astonishment. The task seemed impossible, but within an hour Adam had completely charmed her mother. After dinner they went up to Stephanie’s bedroom to talk about the band.

And then he took off his glasses. Stephanie felt as if it was just like in the films when he did his, ‘Oh so handsome, I never realised,’ she thought, and ‘That was it – love. It’s the only time it’s ever happened in my life when someone takes off their glasses.’

He was a neat gentleman, they got up from the floor where they were talking about music and took to the bed, and the ‘food of love’.

‘He really does like sex in a big way, and he really gives. You can tell whether people are takers or givers and he’s a giver. While he’s making love he expresses how he feels about it while it’s happening, he’s not one of those who goes ‘bang, and thank you very much’ he either talks or sings about it.’

He started climbing the wall with his legs.

‘It was like – you know how amazing sex is supposed to make you come out of your shoes? – like in the films – you know when they kiss the one they love, that’s how they know. Had this vision of being in one of those films because the sex was so good it was making him climb up the wall. That’s what’s good about Adam, - being able to do something as silly as that, it doesn’t come across as stupid, it was his way of showing me what he really felt.’

One of the scenes of Jubilee is set in a weird set of catacombs where a disco is taking place. Both Adam and Stephanie were in this scene. A fight breaks out. It was, in fact, a real fight, and Jarman seeing the opportunity kept the cameras running. Adam was made very angry by the fight and he went rushing out. Stephanie followed him and they went off to find a coffee house. They sat there for three hours. ‘Three hours with Adam will last you a week.’ Stephanie didn’t mind that Adam was often involved with several girls all at the same time. She knew he wasn’t cut out to be a one girl man ‘because he’s got a hell of a lot to give, very energetic, very inspiring. It’s very hard work when you go out with Adam.’

Suddenly, their extended coffee break was interrupted by a scream from across the restaurant. It was Guy Ford, ‘Where the Hell was he?’
Adam was living in Putney at this time in the house of friend from his Art School called Chris Brown. The house was ‘full of weirdos’ and whenever Stephanie visited him she would dash up the stairs to avoid being accosted by the other inhabitants. Adam’s room was like a small box. Whenever he moved he would begin decorating his room immediately, and when it was furnished he moved out. The room was sparse, just a mattress on the floor and his tape recorder at which he worked every day. All day long he would be dashing down to Chris’s room saying, ‘Come up and hear what I’ve recorded.’ He played Chris. In this room he wrote a song called Young Parisian. Adam had never been abroad and sitting in his small box in Putney he began to want to travel. He wanted to go to Paris. Unfortunately he had no money at all. He refused to sign on the dole. There was no possibility of his being able to travel abroad, so instead he wrote the song: ‘I want to go to Paris with you, to see what the French boys do.’ For Adam the song was a kind of joke born out of his miserable room and lack of money which was tying him down.

There has always been a lot of humour involved in the writing. The mark of a good song is when you are on the floor crying with laughter.

Adam talked to Chris about his plans to make a whole set of songs like Parisians. They were to be called Young Berliner, Young Viennese, Young Romans. The songs didn’t get written, neither did he get to Paris. Instead he bought a pot of violets and a goldfish. Adam gave names to everything in his room, the goldfish he named Dennis, and the violets he also named Dennis.

Adam had decided at this time that the ideal food for him was Ready Brek and jelly. It was cheap and took hardly any time to prepare. Ready Brek contains all good natural stuff, and jelly itself is remarkably nutritious. The fridge was constantly jam-packed with red jelly, always red jelly.

This became his sole staple diet and Adam became very ill.
Nine – Car trouble

It would be a while before Jubilee was released so meantime the band decided to return to some solid gigging. The rest of ’77 would be sent travelling up and down the country to far flung music venues trying to establish a hardcore Ant following.

On one Saturday, The Ants were booked to play Rebecca’s a large music venue in Birmingham. Saturday morning came, they loaded their equipment into The Banshees van, who were playing with them but didn’t have the space to take the band as well. Clutching their guitars, which they hadn’t entrusted to Siouxsie’s lot, and the run down of the set they were going to play, they racked their brains for a way of getting there. Then someone had a brainwave, and phoned a mate who worked for Haringey Council. A while later a van arrived – HARINGEY SOCIAL SERVICES was writ large on the side.

Loading it up, they laughed at their luck, but it was the decrepit old van that had the last laugh. It broke down – just futtered and stopped on the motorway. The band had to leap out and run across the nearby fields in search of petrol. On the way back it started raining and, accompanied by tiny frogs who were moving from one pond to another they laughingly filled the van with the little petrol they had accumulated.

They set off again, when suddenly the inside of the van began to fill with smoke (the engine was inside!) and choking and coughing they had to abandon it once and for all in an underpass twenty miles from their destination. ‘That’s it,’ Jordan commanded them all, in her best manager’s voice, ‘Get out!’ And with one hour to go she had made them run up the road, guitars firmly wedged under arms, to the fastest part of the motorway. Juggernauts were whizzing by at 100 mph, but courageously Jordan stuck out her thumb, and one screeched to a halt.

‘I’m ever so sorry,’ said Jordan to the driver, as she signalled the band to get in. There’s rather a lot of people here.’
‘That’s nothing – I’ve had fourteen in this cab, where do you want to go?’
‘The Bullring.’
So, after making a quick phone call to The Banshees, ‘It’s all right, we’re coming!’ the driver took them to the centre of Birmingham. The group arrived at Rebecca’s ten minutes before they were due to go on. One of the best gigs they’d done to date.

In October they were booked to play at The Plymouth Top Rank. Once again they were on with The Banshees and once again it was a nail biting journey. In all it took them eighteen hours to get there. They had driven down to Portsmouth and just turned right? It hadn’t occurred to them they could go diagonally. There were ten bands on the bill, and The Ants were right at the bottom, i.e. on first. Time was getting short, and they were wandering about lost in the West Country in a caravan. Finding an old petrol station Jordan was once again on the phone to The Banshees – one of those old phones with twisty wires – ‘It’s all right we’re coming!’

When they finally arrived they were met by a bunch of bouncers in frills and velvet jackets.
‘Who are you then?’ one of them asked, flexing a muscular arm
‘We’re the band,’ replied Jordan, equally heavy. Adam always left it to Jordan to deal with the aggro – she gave as good as she got, and more affectively.

Anyway they were allowed in, and played another good set.

A few weeks later they were faced with more trouble in Brighton when they went down to play The regency. The bouncers were abusive and the manager tried to make them pay £90 for the hire of the microphones. And considering the average wages the band was getting for a gig was £50, this was outrageous. Jordan was more than unwilling to pay such an extortionate sum, particularly as Dire Straits the band who were on with them, didn’t seem to be paying anything. Then the bouncers set up the drumkit in the wrong place. And that blew it. Jordan smoke rising from her ears, marched up to the DJ, knocked him off his stool, picked up the microphone and announced:
‘We’re pulling out because of the management’s ridiculous
demands. I know you’re all Ants fans, so just go and get your money back.’

The audience moved en masse towards the box office. And the manager watched with fury as his lovely pound notes floated out the door in the hands of a ‘miserable bunch of punks’.

For the first time the group realised they had a strong group of followers. The fans helped them load the van, and begged them to pose for photographs with the faithful. One of them, a young kid called Don who had a marvellous fencing shirt with ADAM AND THE ANTS sprayed all over it would drum for the group a few years later on Martian Dance.

They played a large number of gigs that year including The Marquee, that prestigious rock venue where The Who and the Cream made their early appearances, where they had a series of headlining gigs, and The Music Machine, the largest music club in London, where they played alongside The Banshees and The Rockats.

And then there was of course Jarman’s famous party. Jarman was giving a friend a 21st Birthday Party - and he wanted it to be ‘spectacular’ so he asked Adam and the Ants to play. He had been to a party a while before where The Sex Pistols had played and the whole place had been wrecked by gate crashing fans of the band. With The Ants growing popularity Jarman wasn’t taking any chances: he put all his belongings in one room, partitioned it off and covered it up with packing cases so no one knew it was there.

Everyone let rip. When people got too hot dancing to the band they went and had baths in a bathroom without walls and so in the end everyone was dancing naked. Adam, Jordan and the band on the other hand were slightly overdressed, Adam in a gold-rubber T-shirt from SEX which stuck to him and made sweat pour down his arms, Jordan in her large black rubber skirt - and the whole band in gloves, because all the wires were live the problem was that there was no earth. As Adam was singing, the electricity built up and built up until it became impossible for him to touch the microphone – in particular with his mouth. They had to do two sets, wait till the electricity had died down, then come back on stage again.
But it didn’t seem to bother anyone much, the party went on all night.

Adam, Jordan and The Ants had covered a lot of ground since April that year. It seemed obvious that they would get bigger and bigger - there was so much originality and so much energy. Adam’s athletic antics on stage had however got him into trouble, and it had been a year of injuries for him. At Eric’s in Liverpool, he’s hit his head on the rafters and ended up in hospital for doing the same thing in Plymouth. At the Marquee, he’d thrown himself off the stage hoping the audience would catch him - but was practically crushed by the crowd.

But the most hurtful injuries came from the music press. For some reason Adam and the Ants were not liked. So Adam started to distrust the official rock press and look toward the fanzines for support. An article written by Gary Bushell in *Sounds* tells us about the press attitude toward the band:

‘I don’t quite know how to say this but I ennnnn, I ennnnn … Sod it, start again. Repeat after me: everyone hates Adam and the Ants. He is most definitely *Persona non grata* with those of us ‘in the know’ (you know us what get in gigs for nothing like) and putting them down is almost an article of faith amongst the pen pushing profession. I’ve done it ever since I first saw them; “Oh Adam and the Ants how *passé*, dahling”.

In fact I’ll tell you this, although it’s none of your business at all, when you start working on a music paper they make you sign a piece of paper to the effect that you detest AA and everything he stands for, and you have to swear on a Bible never ever to even consider giving them a good review. It’s the truth, I’ve done it meself willingly.

So how come I found myself this brass monkies Tuesday actually quite ennnjer … ennjjio … erh thinking they were pretty interesting. Oh bollox, I enjoyed them.

There we are I said it. I saw Adam and the Ants and quite enjoyed them. Huh, once you’ve said it once it’s not so bad. I ENJOYED Adam and his hymenopterous insects! … He
reminded me of a hammier version of Siouxsie, coming on a drama school, shoulder-hugging cracked actor, face coated in thick white make-up, eyes staring, body jerking and all that. He takes himself seriously but he’s quite fun in a campy caricature of Bowie’s darkest moments sort of way. Just another of the Zig’s goblin offspring locked in a marvel comic nightmare dream no mortal mind can hold tossing in all the expected SM, Deutsche girls imagery, Oh you terrible termite Adam!

And the music was suitably theatrical: great ponderous pulsing riffs and slowly surging slabs of sound flirting with HM but far too cartoon decadent for that. Not often rock n’ roll, several times boring and hardly ever pop but really a sub-Art form in itself and I must admit that even though I didn’t feel the urge to go and speak to the man (He might have whipped me for godsake) did stay right till the end.

Excuse me, I’ve got to make an appointment with my doctor.’
On the 23rd of January, Adam and the Ants recorded the session for John Peel. They put down four tracks: *Deutscher Girls*, *Lou, It Doesn’t Matter* and *Puerto Rican*. It really was quite a landmark for the band. John Peel’s programme has enormous influence. Over the past few years he has continually been voted ‘No. 1 Favourite Person’ in many of the music papers because of the way he enthusiastically champions new music. However the session that they did for him came about in a very funny way.

Jordan was at a Banshees’ gig at the Croydon Greyhound when she met John Walters who produces The Peel Show. Walters was very interested by the fact that The Ants had a female manager and so Jordan took the opportunity to invite him to see the band.

Walters turned up at the Royal College of Art on 1st December, 1977, to watch them play. He stood in the audience and watched the set. Jordan came on after a few numbers to sing with Adam, and when she was leaving the stage, Walters stopped her and asked for a chat.

They went back to the dressing room and shut the door. Walters said that he really wanted the band to do a John Peel Session but with one stipulation: Jordan’s song had to be included. She knew that Adam would agree to this, and so she said ‘yes’ immediately. She thanked him for coming and then went to open the dressing-room door for him. It wouldn’t budge. They had locked themselves in, there was no way that it would open.

The two of them, alone in the dressing room, just stared at one another. They then began banging on the door and yelling. They couldn’t be heard, of course, because the band was playing.

Jordan was very embarrassed indeed. It was her first encounter with anyone from the BBC and she wanted to make a good impression. ‘And there we were locked in this bloody dressing room.’

The band finished their set and the door opened. In walked
the band to see John Walters and Jordan just sitting there, waiting. Walters had obviously only seen the first part of the set. It looked like he hadn’t liked them at all from the expression on his face.

Besides the BBC another company approached the band. The company was called ‘Megalovision’ and they were the financiers behind *Jubilee*.

They were the first people ever to put money into the band and the only ones not to get anything out of it. The best thing they did for them was to buy them a van. Jordan was taken on too, still acting as manager and doing all the same services that she had always done. Looking after The Ants artistically and musically and collecting the money after gigs, carrying the contracts and arguing with club owners. Megalovision gave the band spending money but Jordan had to get chits for everything and bring back the receipts. Everyone thought all this was rather funny.

The man in charge of The Ants, Howard Malin, really didn’t have a clue about the music. The company was primarily concerned with making films. Very few of the Megalovision people could muster up enough courage to risk the sweatiness of The Marquee where the band were doing their Thursday nights.

The one person who did go and really did show an interest in the band was Don Hawkins. Don was with the company because there were a couple of filmscripts that he wanted to make but he and Adam became good friends. After Don had seen the band play at The Marquee he had a long talk with Adam.

Don had been in a rock band in the early Sixties, he had joined Vince Taylor and the Playboys when he was sixteen. Vince Taylor and the Playboys happened to be one of Adam’s ‘hero’ bands and he was bowled over at being able to talk to someone who was in it. Adam was mad about The Playboys because they were a kind of seminal punk band. Vince used to dress in leather and the band would stage mock fights with blood capsules. They were the first group to do this and for that reason held in high regard by the early punks.

At his flat in West London Don played Adam some rare records, enthusiastically jumping from one track to another to show how the style of the early Sixties music had evolved.
Adam was amazed when he first heard something by Vince Taylor and the Playboys. It wasn’t how he imagined it at all. It was far less gutsy than punk. The songs go on quite normally and then suddenly burst into a bit of well rehearsed chaos. The fights too, Adam discovered, we all carefully choreographed. And yet The Playboys were banned for being too violent. But it was a show, when they left a gig they were instructed never to smile but always to look mean. This applied to interview and appearances too. All this appealed to Adam.

Years ago, Don told Adam how the Playboys had been booked to play at a club in Hamburg called the Starlight. Several Liverpool bands were doing a residency there at the time. When Don arrived he walked into the club and saw one of the other bands setting up. They were all dressed in black leather, kicking things around. One of them was sitting on a cabinet eating a roast chicken - his name was John Lennon. The band was the Beatles.

That night Don watched them play from the wings. They were full of aggression. John Lennon began thrusting his arm up and down in time to the music, and when he succeeded in making all of the Hamburg audience do the same he shouted, ‘Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil’ and told them all to ‘Fuck Off’.

This story Don related to Adam and then he said: ‘When I saw The Ants playing The Marquee I thought I was back in Hamburg. Your band is just like I remember The Beatles when they began.’

‘Who were The Beatles,’ said Adam, ‘We’re The Ants.’
Eleven – Life in celebsville

Adam often stayed at Jordan’s flat in St. James’s, just off Piccadilly.

Johnny Rotten, Sid Vicious and Siouxsie Sioux were frequent visitors, so on many an occasion the living room contained three of perhaps the most influential singers of the punk era. Adam however would generally sit quietly in the corner somewhere inside his leather jacket drinking pot after pot of tea while Rotten surrounded himself with cans of lager.

One evening he and Nancy Spungeon, Sid Vicious’ girlfriend, for whose murder Sid was later accused, were talking at the flat. They were discussing Adam’s main instrument the bass guitar and Adam was saying that if Sid liked he’d teach him how to play it.

By the time this got back to Sid, Adam’s offer had been changed. Nancy told Sid that Adam had been putting it about that Sid couldn’t play the bass.

That night Adam was sleeping in the kitchen at St. James’s. When Sid, never being one to quash his feelings, turned up at the flat.

‘Where’s Adam?’ he asked.

‘He’s asleep, I’m afraid, in the kitchen,’ he was told.

Sid burst into the kitchen, and Adam, who was soundly asleep woke to the feel of Mr. Vicious’ boot. Still asleep and offering no resistance Sid inflicted a number of punishing blows to his head, and satisfied at the obvious marks of his handiwork, left.

It seems a shame that the two people who took the punk style more seriously than anyone else could only discuss their musical endeavours at such a basic level. Adam is much stronger than Sid ever was and had he been awake at the time perhaps their differences would have been resolved in a more affable manner. Sid took the ‘whole thing seriously’ but didn’t have Adam’s wider perception of what punk was all about.
Jubilee was finally released and Adam attended the première with his parents.

All the bands came with their followers so that the cinema was full of factions. Although the bands were pretty matey with each other, they were nevertheless hardbitten rivals, so whenever anyone came on the screen, like Adam or Toyah, or Siouxsie, one faction would cheer and the other one would boo. This went on throughout the film and made an astonishing noise.

The film had employed a bunch of motorcycle stunt girls who stood in for Toyah. They were tough young ladies and had terrified Jarman by driving their motorcycles at him and stopping within inches of his feet while he was filming. Halfway through the showing of the film they got up and left, loudly proclaiming that they thought the film was ‘disgusting’ and ‘We’re Christians’.

And then a friend of the camera crew keeled over with an awful crash and had to be carried into the foyer. Jarman had had no idea that the film was violent, until this happened.

And finally to cap it all a flower power lady suddenly leapt to her feet and started dancing in front of the screen singing ‘What we need to do is all dance and love each other!’

It was an extraordinary première that totally polarised the audience, Some of them loved it, others hated it. Adam’s father said that he found the whole thing ‘Pretty wild, pretty, pretty wild.’

Instantly Adam and Jordan found themselves members of ‘Celebsville’ as they called it and invitations to all the film industry functions, opening nights and parties poured in.

They were both invited to the opening night of Robert Stigwood’s ‘outrageous’ film Saturday Night Fever which brought John Travolta to Britain in a big way.

Adam is not a keen party-goer. In fact he rarely goes at all and since he doesn’t drink or smoke the sight of a room full of inebriated executives is not something which he can take for very long. Megalovision, however, insisted that Adam attend the opening of Saturday Night Fever for publicity purposes.

Before the limousine arrived to pick up the two Jubilee stars, Adam and Jordan, a Megalovision executive took Jordan aside:

‘Make sure he’s seen,’ they said, ‘Hold his arm all the time
because they will be taking pictures of you. *Push* him in front of all the cameras.’

It all drove Adam mad, he hated the parties and he hated the photographs. ‘He’s dire to go to a party with,’ said Jordan, ‘Because he just wants to leave after two minutes. Unless he gets into chat with somebody who’s in a band or something. He doesn’t dance, or hardly ever.’

But Adam put up with it all and attended a requisite number of ‘dos’ to keep Megalovision happy.

Next on the list of important social engagements was the opening of *Jubilee* at the Cannes Film Festival. There was a great deal of publicity surrounding *Jubilee* and Cannes was bound to be a number one bun fight. Adam refused to go. So Jordan and Derek went alone.

Jordan was away for ten days. As soon as she got back she phoned the band. Then within a few hours she got a call from Andy Warren saying he wanted to see her.

‘Oh fine, come over,’ she said and put down the phone. Then looking at her two flatmates she said, ‘The next ten minutes will decide whether I am to remain with The Ants or not.’

The doorbell rang, and Jordan went downstairs to see Andy standing there, ‘Looking bloody shaky and I thought, Oh God …’ Andy braced himself and said very quickly that he thought it would be better if she wasn’t with The Ants. Then he got stuck for words, and they just stood there staring at each other on the doorstep, so Jordan said, ‘Let’s have a drink’.

So they had a coupe, of Southern Comforts, and Jordan told Andy that the decision was fine, ‘I’d already made-up my mind that I’ve got to do something with myself’.

The last gig Jordan did with the band was playing alongside X-Ray Spex at the Roundhouse.
All the success of the later months of 1977 seemed to be slipping away. There was criticism that they weren’t changing enough. Worst of all the band had no record deal. Even though they had two tracks on Polydor’s *Jubilee* compilation, no company was forthcoming with a deal for them.

Everyone around the band knew that their first chance had slipped from them, it almost seemed a deliberate plot by the record companies to overlook them.

At one point they had certainly overtaken Siouxsie and the Banshees and The Slits. It had already become a joke with The Banshees - that they hadn’t been ‘signed’. People sprayed ‘Sign the Banshees’ on the walls of EMI and Polydor.

The Ants had a huge cult following, but somehow the record companies didn’t really believe that it meant anything. Neither did they believe that ‘Antmusic’ - or whatever you want to call it - was here to stay. They preferred to sign easier one-hit-wonder bands. The record companies were all dishing out two single deals, signing up dozens of bands that they didn’t think would last long enough to record an album.

Adam and the Ants and Siouxsie and the Banshees were obviously too ‘serious’ for the companies. They were likely to make demands. They would want control over what songs were released. They may get into the Board Room and spoil the leather chairs … these were the types of prejudices exercised on bands like The Ants.

It made the band despondent. Personally, for Adam, the whole business was very disturbing. Adam was financially depressed too, still refusing to sign on. It wouldn’t be an over-dramatisation to say that he was very poor. He was living in a small flat in Earls Court which was the size of a bathroom, for which it had once been used. He was renting it from David Gibb who was now sculpting in
Berlin.

One night he was eating round at the flat in St. James’s. He had a pair of boots on from SEDITIONARIES, Vivienne and Malcolm’s new shop, which were being admired from someone in the flat. After Adam had gone they had noticed that he’d left the boots behind as a gift. Someone else admired his black leather jacket and he offered it to them then and there. They refused it. A week later it was stolen at the Marquee. Adam would have given it away.

Adam started earning some extra money by doing some painting and decorating for friends. He would turn up and work like a madman, talking and painting the whole time. When he had finished a friend’s bathroom he painted on the wall:

By Adam Ant. One day he will be famous.

Poor and discouraged but still driven by one goal. I don’t think it would be going too far to say that he wanted to be a Rock Star. Not just to be a musician or make a few singles, he wanted to see the whole machinery of the pop music mythology get into gear for him.

He understood the images and knew what was required. His manager, Howard Malin and everyone around him were in no doubt that he would be famous and a star. What was wrong with the market?

He was witty, sexy, a good performer and a good songwriter. Why then was it slipping away?

Most nearly big pop stars, like Adam, are created by what the record companies call ‘a gap in the market’. They fill a vacant lot in our imaginations. In 1978 there was a glut of new music, the market was flooded. There was no place for stars because there was too much going on that was new and interesting. It was the punk movement that was the star rather than the individuals.

It has been said, however, that if only Adam and the Ants could have got on television at this time then they would have ‘made it’, but for some weird reason they were overlooked.

The experience of success is like ever increasing adrenalin, as soon as it slows a little you feel as if you’re dying. It was hard for the band to push on in the face of such adverse publicity from the press while being ignored by everyone else.
If only *Jubilee* had come out earlier then it would have caught the crest of the ‘New Wave’ and could have established the band. As it is, however, films take a time to make and it was never intended as a retrospective documentary like Don Lett’s film *Punk in London* in any case.

A lot of boats missed but no intention of staying on the beach. Jordan in her time of management had badgered the major companies. She took the tapes to EMI and sat there while they listened. Still, they wouldn’t do anything. They weren’t interested, but neither was Adam either.

Jordan maintained that the band couldn’t do anything unless they’d got a big company behind them. ‘You’re treading water.’ She was fighting for a big company but Adam would say: ‘No, we’ll wait for an independent label.’

He was very keen to do interviews for fanzines – the homemade Xerox copied efforts the fans were producing - because he disliked the Rock Press so much. Jordan contested this.

‘No, keep to the major press. They’re arseholes but they’ll probably come through in the end.’ She was thinking on a bigger scale but Adam was still thinking on a more underground level. He appreciated the fans and believed that this was the way to ‘really do it’, by building up a cult.

The Roundhouse gig was the last one where the ‘faithful’ Johnny Bivouac played with the band. And their next gig, at the Chelsea College of Art, was done without a guitarist at all. Adam had met Matthew Ashman, a guitarist with the band called The Cameras, and by the band’s next gig at the Hard Rock Café in London, Matthew was in the band.

The next gig they did was a rock against racism event at Ealing College. By 1978, the initial fire of the Punk movement had well gone out; the various coals that were still warm gathered together in little clots to re-group. From 1978 onwards, the chief manifestations of the Punk movement have been in various cause célèbres, the first of which was the movement known as Rock Against Racism, which later became the Anti-Nazi League.

Adam had been caught up with what is known as Nazi chic, an unfortunate label harping back to the days of the Berlin nightclubs and the cabaret acts that dominated the Berlin scene at that time. A
prime example, in Adam’s case is the track they recorded for John Peel and on the Derek Jarman Jubilee compilation, Deutsche Girls and the original song ‘Dirk Wears White Sox’. The use and the power of Nazi imagery was two-fold; it was primarily a shock tactic, in much the same way that Mel Brooks used it in his film The Producers, but it also evoked a certain air of decadence and alienation. Adam’s act and stage manner has always been a trifle camp, and by ‘camp’ I mean a certain theatricality that accentuates vulnerable sexuality. The Rock Against Racism gigs, however, were important in getting together a great number of people for one cause. The rise of the RAR gigs was in part due to the new interest which everybody was showing in reggae music, mainly bands like Black Slate and.

After another RAR gig in the South Bank Polytechnic, The Ants again played The Marquee. Jordan hadn’t been to see the band for some time, but she thought it was about time she re-made her links with them, so she went along to the gig.

It was a little difficult talking again after such a dramatic break, but within a few hours they were sitting over a pot of tea, talking about make-up. Adam was at the time wearing a shirt which had got little symbols printed on it from the badge ‘Whip in My Valise’, all inspired by Allen Jones.

The suggestions of violence and the suggestions of pressures which have been contained in Adam’s early lyrics should, of course, never be taken literally. They have nothing to do with the type of Facism at the moment being propagated in our country by the British movement and the type of violence which has taken to the streets with bricks and petrol bombs in its hands. A lot of bands, like Siouxsie and the Banshees and Adam and the Ants, at this time had to pay for their earlier use of such Germanic imagery since it had gone out of fashion. Siouxsie had to go to quite some lengths to explain exactly why she had the penchant for offering Nazi salutes during her performances. People had become terribly serious about Punk. The young politicians had moved in, and the rock press, after its initial condemnation of Punk, had now become terribly analytical.
If you take a Southern Region train to Victoria you will pass over one of the largest railway stations in the world, Clapham Junction.

It’s a maze of old tracks and dead railway buildings, and right in the midst of it is an enormous crescent-shaped place that looks abandoned. In large letters on the side it says DECCA. It is not an inspiring recommendation for their label; rather, it expresses in brick and steel the image that most people had of the company in 1978.

The Decca record company had been for some time in decline, they didn’t even have an A & R department: that worthy body of company men that actually go out and see new bands, and can always be seen at forty-five degree angles to the bar being abetted by the music press. But in 1978 they started up a department under the leadership of two men, Mike Smith and Frank Hodges.

One of their first ports of call was The Marquee where the ‘Ants’ were doing their Thursday night residency. They were immediately impressed. They thought The Ants were a more appealing version of The Banshees and, moreover that they were the absolute best of the new crop of bands.

They approached The Ants manager at Megalovision, Howard Malin, and offered him the standard contract of two singles and an album.

Adam was very dubious. Decca was a unknown quantity, it was run by two men both in their eighties called Bill Townsley and Sir Edward Lewis. Adam decided that they should sign but because he didn’t trust them he had a clause built into the contract which meant all the demo time would be his and he would own the tapes. (Bands do not just go into a company and record one single at a time, they are made to spend a long time in the studio recording all their material as demo tapes for the company.

There were only five people in the company who liked the band, everyone else thought it a waste of time to have signed them. So
Howard Malin had the idea of organizing a trip for all the Decca executives to see the band play live. This was bound to do the trick, since the concerts were electric and the audiences enthusiastic. They had a strong following at this time and Adam was often up all night replying personally to every fan letter he received.

The executives were brought to see them during a gig underneath the arches in Battersea, just a few yards up the track from the cataleptic Decca building: ‘Three thousand punks crushed to death in a rush of wheelchairs leaving.’ It was a bizarre night which only increased the gulf between the young and the old.

Adam decided upon the single that they would record. The release of Young Parisians caused quite a lot of fuss. It was hated by the press and many of the fans and associates of the band alike. The choice of their first single is a crucial decision for a band, because as soon as you are on record it can be one step further away from your fans. The friends of a band, naturally, get very excited about the first pressing, seeing their band ‘Make It’, so it becomes a kind of fulfilment of a promise. Much has been said about the release of Young Parisians, the simple fact is this: Adam intended it to be a double A side with Lady. ‘But they did the dirty on me and they made Parisians the A side.’

Adam found the whole experience of Decca a bit strange. He found it ridiculous that every cheque and pound note had to be passed by an old man upstairs. The last band that they’d really worked with was in the sixties. He found it an archaic company in which not much happened. They wouldn’t ‘get in behind the band’. That’s partly the reason why he gave them ‘Parisians’ because he didn’t really trust them with any of his other work.

This he came to regret, the fact that he didn’t put out his strongest product at the time, because ‘Parisians’ was obviously a joke. Adam was concerned that people thought of them as a ‘four-four kind of crash, bang, wallop band’. He thought ‘Parisians’ was the last thing people expected, which was the most important thing at that stage for him. People were making their minds up about The Ants too much and too regularly.

Together, ‘Parisians’ and Lady could be called Songs for Voyeurs. A great many of Adam’s lyrics have to do with watching or looking, or one image being copied by another, as in Xerox. This was obviously
part of the legacy of having been a designer, the fascination with isolated images, or one image upon another. ‘Parisians’ is a fairly subversive song that is posing as a ballad. Voyeurism is the theme of decadence, of Berlin, of dark clubs and atmospheres. The theme of Lady is that Adam is being sexually assaulted through his eyes by an unmoving naked lady whom he has discovered by chance, in a very surreal way, in a corridor somewhere, perhaps in a dream. It’s a vision of life that is always expectant of sudden sexual encounter. It’s the type of song which is likely to be raped in the foyer of a respectable banking company. The lyrics of someone molested in the photocopying room by a very ordinary, straight-laced secretary. In Lady Adam is the one doing the watching. The whole plot is tantalisingly perverse.

The reviewers of the music press, however were not really prepared to listen at all. Sounds printed a review which ran:

‘Laugh? I nearly split my bondage trousers. Good old Adam, he’s at last dumped all that punk outrage and gone onto punk singalongs extolling the virtues of Paris. Maybe it’s his way of conning a French promoter into bringing his band over.’
Adam had never been abroad in his life and the first place he went to was Belgium. Belgium is one of those countries that you forget about and only remember once a year when it crops up on the scoreboard of the Eurovision Song Contest and they vote like they’re giving away balloons. Just as we crack Irish jokes in England, so the French and Dutch crack Belgian jokes - the very same jokes in fact.

The band went off in a VW van to play a gig in Leopoldsburg. It was very much a matter of them having to make their own entertainment. About six of the hardcore fans went with them and turned the whole thing into a riotous weekend. Peter Vague went along, one of the strongest supporters the band has ever had. He had followed them to just about every gig, sleeping out in the snow, trying to get himself nicked so he could spend a night in the cells, anything for a bed. One night sleeping on a steaming compost heap to keep warm. Belgium hadn’t seen anything like them, this strange looking bunch of dedicated fans. Adam dedicated just about every song in the set that night to people from London.

The second gig was more successful than the first. They played in an old theatre in Ninove. It was like something from a Fellini film: a decaying Grand Duchess of a theatre, where the gilded cherubs had lost half their arms in the fight with the years, the curtains were like shrouds and golden grapes had fallen like rain from the friezework - it looked as if the place had seen too many operas. The atmosphere was one of the ghosts of decadent old gentry romping with their whores up in the boxes. The stage itself was rotten, eaten up with woodworm and damp. Their electricians didn’t seem to understand electrics at all and so the band were constantly electrocuted by everything they stood on and anything they touched.

By the end of the gig the audience were really moving, they
began to tear down the giltwork and the curtains until the wattle and daub of the walls themselves came away. Adam watched from the stage, it was marvellous. Everyone had a great evening - and totally destroyed the theatre.

Their next gig was in Margate, which illustrates that these concerts abroad did not constitute anything so Grand as a ‘European Tour’ but more a set of one night stands in far flung venues. After another gig in England they went to Germany, playing in Cologne, Berlin, Bonn and Langensfeld.

They drove in their van through the Eastern block to Berlin. Adam looked out of the windows, every sign he saw had been shot through with bullet holes by the bored East Berlin guards. They had a German driver and everyone in the band was concerned about the familiar English cliché ‘Don’t mention the war’. As they went through customs the guards eyed their strange aggressive clothes. They drove past a huge tank, sitting with it’s gun aimed at the Wall, the crew still inside. Adam began, unconsciously, to whistle Springtime for Hitler and Germany from the film The Producers which he liked and the band joined in singing the chorus.

They were playing at the S036 club on the Iranianstrasse in the Turkish quarter, built right into the Berlin Wall. Their audience was very serious, they stood at a distance from their positions in the dark and observed what the young English could do. ‘They’re very posey in Berlin, very seriously minded, and they came down and viewed us.’ Berliners are very insular, living in a city cut off from the rest of their country, they’re out on their own in the middle of No Man’s Land. ‘They don’t want to be thought of as Germans, they’re Berliners.’

Despite the distance of the audience, Adam ‘got a buzz off Berlin’. It was about the time when ‘Euro Rock’ ruled, Bowie and Iggy were living in Berlin at that time. Iggy’s ‘Idiot’ album was out along with Bowie’s ‘Low’. High points for both of them. It was very different to the state of music in London, which had begun to cloy.

The first interview that Adam ever gave was for an Italian book on Pop music. It was being written by Anna Maluxa, a friend of Jordan, and it included a short chapter about what was happening in
London. Half the interview was spent talking about The Sex Pistols, the rest about The Ants. The result of this was that Anna was able to do a great deal of publicity for them in Italy, so, after Germany, The Ants invaded Italy.

There were many political problems about staging a gig there since you have to get the ‘yes’ from each and every political party. Otherwise one or the other will mount a picket. There were problems with the tickets too, the band has to purchase their own tickets and then resell them to the audience. For these reasons Italy had become notoriously bad for rock bands. Most bands wouldn’t touch Milan - when Lou Reed played there he got bricks thrown at him.

The Ants played the Modenostra Fashion Show, and strangely, in Italy, they felt most at home. The style-conscious Italians recognised the same in the band, and being warmer than the Berliners were able to show it. There were only about twenty punks there, but the whole audience were able to join in unlike in England where punk bands played almost exclusively for punk audiences. Jordan came over for the holiday and although she was no longer with the band found herself humping speakers. It was by far the happiest of their European dates.

They made their first TV appearance in Milan too, playing Young Parisians. Dave Barbe played the drums with two rolled up newspapers and had a cappuccino on one of the drums which he drank in between mad bursts of miming to the backing track. They found the whole business nonsensical, still not knowing to this day which or what type of programme they were on.

Of all the Young Europeans they’d played to, it was the Young Italians that most took to Young Parisians. Adam himself became somewhat of a hero to the punks in Italy.

When they came back from Europe, Adam decided to ‘really get to work’. The band had been, up until then, very much a London band. Adam was determined that they should get away from London, and play all the major towns and all the small clubs in England. The Young Parisians Tour was organised.
Fifteen – The Battenburg cake

Adam felt it was time for him to move home again. He got a room in a house in Earls Court, in Redcliffe Gardens. It came to be known by his friends as ‘the black hole’ since he painted the whole room black. The place had the air of an ancient Japanese monastery, the sort of place where if you moved you would be hit over the head with a lump of wood. This was the time when he was wearing his kabuki make-up and kilt, and the lighting of the shows was very clean, stark and black and white, giving the impression of a photograph. He would spend long hours in front of the mirror working out every move, and every angle he would adopt on stage. Precision was the order of the day. The clarity of things oriental.

He had a grand piece of wood on the floor of his room which served as a low table. On this he displayed his small collection of oriental gadgets, a pair of folding scissors and a Japanese shaving kit. The whole room was lit from the floor like a stage. In the corner was a sink, absolutely spotless. The room was freezing. His bed was simply pieces of wood over which he had an old undermattress. One day he bought an electric fire. This caused great excitement, for Adam it was like getting a colour TV. Dennis the goldfish had left him and gone to live at Megalovision, and so the fire became one of his favourite topics of conversation.

Just above the fire Adam placed his starchart. Adam circles all the bits which he felt applied to him, he put a big circle around a line which said:

‘Be wary of Scorpios, Scorpios need a lot of sex.’

All his friends found it funny because since the room was so cold you were naturally inclined to look towards the fire, and, so
were continually confronted by this statement about Adam.

It was a very productive time, but the relationship with Decca was beginning to fall apart. He was recording an enormous amount for them, practically all of what was to become the ‘Dirk’ album was put down on demo tapes. The gigs were getting bigger and bigger. Although they were playing many small clubs the band had actually moved into being a much larger venue band, filling places like the Cavernons Music Machine.

By the end of 1978 there had grown up a whole new generation of ‘punks’ that weren’t really punks at all. They had missed the original energy of the early bands, and with it had missed the point. They wanted to see the ‘four-four, clash, bang, wallop’ bands which Adam and the Ants were not. Therefore there was a lot of prejudice against the band.

A gig I remember particularly well was the one played at the York Pop Club in December 1978. The Pop Club operated for only one night a week, the rest of the time it was run by the Rugby Club as an old time dancing venue. It was a part time punk venue for part time punks. The Ants gig was, then, one of the rare chances for the ‘punk’ populace of York to get to see a London band. The queues to see them stretched right the way around the wall; it was raining hard and the bedraggled punks were steaming in their plastic trousers. I was standing next to a music critic, up from London, and he was remarking on how all the kids in York were two years behind the times, still dressed in bondage and sporting dog collars, ‘But perhaps they’ve come to see the right band for all that.’ This shows just the sort of attitude that the rock press still had towards Adam and the Ants at the end of 1978. They felt they were a no-hope band that were just trading on dead images.

Inside, of course, out of the rain, and in the heat of the dancing it was a whole different story, and the journalist had to admit that it was indeed a very fine band playing good songs. Whether this got to the pages of his veritable organ or not is another matter. Once someone has become a whipping post and the brunt of running jokes, it’s not easy to change your opinions in print.

The band were playing on a stage hopelessly too small for their act, in a club which was very much further down the market than they
deserved. The story of 1978 is one of Adam and the Ants playing awful clubs in terrible towns, getting a bad and ignorant reception from everybody except their dedicated fans and those people who were bright enough to hear good music when it was being played to them. Adam came to refer to these clubs as ‘the toilets’.

Adam often felt as if the whole audience had come to interview them, standing there blankly waiting for pat answers. The jaunts abroad, the crazy TV shows, the deal with Decca, all these things were still just the side roads and back alleys and nothing to do with the main business of establishing the band in the rat race of rock.

Whenever friends, like Stephanie, would visit Adam in his ‘black hole’ in Earls Court, they would invariably find him laying on his bed, sick. He was continually weak and getting depressed. Only two things would make him perk up, the mention of sex or the mention of a gig.

One day he called Stephanie and asked her to come over for tea. Before she arrived he went out and bought a Battenburg cake for a treat. She walked in and saw he was lying ill. The whole room smelt of illness, of decay, of gloss paint.

‘You’ve started painting this bloody room again,’ she said. The room was half white. On the table was a Battenburg cake. Adam offered her some. Stephanie knew there was no way she could eat it, knowing how little money he had, it must have taken everything he had just to buy the cake. So Adam was forced to eat Battenburg cake alone for the rest of the week.

The night that Stephanie visited he was very ill. Weakness makes you very depressed but any depression that he suffered was outweighed by his frustration. He lay on his bed and looked up at the ceiling and said:

‘I’ve done everything, Steph, that should make this happen but it’s just not happening. When are these people going to be ready for my music?’

He felt a little bitter that Jubilee had got him such a bad name. He felt he was regarded by many as just ‘a Figment of some film director’s imagination.’ He had food poisoning and really thought he was dying. He wanted to get back and be respected on the basic level that he’d always set out to be. He looked up and said ‘I’m sick of all these people telling me that I’m a star, I’m sick of all these
people telling me that the Ants are “marvellous darling”, I’m sick of being told I’m a film star, I’m sick of being told that everything’ll be all right in the end, I’m sick of being told that Decca will do a good job on the single.’ And then, ‘Fuck it, I’ve got the songs, I’m going to write more songs.’

Howard Malin, the band’s manager was often away in America. Julie Stone, an Australian who had worked as a cleaner for Megalovision had effectively taken over as manager. Then the Decca deal collapsed. It was nothing to do with the band at all. The marketing department refused to put any money into the band. Mike Smith, the A&R man had to pay for the printing of the Parisians cover himself and Adam designed it. He had come back from Berlin with lots of new graphic ideas, he had visited the Banhans the Art school which had pioneered modern graphic design in the thirties. It was after Berlin that they reversed the ‘D’ and changed the ‘S’ in the Ants logo. They designed some superb posters for the tour but the company would not produce them. There were big arguments between the A & R and the marketing departments at Decca. ‘Upstairs’ they got angry and sacked the Ants artist.

In the A & R department everyone was upset. ‘We all knew that Adam was going to make it. We all knew that he was absolutely stunning and superb, the majority the company thought he was a total waste of time. We felt the only way you can “break” an artist like that is to go forward, spend money, merchandise him.’ They asked Adam to come into the office, and they told him ‘look, the guys upstairs aren’t going to market you properly, we don’t want to hold you back, so off you go, contract void.’

So they tore up the contract. There was no unpleasantness. They hoped that one day they might be able to re-sign him. Shortly after the whole company collapsed, was bought out by Polygram and everyone in A & R except Tracey Bennet, lost their jobs.

It was the end of their relationship with Megalovision as well, Howard was in L.A. and Julie Stone left the company to manage the band, they were at their lowest time of all.
Sixteen – ‘A happy new year’

Adam never considered giving up. He thought of going back over some of his old stuff thinking that perhaps people might be ready for that. He was working all the time, not only writing songs and gigging, but producing film scripts, hundreds of drawings, clothes designs, and writing a book. Every scrap of paper became precious, envelopes, tickets, all these could be used for drawings and collages. The book he was writing was being written over another book, between the lines in the type, and to make it even more absurd, it was written in code. And he doesn’t intend it to be published until he’s dead.

He began working at a house in Notting Hill, just on the corner of Camden Hill and Holland Park Avenue, painting one of the rooms. As was often the way with these jobs it enabled him to move in.

It was a few days before the end of the year. Adam had been out drinking and come home a bit worse for wear. Stephanie was there and she accused him of being ‘a drunken slob you creep!’ Drinking was not something which he did to excess often, but on this occasion he’d drunk a bottle of vodka with Kenny Banshee and was totally slugged. Stephanie was so disgusted that Adam declared, ‘I’ll never drink again’. At first she thought this was a bit of a melodramatic gesture, but it was something he stuck to.

A couple of days later it was New Year’s Eve. He and Stephanie wanted to celebrate. Everywhere they went it was just drunken parties which Adam had vowed never to take part in. They got in Stephanie’s car and began to drive. They had no money for a meal. They passed people singing in the street, brandishing bottles. People were dancing in the fountains, music blaring out of doorways - the cheapest, worst music that the British people tend to play on these occasions. It began to rain, the car was stuck in a traffic jam, the sound of bagpipes was everywhere. They were very low. What
could they do? They turned to each other in the car and kissed. ‘A real big smackaru!. Suddenly all the horns began blasting behind them, the traffic in front had begun to move and they were holding everybody up. They didn’t care, they finished their kiss. 1979 was going to be better.

One day Adam was on one of his rare excursions to a party and someone who worked for Do It records came up and asked him if he would like to sign to their company. Adam was, as usual, very cautious, he’d just had an offer from a music publishing company. They had offered him five thousand pounds for all his songs over ten years. If Adam had signed that he would have lost the greater part of his present income.

He decided to go and see the head of Do It, Max Tregonin. They were a very small company, the only other bands they really had were Rooglator and some small pub bands. Adam felt, that this meant that he would have a greater measure of control over what they put out. He made his feelings clear to Max, saying he wanted full control, that he didn’t want any advance (the money given against future sales) but simply wages for the band. Max Tregonin was very sympathetic towards Adam’s work, and felt that Adam’s demands were sensible, so the band signed with Do It for one album and two singles in the U.K. With his wages Adam went into Woolworths and bought his first stereo.

The working relationship with Do It was to be very constructive. They put the Ants into the Roundhouse Studios with Motorhead’s engineer. Max liked the quality of the demo tapes that Adam bought him and asked who produced them, ‘I did’ was the reply, so Max let Adam produce his own records. ‘He put virtually no restrictions on me at all.’

The Company were prepared to put money behind the design so that, when it came to it, Adam was able to employ two artist friends of his Wad and Clare to do the cover. They took out full page ads in Sounds which, in the public’s mind, bought the band from the club level to the Singles and Album level. They did another John Peel Session too, recording Ligotage, Animals and Men and Never Trust a Man with Egg on His Face.

They played the Lyceum and sold it out. The Lyceum is one of the largest venues in London, situated just off the Strand, it looks like
the Palladium. It was a real landmark for the band to fill it with three thousand people, and then to play The Electric Ballroom and do the same again. It was a little like the situation on *The Ants Invasion Tour*, thousands of people flocking to the gigs yet at the same time the band was not popularly successful, still no TV coverage or decent reviews.

The day after their sell out at the Lyceum the band were off to Germany again. This time they went by train on the Trans-Europe Express, joking all the way about spies and murders. They had got into a First Class carriage by mistake, and Adam was just climbing up the wall to get into the top bunk when the train stopped and Dave and Andy pulled the curtains open to see where they were. They were somewhere in the Eastern Block and the train had stopped at a station. Dave and Andy started to giggle because on the platform people had gathered around laughing at Adam, halfway up the wall in his underpants. By the time Adam realised, the laughter had stopped, a guard was standing there with a machine-gun aimed at his backside. ‘This is it,’ thought Adam, ‘I’m never going to be seen again, I’m going to be shot in the bum!.

All the others felt sure they were going to be taken off the train. Then suddenly the guard burst out laughing, and they moved off toward Berlin.

Adam wore his new kilt that Wad and Clare had made for him. He began wearing the kilts during the *Parisians Tour*. He had been talking to Jordan one day and had been saying how he wanted something a bit more colourful. Something to break up the black leather trousers and the kilt seemed the obvious solution. It appealed to him because there’s something tribal and clannish about a kilt. He was also fascinated by the Samurai, at this time, who wore silk shirts over their trousers.

Up to ‘the kilt’ his ‘look’ had been primarily leather trousers, Japanese shoes and shirts from SEX, black leather jacket, kabuki face and holding a red rose. Then, one night at The Marquee his jacket was stolen. When the jacket got stolen he moved on to shirts. There was no way he could afford another leather jacket so he just bought a couple of leather ties. It was at this time that Wad and Clare produced their famous photos of him.

The audience in Berlin at the S036 Club couldn’t believe it
when Adam came on with a kilt. In England people are used to kilts because of the football matches, but for the Berliners it was ‘right out of the window’ as Adam put it afterwards.

After the gig everyone went over to a restaurant called The Exile, which is one of the haunts of the artists in Berlin. Adam and about twenty others walked in. On the ceiling there’s a huge painting of someone having a heart attack. Adam had a Rudolf Schwartzgogler badge on that he had made. Schwartzgogler was a ‘body artist’ that Adam admired, he had become a bit of a lesser known cult figure amongst artists since he committed suicide by castrating himself. Somebody saw this badge on him and paid for the whole meal. It was the type of eccentricity which gave Berlin a buzz for Adam. Everyone agreed that the shows they did there were the peak of that band. Everything about the line up and the songs worked. Musically it was becoming a very satisfying time.

‘With Do It it really was just like, “Do It Yourself” records. You were just going in there and learning the skill of making a record. I worked very closely on every single element of that whole time, more or less made the records myself.’
Seventeen – ‘Xerox’

As soon as they were back from the gigs in Berlin, Adam decided they should go on tour again, playing nearly all the places they had covered on Parisians. The Xerox Tour was practically a carbon copy of the tour before. They had established a firm following in the North and West which he wanted to keep. Dave Barbe’s wife, Mandy, had taken charge of the fan club, which had grown to two thousand, she invented the character of Brenda the Secretary and wrote to everyone under this guise. The 1978 gigs had been very ‘bitty’. This wasn’t going to happen any more. No longer would they support anybody, and if anyone supported them, they were to get better treatment than The Ants had frequently received. This was a decision Adam had taken way back in ‘77. They had supported Generation X at King’s College and had been kept waiting seven hours for a sound check, and they decided then that they would never treat a support band like that. No More. Adam went into Do It and said:
‘Right, let’s stop all this beating about the bush.’

He designed another hand out for the fans, printed off lyrics and information. He made a set of designs of what he was going to be wearing on stage.

The tour began with the release of the single Zerox/Whip in my Valise on July 6th, and then dates in Retford, Birmingham, Newport, Leeds, Edinburgh, Manchester, Bradford, York, Liverpool, Middlesborough, Jacksdale, Swansea, Exeter, Plymouth, Port Talbot, Newport and London. Seventeen dates in twenty-four days. Some of the places they played, however, were still the pits, places like Circles, Swansea and Plymouth Woods.

The worst gig of Adam’s life was the one on this tour when they played Plymouth Woods. He was wearing a new type of make-up, which was like a multi-coloured camouflage all over his face. It was the most gruesome of make-up schemes which made him look as if he’d been mining in a greasepaint factory. The ceiling was very low
over the stage with great vicious-looking beams at angles. During the second number Adam’s head cracked against a beam and his head split open with a very deep cut. Adam continued to sing but the blood started to flow over his face. Everyone thought it was a stunt, all part of his shocking make-up. He turned round and looked at Andy Warren, Andy went completely white. Adam cupped his hands and they filled with blood, it would not stop, the lights were keeping the wound open. As soon as the gig was over they drove him off in the van to a little hospital in the middle of nowhere. He sat on a chair in casualty waiting for a doctor. When the doctor arrived he walked in to see a young man, covered in blood, with make-up all over his face and wearing a blue kilt.

He looked at Adam and said: ‘Don’t tell me, the Martians have landed’.

Adam was losing consciousness a little. He heard a nurse say, ‘What’s your name?’ and Dave Barbe replying: ‘His name is Mr Ant’

As they laid him down he could hear them all laughing. They were whispering, thinking that he couldn’t hear, but as he lay looking up at the little Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck designs on the ceiling he heard the doctor say:

‘Nurse, I think this is a bit deep, a bit nasty, and I think we’re going to have to have a local anaesthetic’ and the nurse replied: ‘We haven’t got any.’

‘Well, Mr Ant, this is going to hurt a bit’, said the doctor. Adam thought the whole thing so bizarre that he didn’t really feel anything. He just remembers the feeling of his ears moving upwards as they stitched the top of his head together.

After that, he had had enough of the ‘toilets’ - no more clubs, no more awful venues. In future everything was to be better organised.

The band went straight into the studio after the tour to record the debut album *Dirk Wears White Sox*. They had three weeks, strictly ten to six to record the whole thing.
Adam, aged 6 months

Adam, aged 5 years

Adam at the seaside, aged 8 years
Adam and Jordan on stage

From Adam’s Private Collection
Adam in Bazooka Joe, 1975
*From Adam’s Private Collection*

Wearing his ‘Eddie Riff’ T-shirt

With Danny Kleinman
Adam’s first publicity shot, 1977

From Adam’s Private Collection

photo by Rudolph
Adam and Little Nell during *Jubilee*!

From Derek’s collection

Jordan ‘Ruling Britannia”, 1977

*Photos courtesy of Derek Jarman*
Signed to Decca, 1977. Left to right: Matthew Ashman, Adam, Dave Barbe and Andy Warren

Adam in Stuart tartan kilt, Roundhouse 1978

*From Adam’s Private Collection*
In Kabuki make-up, October 1978

From Adam’s Private Collection
Adam’s stage designs for the Xerox tour, July/August 1979
Adam’s warpaint
make-up: red, green, blue orange

In the Lyceum dressing room, the band with Eve, Anna and Jordan, 1979
*From Adam’s Private Collection*
Electric Ballroom gig, late 1979

From Adam’s Private Collection
‘Portraits’ - a photo session by Chris Duffy, London 1980

From Adam’s Private Collection
Adam and Marco, the beginning of a new band
London 1980
On stage, The Ants Invasion Tour, 1980

From Adam’s Private Collection
Looking for The Ants Invasion, 1980

From Adam’s Private Collection
Adam and the Ants on board. Photo for the “Kings” single cover, July 1980. Left to right: Terry Lee Miall, Merrick, Adam, Marco, Kevin Mooney
The Frontier Tour, November 1980

Photo by Robert Ellis
‘The biggest cheer was when he took his shirt off’
A last rehearsal before going into make-up for Top of the Pops, 1981
With Dick Clark on American Bandstand TV Show, USA

With Princess Margaret at the Junior Royal Variety Performance, February 1981
America discovering Adam, 1981
New York, new style, Spring 1981
Eighteen – The Artists

The thing about ‘Dirk’ is that it sounds more like a band’s second album and ‘Kings’ more like the first. *Kings of the Wild Frontier* is like a manifesto, but ‘Dirk’ is an album which was really a resume of two years’ work. The band should, in all rights, have been recording its second or third album if only the companies had got themselves together in time.

The reasons why the ‘Dirk’ album is like it is many and various. Adam wanted to produce a stylish album, one that had the quality of soul and funk. Most of the songs were a product of a much more consciously intellectual inspiration than the present work. Songs like *The Idea* are very refined and delicate and are part of the period in Adam’s life when he had a fancy for oriental gadgets and black rooms.

Adam had been absorbing other influences, outside from the sphere of rock and ‘punk culture’. In the summer of 1977 he had returned to see the degree shows at Hornsey and amongst them a performance by Jaunito Antonio Wad Whani and Clare Johnson, whom he got to know as Wad and Clare.

It’s not strange that Adam should find ‘Performance Art’ stimulating and inspiring. ‘Performance Art’ is a particular discipline which has been going on in and around art schools on and off since the beginning of this century. Its big moments were the DaDaists, the Futurists and the Surrealists, all art movements which have points of reference within Adam’s lyrics and performance. There was another spate of this grey area of artistic endeavour breaking out in the mid-seventies and it served in some ways to re-open the channels of communication between some of the punk and some of the DaDa.

The whole idea of the type of show that Wad and Clare put on was, in effect, to create an environment in which the audience and performers were more vulnerable to the images being presented than
they would be to, say, a picture in a frame. ‘Performance’ is the art of atmospheres.

Adam has always been a person who responds to diverse types of knowledge, things that are on the fringes, like fetishism, things of the fringe of our culture like tribalism, and things slightly out of the mainstream of traditional art like Wad and Clare’s show.

Adam went with the rest of the audience into a darkened room, they were all given candles to hold, some of them were positioned on the set which was a pure white with a canvas backdrop. In the centre of the stage was a white block and on top of that a rectangular cage curtained in white. To the music of Bach and Penderechii a tall figure entered carrying a bundle in his arms which he placed in the cage. The bundle contained a young girl who was revealed through the white curtain as the cage was lit from the inside. A lot of the images used were drawn from clown-types, harlequins and pierrots.

At the end of the show, when the audience had left, Wad and Clare came out front to clear up. They saw a black bondaged figure sitting silently in the centre of the room, he was practically on the verge of tears. Wad and Clare talked to Adam about the show. He said how deeply moved he had been by it. It was for him a welcome breath of fresh air from his involvements with punk and Jubilee.

He was impressed by the clean professional purity of its presentation.

‘You’ve got to get this show on the road’, he said to them, which they found amusing, and a friendship began between them, Adam frequently visiting them to discuss his visual ideas. What was born out of these meetings was a much clearer sense of style and performance for Adam, so that he was able to drop the shock tactics which were the keynote of the band in Jordan’s time and to get a more considered area of light and shadow, using less frantic energy and more drama.

It was to Wad and Clare that Adam turned for the design concept of the Dirk Wears White Sox album. They used a model who had not worked as such since the fifties. She was a friend of Wad’s that he had met on leaving art school. Clare made her the taffeta dress. The cover, then, shows this mysterious lady, obviously beautiful and experienced, walking through the sleeve into the record.
Adam was very pleased with the work they had done on the cover. When he got the artwork he phoned Jordan and asked her to come and see it, and he played her the tapes of the album. Jordan had once more become very important in Adam’s life, she was beginning to advise him again on the type of make-up he should wear and he was using her as a sounding board for his ideas. They had begun ‘going out’ with each other. Jordan was still working for Malcolm and Vivienne at the shop, there were a lot of new ideas flying around, plans for a new shop and a new set of clothes completely different from SEX or SEDITIONARIES, something more romantic. Jordan frequently spoke to Malcolm about Adam, saying how she still had complete faith in him, that she was sure he would become a big success. She implied as heavily as she could that he would be a good person for Malcolm to work with.

One afternoon Adam received a phone call from Vivienne Westwood inviting him to come over that evening to a wedding party for two friends of theirs, Jean-Pierre and China. Adam felt that something must be in the air. He went to the wedding, he couldn’t see Malcolm anywhere so he went over and sat down with Vivienne. As they were talking he saw Malcolm in characteristic fashion by the door, arriving late. Malcolm walked in and instantly thought that someone else was the groom, went up to the wrong person and said ‘Congratulations’. Then made straight for Adam and his first words were:

‘Hallo Adam, how’s The Ants’, then he sat down and talked to him for two and a half hours on how video was going to take over the music business.

Malcolm’s interest in video was a practical one, he had been in Paris prior to his meeting with Adam, working on a mammoth video project. He had decided after the demise of The Sex Pistols, to return to his original discipline of making porn movies. He wanted to make something for children.

It was to be a musical, and he had decided to produce the songs first, rather like they did with Jesus Christ Superstar, in order to raise money for the video. He was working on various sets of lyrics. About six months prior to this Malcolm had discovered a record which he found interesting, one of the many rarities which he is
continually turning up in his passion for records. Malcolm is an expert in the byways of rock. He’s one of the most exciting characters in the recent popular culture and someone who Adam has admired constantly throughout his career. The particular record that he had turned up contained the ‘Burundi beat’. Malcolm played it. Speeded up at forty-five, with an overlay of frenetic guitar, he thought would make it really something. During the six months between this and meeting Adam at the wedding this musical image had become united in his mind with certain visual concepts: the Pirate, the Indian, the romantic warrior.

These figures are the fathers of popular culture, they go beyond just being historical figures, having an attraction which is universal and irresistible.

He thought he’d use a highwayman-type character called Louis Quatorez in the film. He’d be young kid who dresses up at night and goes out raping young girls at gunpoint. But it’s here that Malcolm’s original ideas and Adam’s songs part company. There are similarities but they are fundamentally different. Malcolm was talking to Adam more about piracy as it was associated with the pirate radio stations than he was about Blackbeard. He was more interested in technology, video and marketing songs on cassette instead of vinyl.

Adam knew that the ‘balls had dropped out of the band’ as he put it. They had been on the road for two and a half years, some of the band were getting bored, new ideas were vital. Adam openly admitted:

‘It had got to a point where it had been very self-indulgent for me, I think I’d been very selfish in the way that any writer who knows what he wants is. I think that any single person, if he’s not a band-orientated person, does tend to be selfish.’ In Adam’s mind ‘Malcolm was still the man’ and if he was interested then it was a compliment to him because he hadn’t touched anybody since The Sex Pistols. He’d come out pretty unscathed from The Rock ‘n’ Roll Swindle, left the sinking ship, and he was still the man.

The two men said goodnight and left the wedding, both noticing they had the same boots on - from Malcolm’s shop SEDITIONARIES.

The next day Jordan spoke to Malcolm in the shop.

‘Why don’t you manage The Ants?’ she said. Malcolm stood
there quietly, and Jordan began to tell him everything she felt about the band, using some of the phrases she’d used the very first time she’d seen them at The Man in the Moon. ‘He’s a real commodity, you could really do well with him …’

Malcolm just listened as Jordan went on and on. He gave the air of one who was being pestered. It has been said that Malcolm decided to work with Adam to get him off his back, to stop the continued pestering, but Malcolm is a wise man and knows about saleable commodities. The question in Malcolm’s mind was would Adam work on video?

Malcolm never went to gigs so it was difficult for him to get to see the band. He asked to see a video. Malcolm’s whole decision to manage the band depended on this. Adam got straight on to Stephanie and asked if she would make a video of Cartrouble and Tabletalk. She agreed. Then a couple of days later Andy Warren left the band. He had simply got bored with it and could see no point in going through yet another temporary managership.

‘Andy’s Andy, he just goes and does what he wants. I’ve never been able to make him out,’ said Adam. They auditioned as soon as they could and out of thirty or so people chose Lee Gorman, went straight into rehearsal and preparing the video.

Stephanie went to her ex-college tutor and persuaded him that they should make the video in his garden which was ‘nice and private’, so one afternoon The Ants turned up there to record the two tracks. Stephanie took the camera and climbed up on to the roof of the house and shot the whole thing from there. Adam wore hardly any make-up and just a shirt and trousers. Stephanie knew as soon as she got him in her zoom that it was going to be some of the best stuff of Adam on tape, Adam was curling up his lip like Cliff Richard. Stephanie described the video after as ‘Pure sex, Adam’, avowing that he’s most sexy without his stage make-up.

‘He’s more sexy, like on the video, in his natural state, he’s Superman on stage but he’s hunky Clark Kent in the office offstage’.

Stephanie felt sure that the video she had made would please McLaren and it would give him confidence enough to work with the band.

As soon as it was edited Malcolm came over to watch it. She put
the cassette into the machine and sat down to watch it with him and Adam. They couldn’t believe it, Malcolm sat for the entire duration of the video reading a newspaper. Stephanie was furious.

It may of course been part of McLaren’s tactics in trying to shake all the old out of Adam’s act. Adam made more videos and showed him those as well. McLaren was finally impressed with the speed with which Adam was able to work and get things together. This was what he wanted to see.

They went to talk about it. He was keen to take just Adam.

‘Do you want me to manage you on your own, or just the band?’ Adam wasn’t sure, Andy had already left, and the band hadn’t really come together on the ‘Dirk’ album.

‘Well if it’s on your own it’s fifty fifty,’ said McLaren. Adam said that it wasn’t, he wanted to stick with his band. Finally they agreed he would manage the band for a month or so, and give it a complete overhaul. He insisted on a veil of secrecy and asked for a thousand pounds. Adam considered it well worth the money. Malcolm was in need of the cash at this time because he was trying to finance Vivienne’s new collection of clothes and open a shop. So, all in all it would be a very clever little grand. The only problem was that he didn’t have one.

He went, with fear and trepidation to see John Curd, the head of ‘Straight Music’ who were promoting The Ants’ big London concerts. When he walked into his office, Curd didn’t even recognize him, so he had to take his courage in his hands, explain who he was and just ask him outright for the money. He said ‘yes’ but he couldn’t give it to him immediately. Malcolm had asked for the money to be given to him when The Ants did their Electric Ballroom gig, thinking, naturally, that they would have the money then.

Adam came tearing off stage that night, rushing past Jordan and Stephanie who were standing in the wings and ran to the telephone, to speak to Malcolm, ‘I couldn’t get the money, will the day after tomorrow be all right?’ The next day in the shop Malcolm told Jordan about the phone call. He wasn’t in the least worried when the money came and found it rather endearing that Adam should be so worried about it. Adam was still in awe of him.
Work began in earnest, as they say. Adam admired him for his ‘genius aspect’, the incredible amount of ideas that he was capable of having. Adam knew for a fact that McLaren had begun to think of a new type of band, he knew that he’d had shirts made with the words ‘Bow Wow Wow’ on them and that this was likely to be the name of a band. What actually happened was that Malcolm slammed right in and in fact did what any good manager does, which is to try and get them all really buckled down to some hard work.

Malcolm’s video was not going to be made now, because the company that was backing it thought it too radical. Therefore he had turned the scripts into songs - these are some of the songs that Bow Wow Wow now play. Consequently he was very keen to get Adam to write a new type of song.

The first thing Malcolm did was to make Adam bring him all his lyrics, posters, handouts, videos, photos, badges, everything and spread them out on a table. There was a slogan ‘Ant Music for Sex People’ that occurred again and again in the literature.

‘What’s that doing there?’ he asked ‘It shouldn’t be there it should be in a song, ‘Ant Music for Sex People’, it’s good.’ It was the kick Adam needed, he had always been concerned to promote the idea of ‘Ant people’ but it had never really got through to the songs.

‘You’ve got to be more direct,’ he said. ‘Who’s this on the album cover? It’s not you - next album we have a big picture of you on the front.’

He turned to him and asked, ‘What do you want, Adam?’

‘I want to be a household name, and have everyone know and like Adam and the Ants.’

Malcolm looked at him. ‘You’re making it very difficult for yourself, you’re doing it wrong.’ He went through the lyrics on the ‘Dirk’ album bit by bit. He liked the song The Idea. He was ‘very nice about the album’ but said it was the sort of thing one puts out as your eighth album, you don’t launch yourself on the world with it.

‘He really beat the self-indulgence out of me.’ Adam felt, in the
light of what Malcolm had said that on ‘Dirk’ he had ‘been growing up in public’).

Malcolm gave him some of the books that he and Vivienne were working from to create their new clothes. They gave him a series of books published by Time Life, bound in pretend leather and titled *The Great Chiefs, Pirates, The Old West*. The books were full of scribbles and circles that Vivienne had put in. A lot of *The Great Chiefs* tells the story of Geronimo. Both Vivienne and Adam were caught by the story of how Geronimo evaded the Cavalry when he left the reservation. It took three thousand cavalry six months to catch him and his gang, and when they did, through trickery, there were only twenty warriors and eighteen women and children. Both Adam and Vivienne were taken by the white line that everyone in Geronimo’s gang painted across their faces. They were the only Indians to do this, it was a clear symbol and when they appeared on the top of a hill ready to attack in the early dawn, the white line made their faces glow. It was a declaration of war. Vivienne had a huge colour photograph made of twenty people, dressed in her new clothes and standing, stripes on, on the brow of a hill at dawn. This was hung in the new shop when it opened.

Adam read about the feathers, great warriors would collect eagle feathers to correspond with their victories. The idea of the warrior captured his mind. He began to write lyrics, ‘Underneath the white there is a red skin, suffering for centuries’. He had made the necessary connection for himself. But it was not the connection that McLaren wanted made. McLaren reflected upon punk and realised that it was a type of modern piracy in the music industry. He wanted to extend this, to create an image of the pirate that was anarchic and anti-establishment.

He wanted to concentrate on the rebellion of the Red Indian against the new technology of the white man, Adam, however was more interested in their creativity than their demise. It was their culture which excited him. He had made the connection with his fans, the family, the tribe. He knew full well that there was a whole army of disenchanted punks and young people who were without a goal, without a figurehead. Identification with this type of image would work, it would get them together, get their feet moving.

Some of the other books that McLaren gave him were things
like *Prick Up Your Ears*, the biography of the comic playwright Joe Orton. This was the other half of the ingredients. There must be humour. This was of course something to which Adam immediately responded. Up until now, the humour of his songs had either been overlooked or suppressed by the nature of the music or it had been overlooked and misinterpreted as with *Young Parisians*. The humour had to be a lot more ‘up front’ and unabashed.

The third main lesson was concerned with the construction of songs. Adam had always liked the classics like Sinatra and Perry Como, as early as 1978 he had said in *Sounds*: ‘I love Perry Como and Shirley Bassey. I love Sinatra’, which was a very uncool thing to do at the time, but it meant that he was ripe to listen, and study the songs that Malcolm gave him.

‘You’ve got to trust me,’ said Malcolm and gave him a tape of the songs that he thought were important.

Adam wrote on the cover of the tape ‘Homework’ and on the flap he wrote ‘To understand the construction of songs and interpreting them - Antmusic’. He didn’t understand at that stage what he was writing, he had been thrown into a whirlpool of ideas and self-examination, he didn’t know what the phrase ‘Antmusic’ really meant.

The songs that Malcolm gave him were these: *Wipe-Out* - The Surfaris; *No Problem* - Charlie Parker; *He’s the Fat Man* - The Hawks; *Mystery Train* and *Blue Moon* - Elvis Presley; *YMCA* - Village People; *Hot Dog* - Roger Miller; *Cast Iron Eye* - Peanuts Wilson; *Tear It Up* - Johnny Burnet; *Hello, I’m Back* - Gary Glitter; *Where were you on our Wedding Night* - Lloyd Price; *Broadway Jungles* - Ska 67; *Got To Pick a Pocket or Two* - Oliver; *Sick Inside* - Christ Bennet; *Burundi Black* - Burundi On 45; *Rave On* - Buddy Holly and some belly dance music. Adam found the tape very diverse, but very useful, playing it again and again.

After their conversation, often taking place after a meal, Adam took notes. Malcolm talked at great length of his experiences with The Sex Pistols and how that band was put together, and gave him a lot of information on how the American market works.

There were problems, however, with Do It, although McLaren didn’t mind working with them, they were not too keen to do the same. He went to see Max Tregorin and began to make plans to pull
them out of their deal with them.

‘Malcolm’s basically a realist. What you’ve got to remember is that he won’t flannel. If there’s a problem he’ll go straight to the root, bang, straight in.’

The problem there, Malcolm felt, was that if Adam wanted to be a household name then he would need a bigger organization than Do It behind him.

When they released ‘Dirk’ it went like a storm. Boxes and boxes went in the first week and it sold out. They pressed ten to fifteen thousand and they went in under a week, and they had to wait until they got the money back before they could press another seven thousand. If it had gone through a major record company it would have undoubtedly got into the Top Ten.

There were problems with the writing of the songs too. McLaren was making Adam concentrate on the lyrics while the rest of the band wrote the music. A lot of the lyrics, Malcolm thought were awful and was continually demanding more of Adam. He began to feel that he wasn’t responding to his leadership. This is the basic problem of two creative people together, ‘Too many chiefs and not enough Indians’ - as it were.

Adam was very unhappy about the situation, all the way through he had written both music and lyrics McLaren was making the band steal guitar riffs from other songs and write from those, but it just wasn’t happening.

Malcolm went round to his house one day and said, ‘Look, it ain’t going right, you’ve got to go and put your foot down.’

So, Adam went into the rehearsal room and said, ‘OK, I’m going to start writing the music,’ and Dave Barbe just stood up and said:

‘Well, I’m leaving the band.’ He couldn’t look Adam in the face but stared at the floor, he had been in the band a long time longer than both the others. Just about everything he knew he had learned together with Adam. Adam was shocked, heart beating and thinking ‘Oh God’, he looked over at Malcolm who was just sitting against the wall on a chair.

Then Dave pushed his chair back with his hand and said: ‘I’ve been a good soldier for two years, and now I want to do my own thing’, and Adam thought ‘Well fair enough,’ and turned to Lee and Matthew.
‘Well, looks like it’s you and me, then. We’ll have to find another drummer.’

‘No,’ said Lee, ‘I’m with Dave.’

Adam looked at him ‘Oh yeah?’ He decided that he may as well play the whole thing out to the end. ‘Well, Matthew, how about it then?’

Matthew was the most upset by the whole affair, he didn’t really want to say it, he looked over to Malcolm. Adam felt then that it was Malcolm who had put them all up to it. ‘Well, look, I’m sorry, why don’t we …’ said Matthew.

In a way it was a great burden lifted from Adam, inasmuch as it left him with nothing, it was an all-time low. There is always a sense of freedom and clarity when it looks as though you’re finished. You don’t have to try any more. Adam felt himself about to break, he was going to cry. He burst out, ‘You’re not having the name - Adam and the Ants is my name, I’m keeping that’. It was all he really had to cling on to. He wished them good luck and left the room. He found the nearest flight of stairs and dashed up them as quickly as he could to get as far out of earshot as was possible before he burst out crying. He stood on the landing and bawled like a baby. You should never work with your heroes. He left the building and walked down the street.

Malcolm came running after him and put his arm around him and took him to a restaurant. He sat him down and said: ‘Look, you’ve got to face up to it, go out and keep with The Ants because it’s a good idea.’ Malcolm had admiration for the way Adam had built up a following, and it was bound to grow if the ‘Antmusic’ ideas were put into practice. Adam did not have nothing, he had all those Ant people … ‘Look you mustn’t give in, you’ve got to get on with it, it’s not the end of the world, if I can help, just give me a call.’

Adam called him the next day just to tell him that he was all right, and then he didn’t see him any more. He phoned Jordan and told her that The Ants had split up, and could she come round to his flat that night. Jordan was disturbed, he sounded completely devastated.

She went round to his flat. He was living in Earls Court again at this time, just behind the station. You went up a spiral staircase
and into a room that looked as if it had been intended as a cupboard. It wasn’t much bigger than a bed, you walked in and fell over it. He had painted the walls a curious mustard colour. It was the very worst of the places he had lived in. Jordan went in and found him standing there leaning against the wall, she could see he was still in a terrible state. She knew that hers was the awful ra ra type of task where she would have to say that it was ‘all for the best’.

‘You’re better off without them’, she said. ‘it’s all for the best.’ Jordan had called Malcolm as soon as she had heard about the split and had it out with him. She had gone a bit berserk thinking at first that he had caused it all, because ‘he does like to put the cat among the pigeons’, to get the most extreme reactions out of people.

All that Adam could do was to keep repeating the phrase: ‘I made it very clear to them, they can have everything … the band’s not with me anymore, they’re with Malcolm now, but I want my name … I want the name Adam and the Ants.’ He wanted that name. He had built up that following and he wanted to keep it. It was the most important thing with him whilst being extraordinarily upset, he wanted to keep the link with the public: the name.

‘It’s really exciting, you’ve got a new start,’ said Jordan. ‘Go out and look for a new band.’

‘Well, what do you think I should do about the material? I suppose I’ll have to throw it all away,’ he said.

‘No, no, no, you’ve worked on it, keep the stuff, it’s obvious it’s not going to tread on Malcolm’s toes. But you don’t want to duplicate something which you know they are going to do. But keep the Burundi beat, change it in some way but keep that, if you think it’s good, keep that thing going, otherwise you’ll be left without a band and without a new sound.’

A lot of the lyrics that Adam had done Malcolm just threw away and didn’t want to use, because Adam was coming from a different direction anyway. Malcolm gave him the subject matter but it was Adam that was giving it the treatment. He was going for the heroic warrior. Malcolm was going for that anti-establishment ‘Pirate on the air waves, thing.

Initially he thought ‘Fuck it - I’ll go and do something else and leave all these ideas,’ but Jordan said:

‘You’ve got to get on with this. You’ve done a lot of work on
this project with Malcolm, and Malcolm’s made a mistake,’
Jordan told McLaren this. ‘You’ve got the wrong band,’ she
said.

Adam did a very clever thing, knowing really that he was now
in competition with Malcolm to get the Burundi idea out as quickly
as possible. He lacked a band and Malcolm lacked a vocalist. He
decided to try and see things like Malcolm would, to think what he
would to and then act. He pushed himself out of the corner, shedding
the old band like a skin, saying to himself, ‘I’m going to push myself
harder and harder, and be more of an idol, use my image, use the
name of the band more’. He had learned from Malcolm how to
work with other people. He had to come down from his artistic high
horse.

The two of them began to talk about the new band. They thought
of Marco Pirroni immediately, he was the guy to phone in this sort
of situation because he was one of the best guitarists there was, and
was also without a band at the moment.

Adam leapt at the idea. A lot of bands had asked Marco to join
and he had turned them all down. He was playing the field, but Adam
didn’t just want a band member, he wanted a writing partner who
would be capable of understanding all these new ideas and able to
bring them to fruition as quickly as possible. Adam had seen Marco
playing with The Models when they and The Ants played together
at Crayford Town Hall in 1977. Adam had thought then that he was
‘magic, a really ballsy sound, he’d got good sound, Marco’. He’d
been taught by Johnny Thunders, from The New York Dolls, who
was one of Adam’s favourite guitarists. He had first laid eyes on
Marco in Chelsea, he was a very early punk. He was a ‘big bloke’
and Adam was scared of him. He had weird green coloured hair and
he was ‘really horrible, very menacing’. He met him again working
in ‘Johnson’s’ always wearing SEX clothes, always looking very
smart. Adam had always thought he was a good dresser. Then he
saw him again in another band Rema Rema ‘which was like one
big feedback nightmare and I still thought he was good. He took
Robert Fripp top the cleaners.’ Adam was determined then to try
and work with him. He couldn’t ask him then and there because
Andy Warren’s girlfriend was in Rema Rema, and he knew it would
have upset him if he’d stolen their guitarist.
Adam went straight to Marco’s house to make him the proposition of a songwriting partnership. He was out. He put a note through the letter box instead saying ‘I want to work with you, call me, Adam Ant’.

By the time they met a few days later in a cake shop in Covent Garden, there was very little explaining for Adam to do. Malcolm’s veil of secrecy had been broken. Nick Kent, an old enemy, had found out and blown the story to the press. There were headlines like ‘McLaren kicks Adam out of the Ants’. Marco was very impressed with the work he and Malcolm had done, he had been a long time admirer of Adam’s work but at the same time felt it needed a bigger ‘push’. They sat in the cake shop, over a cup of tea, and Adam said: ‘I haven’t got a band any more’.

‘Oh dear,’ said Marco.

‘Do you want to write songs with me?’ asked Adam.

‘Yeah, all right then,’ he replied. Adam was pleased, for he had heard that Marco was going to join The Banshees, since Kenny and John had just left Siouxsie. But Marco had played with The Banshees on their first gig at The Vortex, and had decided that he didn’t want to play heavy songs like Overground.

They decided to write, just to start from scratch, Adam played him some of the melodies that he had come up with, most of which constituted a song which he could never make work with the other three, called Kings of the Wild Frontier.
**Nineteen – Working hard for their moment**

Marco and Adam sat with two acoustic guitars with their fingers over the strings in order to make a dead percussive sound. They were going cher chunk cher chunk cher chunk cher chunk, and Marco played a twangy lead piece inspired by people like Link Wray, a sound that hadn’t been heard for a long time. Adam hit the opening lyric: ‘A new royal family, a wild nobility, we are the family. Antpeople are the warriors, Antmusic is the banner.’ They were putting into practice all the things Adam had realised with Malcolm - they were making Antmusic.

The two of them had changed their whole idea of how a song should be written. Their way of working most simply explained was this: Adam would bring lyrics and lots and lots of ideas. Each song would have a theme, say it was Pirates - then the obvious thing to include would be a dollop of ‘Hoist the Jolly Rogers’. They had become unafraid to include the obvious, those things that would be most immediately effective. Everything about the new songs was strong, the beat, the guitar sound, the visual images, the emotion. They treated the writing of a song rather like an empty room that had to be furnished, so that they could move a great many different and varied ideas in. Some would have to be moved around, others would have to go out of the window. Adam frequently had his favourite ‘armchairs’, which Marco would say no to. Basically this is the way they wrote ‘Kings’, and have continued to write ever since. The principle of taking things from The Ants paraphernalia, leaflets, reviews etc., was adopted as Malcolm had suggested. It’s interesting to read the first review that Adam ever had and compare it to *Antmusic*. The review said this:

‘The Ants have been working hard for their “moment”.'
Pursed lips drop open and genuine astonishment rules the waves once more. Yay! Wonderfully disturbing, divinely exhilarating - like taking lemon tea in the intensive care ward, baybee. Adam, vocalist and composer of the band’s set twitched and hiccupped his way through the songs, his *falsetto* outbursts coming as a welcome relief to the monotone slur, so *de rigeur* of this ‘scene’. He stalks the stage like an amnesiac lost in a funhouse, searching for his face - uh what? The Ants, with their barbed sound - and jugular attack, are not an “immediate” band, but the best bands never are. Unplug the jukebox kids, and learn about addition.’

*Jane Suck, Sounds, 24.9.77*

That last line, strangely, fits the Burundi rhythm of *Antmusic* ‘So unplug the jukebox and do us all a favour’.

Marco Pirroni had, at this time, unplugged his stereo too and got rid of it in favour of an old Sixties Dansette-type machine. He preferred the sound to the more advanced systems. Listening to Antmusic being played on this machine with him make you very aware of the odd juxtaposition that Antmusic is. It’s the kind of distilled type of rock ‘n’ roll that while being rather powerful and emotional is also at the same time a parody of rock itself, standing slightly outside the tradition of English music.

Both of them had realized that rock music is the pits. ‘It’s the lowest form of art,’ said Adam. The new songs were crossing over into a field that was more showy than rock, less concerned with itself only, a style that reaches out and cross-fertilises itself with all sorts of things. They began writing an enormous amount because so many things were open to them, history, films, comedy, anything.

Adam and Marco went to see Falcon Stewart, the man who had come to see The Ants right at the beginning in The Alaska studios and had given them the gigs at The Man in the Moon. Falcon was still working as a manager. X-Ray Spex had become a success, sold a lot of records and had split. He now had a Gold Album on his office wall, and he was managing quite a few bands. He offered to help Adam and Marco sort out all the business that lay ahead. No contract was signed between them, but in effect, Falcon was acting as manager. He was appalled by the incident with Malcolm. He
believed that it would have been impossible for Adam and Malcolm ever to work together.

‘What happened was that Adam admired Malcolm’s games. Adam admired the way Malcolm manipulated people. Found that fascinating. That’s why he wanted to work with him. The reality was quite different. Adam’s the last person who’s going to be manipulated directly when it comes to his art, his songs and his singing. He’s not going to have anybody tell him how to do that, which is right. So of course there was no chance that they could work together at all. It was all fantasy.’ Falcon had no intention of interfering with the art side at all, he was a business adviser.

Even though Adam had come to Falcon with nothing, he knew that Malcolm had ‘thrown away the best thing that was there, and lost a fortune.’ He felt that Adam was like someone who had just had a fight with his older brother and lost. His first words to him were: ‘Well … basically, start from square one again, and do it. Don’t fuck around.’ He wanted him to forget all about the incident. ‘Get it out of your head.’

‘Adam had finally sussed out, when he came to see me, that he was going nowhere with the sort of thing he had been doing before. That was the end of the line from a press point of view. People only wrote about him just to slag him off.’ In many ways, though, the incident with Malcolm had provided a full stop to one part of Adam’s career.

The first thing to do now was to get straight into the studio, not to record all the new ideas he and Marco had, but to get themselves free of the Do It deal. Adam was only contracted for one more single, when that was done he would be free to build everything up from the beginning again. Things had been getting a little fraught at Do It, there were many disputes, mainly about sales figures. The company and the artist no longer saw eye to eye. The trust had gone.

*Kings of the Wild Frontier* would have to wait. They had to decide upon a number and chose *Cartrouble* from the Do It ‘Dirk’ album, the pair of them would rework it. Less than three weeks after their meeting in the cake shop, Adam and Marco were in Rockfield Studios recording. It was a good start to their relationship, there is no substitute for having to get on and do something. They had two days to record *Cartrouble* and *Kick*, and Marco had never heard the
songs before.

They needed a producer. Falcon Stewart had been producer as well as manager for X-Ray Spex, but in this instance he didn’t want to take up the controls. He was a busy man, looking after several acts, and anyway he thought it better that someone more involved with Adam should do it. Chris Hughes was ‘luckily’ around at the time, working with Do It. They asked him to produce, and in the course of recording *Cartrouble* he also became the drummer, now known as Merrick.

Adam was the first one into the studio when they began and he put down the bass line and a rhythm machine. Then Marco walked in and said, ‘It’s not good enough,’ and recorded the bass line again himself. Marco did all the guitars on the record while Adam sat in the gallery. It was a good sound. If you play the version on the album, then lift off the needle and play the single - you could hardly compare the two. The first begins with a standard thump thump thump in just the way a million and one other songs do, the type of technique which is totally unmusical and treats the listener as if he’s an idiot, having to tell him again and again what the rhythm is. The recording with Marco however is a whole different ball game. The guitars are strong, and Adam’s voice is that of someone who’s determined to win. It’s the first piece of the warrior voice of Adam Ant. When he sang ‘*Push Push Push*’ before, it was like an upward struggle with a wet fish.

They were free of any contracts now and ready to put together a band. They had the idea of using two drummers, like The Glitter band, but thought that they probably wouldn’t be able to afford it. But when he began to think about it, and visualise them on stage, he could see that it would look and sound very strong, like a blitz.

Marco got in touch with Terry who had been the drummer in The Models, and got him to play in the new band. Adam would also have liked Johnny Bivouac from the first Ants band, but he had started a group of his own. So they still needed a bass player. Adam was visiting Eve, and living in her flat was a young man called Kevin. He had just the right type of face for the band and was sitting there playing *No Lip* on a bass guitar. Adam was impressed by this and asked him to join the band. Kevin agreed.

The main thing Adam wanted to achieve was to get out on the
road and prove that he still existed, because all his fans thought he was finished. ‘He didn’t have a band any longer - all wiped out.’ So he had to get back on the road and prove that in fact that he was still just as good as ever, but not just as good - better. And it was crucial that he do it as quickly as possible. They had no record company to back a tour and no money of their own. To raise some money they had to sign with a music publisher. The only music publisher that was interested in signing him was EMI. No one else was interested because he was so discredited. EMI only really took them on because they were unaware of what had happened, which was the funniest thing in the whole affair. Anybody who was in touch with the street was saying ‘Adam is finished, he’s a joke if you get involved with him you need your head seeing to’. It was only EMI that was sufficiently out of touch.

Falcon negotiated a deal with them, it wasn’t very much, they got an advance of five thousand pounds for a three year contract. With this money they financed a tour, *The Ants Invasion Tour*. They felt sure it was going to work this time. From a practical point of view Adam knew that there was a huge audience out there, not just the established supporters, but a whole army of disillusioned punks who had tired of the grey music that was being sold to them.

Before they went on tour, Adam and Marco got their dream, they recorded the *Kings of the Wild Frontier* single and *Press Darlings* at Matrix Studios.

*Kings* turned out to be a ‘real bugger of a song to record’. Something was missing. Adam and Marco had gone over the lyrics again and again and knew that they were sound, but somehow it just wasn’t coming together in the studio. It was just a whole lot of drums ‘with all this shouting’ - as Marco described it.

Adam and Marco turned up with the tape at Jordan’s basement flat in Hyde Park Square, and played it to her and Mandy Donohe, alias Jayne Vincent, the Ants’ make-up artist. They both looked at each other and knew that it was nowhere near the mark.

‘I think it’s awful,’ said Jordan, bitterly disappointed. The song just didn’t gel, the voice wasn’t right, it wasn’t punchy enough.

So they went back to the studio and recorded it all over again. All in all it took seventy hours to record. The next version they played to her was ‘the one’.
They decided to do a private show at John Henry’s Studio, as an unveiling of the band for their friends. It was to be the first time the new band would be on stage together.

Jordan and Adam got a cab to John Henry’s, and on the way it got a puncture. They just looked at each other and began to sing *Cartrouble*. They ran through the pouring rain, that always seems to be about on these occasions, and arrived at the small studio. There were about thirty people there.

The Ants played the whole thing like a real gig. Adam was out to prove to everyone that it could be done and that their faith had been taken on good trust. Everyone was impressed and taken aback because it was a new sound being punched out. It wasn’t the old Adam any more. It wasn’t the bloke who had always seemed introverted, he was writing stronger lyrics.

Everyone said to each other afterwards ‘He’s done it!’

The whole thing had come together quickly. He’d been over to Bernam and Nathan’s, the theatrical costumiers, and got a new jacket. From the moment he walked in he knew exactly what he wanted. He spoke to Charles David Whiteing who worked there and described the type of thing he wanted. Whiteing came up with a jacket which had last been worn by David Hemmings in *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. Adam hired it for the tour.

The band were all incredibly enthusiastic, it was their first tour together, for Kevin it was his first time on stage. He spent the preceding weeks learning to play the bass. After hours and hours of talking with friends long into the night, Adam felt sure that he had all the details of the band correct. On several occasions he had got through a whole box of tea bags in one sitting, designing the make-up, and discussing the lyrics.

Falcon summed up that time as manager like this:

‘Do It single, put the band together, plan the tour, record the single, go on the road, and then hope that some record company would come and see the bloody band and want to sign!’

The tour began in London, on home ground at The Electric Ballroom. It was filled with the faithful and the curious, and those who though it would be a disaster and good for a laugh.

They looked great, Adam was the most athletic he had been for years. The new songs shone out and the ballroom began to move.
Adam soon discovered exactly how powerful the songs were on stage that night. A lot of the earlier Ants songs were a bit repetitive in mood and didn’t need so much emotion or vocal finesse as these did. The songs had become vocally a little bit more of a strain, so Adam had to discover for himself a happy medium where he could still look good and move but also sing well. If you do too much you can get in a state vocally, so he was learning to get that all together, and conserving energy when he could.

The band looked and sounded more invincible than any that had appeared in England for a long time.
The band set off for the Midlands only for Adam to find out that once again a tour was going to be dogged by bad planning and awful venues. One of the biggest problems was in Birmingham. The club had bought in a rule which said that you had to be a member to see the gig. This meant that people would have to join the day before and then come back and buy a ticket, obviously all those people who had travelled from a distance wouldn’t be aware of this. Consequently on the day of the show the Top Rank in Birmingham was the scene of bitter arguments between would-be customers and the velvet jacket boys with the bow ties.

The night before the gig Jordan and Mandy were working away on the costumes. They were in a flat in Birmingham surrounded by hundreds of feathers. Adam had decided to hang feathers from his clothes and asked them to help paint them. The Indians used to paint dashes on their feathers for the number of people they had killed, and Adam wanted something similar. The two girls sat on the floor all evening with a pot of ink painting stripes and dots on feathers. By the morning there were feathers lying out to dry on every available surface in the room. They dreaded that someone might open the door, or sneeze. He had started to hang trinkets and things from his clothes as well, and wearing a skull and crossbones ring which Johnny Thunders had given Marco.

Jordan had made him a set of twelve braids of hair, so that he could have fresh ones each night. She had dyed them to his colour and drawing-pinned them to the back of the door to dry. Never did Indian squaw work so long for brave.

By the time the show was due to start the next evening those who had been arguing all day outside the Top Rank had got very bored and disappeared. When Adam found out what had happened he was furious. The band sat around wondering if the gig was going to happen at all. There were only about twenty people in the place
with half an hour to go. They spoke to the man on the door, there was no way they could do anything about it. All this should have been worked out before.

A few more people came in. It was just a few minutes before they were due to go on stage. The disco was playing and Pete Vague and all the old faithfule were there jumping about as much as they could to try and make it look a bit fuller. Despair. Perhaps this was going to be another tour like the others but with emptier toilets.

Jordan left the building and made a mad dash down to one of Birmingham’s best known pubs. She walked in and saw a load of skinheads leering at her through beer and crisps, destroying the tablemats and carving their names in the carpet. She went through to the back room and there sitting bored and fed up were a load of punks.

‘Have any of you been standing outside the Adam and the Ants gig for hours?’ she asked.

‘Yeah,’ they all said and began complaining bitterly about it, they’d got so fed up with trying to get in they’d gone for a drink instead. Practically the whole audience was in pubs and on street corners across the centre of Birmingham.

‘Look, I’ll get you all in,’ she said. One of the girls looked up at her and said: ‘Who do you think you are, Jordan? You really fancy yourself as her, don’t you?’

She told them all to go as discreetly as possible to the back door of the Top Rank. It was the discreetest bunch of multicoloured punks ever seen, sneaking through the alleyways and hiding behind the dustbins.

Jordan got to the front door and went in, smiling nicely at the huge security men who were stopping all and sundry. She went to the back and quietly opened the door, letting a few in at a time saying to each ‘Act natural’.

Adam was back stage doing his nut. She went and saw him.

‘Look, the best I could do - I’ve got people from the pub.’

The band went out to a warm reception, getting in free had lifted their spirits.

Most of the friends of the band were there for every gig: Mandy, Jordan, Peter Vague. All of them having to get the first train back to London from places like Bradford, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Dundee in
order to get to work in the morning.

The last date of the tour arrived, and still no record company had made any move towards them, despite the buzz the tour was causing.

Their last port of call was the Empire Ballroom, London, and there were problems there too. It wasn’t really equipped for a rock audience. There were no bar facilities, bound to put the record companies off. Supporting them that night was Dave Berry, the sixties singer who Adam had always admired.

The place was packed, a sell out, but there were bouncers everywhere, nearly all of them overreacting because they weren’t used to seeing such a following. They had put up metal barriers two feet from the stage in an attempt to stop the crush. Naturally when the crowd pushed forward all the barriers fell over, and then the bouncers went nuts. They got up on the stage and told Adam to make everyone to move back. Adam was very annoyed, it threw a black shadow over the evening.

The show produced one of the first reviews of the new band, in New Music News, which ran: ‘With the show running ridiculously late, the Ants came on at 11.35 p.m. causing many to miss the last bus and train home. Still, they’d argue it was worth it, and they’d be right. This was a wonderfully powerful display by a band that have had too much rough treatment from self-styled “discerning” critics for too long. I can’t understand the prejudice against them. Forget the bondage bullshit, Adam consistently writes lyrically strong and tuneful songs and they’ve produced three excellent singles (although the album was disappointing).

But not many bands can equal the excitement they generate onstage and in the audience, and this show demonstrated all of that with new guitarist Marco Pirroni and two synchronized drummers, their sound knocks you backwards, especially on songs with heavy drum intros like Kick and Cartrouble. They opened and closed with the new single, the chant-like Kings of the Wild Frontier and played mostly old stuff, with a few newies like Ants Invasion, Killer in the Home (the best of the new ones) and
a po-faced version of *YMCA* to keep everyone happy.

Adam - a white stripe painted from ear to ear and feathers dangling from his trousers - did his usual whirling dervish act. The whole performance underlined how unfair it is that they’ve been left so out in the cold.

Jane Garcia.

For the whole of the tour, nobody from the record companies had shown up. Financially they had been walking on a knife edge, if no A & R people came that night, then they were five thousand quid down the drain.

Not one company had come that night, but three, Howard Thompson from CBS, Simon Draper from Virgin and Tracey Bennet, who was still hoping to sign the band back to Decca now that it was a completely new company.

The managing director of CBS, David Betteridge had been wanting to sign Adam for as long as two years before but he hadn’t had enough faith in his management company. Having seen the show they all agreed that they wanted to sign the band each to their own labels. They were taken aback by the new combination. With Adam’s old band, they felt, it never quite happened because there was a basic imbalance; the band behind wasn’t strong enough then to back Adam’s energy.

The man from Decca was quite upset, he felt that the man from CBS was going to ‘get it’.

CBS asked to see Falcon Stewart. He went over and talked to them in their offices in Soho Square; it was true, they were very eager to sign them up. Adam preserved a bit of distance, he wanted to make sure that this time it was the right deal, he was well aware that CBS was a big enough organization to handle his success if it came. He was invited to meet David Betteridge, the Managing Director. As soon as Betteridge met him he knew he wanted to sign him up:

‘Meeting Adam did it for me, as far as I was concerned. I liked him, he was bright, hungry, wanted to kill for his art. When you get artists like that you realize how many lazy artists there are about.’

They signed on July 16th to CBS. There were teething troubles
at first: Adam didn’t get on with the Product Manager who was in charge of liaison between the A & R department and Marketing. Adam was very upset that he didn’t really seem to understand how he wanted the career of The Ants to progress. David Betteridge spent long afternoons ironing it all out with him. CBS took *Kings of the Wild Frontier* and released it within nine days of their signing. It entered the charts at number fifty-three, which wasn’t bad at all, and then went up to forty-eight. Everyone around the band prepared themselves to watch eagerly as the most exciting single for a long time climbed up the charts.

Meanwhile in the rooms off long polished corridors in the BBC where radio play and *Top of the Pops* is decided, people sat around listening to all the new releases. When ‘Kings’ was put on in such places the decision was simple and direct: ‘too raucous and too raunchy’. It was also damning. Adam and the Ants watched the record slide down the charts, yet ‘Dirk’ was still high up there, selling solidly, registering every week in the alternative charts.

Very disappointed they went off to Monmouth, to Rockfield Studios to record the album. A miserable time for everyone. It was still just that bit too early for success, the new sound was going to take a while longer before it would be acceptable to that giant tortoise, the mass market.

The Ants record by a process of layers, Adam and Marco going into the studio first and making demo tapes on bass, guitar, rhythm machine and vocals. Then the whole process is repeated, each member of the band recording on his own until the original demo is covered entirely over. It’s a process of trial and error. One of the main problems is, funnily, trying to keep some of the original mistakes. Often the things that happen accidentally are some of the best moments. Despite the excitement of the writing and the new sound, *Kings Of The Wild Frontier* was a hard album to record, there was no place for any of the vocals or band parts just to slip into the background, because of the nature of the music every part had to be strong and ‘up front’.

Very often Marco was in the studio, headphones on working away, and Adam would come over on his headphones with comments like ‘If you get this right this time, then I’ve got a nice Birds Eye chocolate mousse for you in the fridge’. The whole album was put
together on this promise. They also knew full well that they would pretty soon have to record another album. They had been forced to sign on with CBS for two albums in the first year because they knew it was going to be a very expensive band to promote, and this was one way of getting a better deal with the company.

The title single was actually dropping out of the charts while they were making the album too, very demoralising. CBS were very worried, they thought it was going to be a big single. ‘What’s going on?’ they were asking. They had on their hands a top ten single that only wanted to go to number fifty. Consequently CBS wouldn’t make a video for ‘Kings’. When they found they hadn’t had their easy hit, they were severely jolted, it wasn’t worth their while to promote it.

The Ants decided to make the video themselves and they did it for three hundred pounds, which is next to nothing when bands can spend up to thirty thousand pounds on videos. The result, however, was a very static video, just the band in a very white studio, there was no way it would salvage the single. What it did provide, however, was the sleeve for the album. Forty two still were put on including what is probably one of the most perfect pictures ever taken of Adam, capturing exactly that ‘wild nobility’. They decided to use it for the cover.

The reason ‘Kings’ didn’t make it was the lack of radio play but the reason it got as far as it did was because thousands of ‘Antpeople’ went out and bought it straight away. They knew it was the one, just as Adam did.
Twenty-one – Overnight

One day, when Marco and Adam had first started to write together they were sitting around reading the papers. Adam was reading an article about Margaret Thatcher when something caught his eye. He called Marco over and underlined a line in the paper with his finger.

‘What do you think of that for the title of a song?’ said Adam.
‘Yeah’, replied Marco. ‘Dog eat Dog, it’s very good.’

It’s the perfect type of phrase for Antmusic simple because you can’t even say it without giving it a certain rhythm and attack. For Adam, of course, it was also a phrase he could sing with emotion. It was very close to his own experience of recent months. The ‘rock’ business seemed to him to be a battle between bands where any tactics were fair. There are also connotations that draw to the mind the ‘doggy’ of another band not so far away.

Dog Eat Dog is one of their strongest tracks. It’s what I would call the ‘front line’ of Antmusic, and is the song to open the album. When you think of how depressing and frustrating the career of the Ants had been then you can hear an extra resonance behind the words ‘It’s easy to lay down and hide/Where’s the warrior with out his pride?’

They decided to launch another attack on the public with a single and it was *Dog Eat Dog* that was chosen. On the B side they put another of Adam’s early songs which was again extensively reworked. *Physical (You’re so)*, a version of *Whip in my Valise*, like the new *Cartrouble* is fresh, powerful, and strengthened by Marco’s distinctive guitar sound and the drumming. After the strong solo vocal beginning Adam throws in an aside ‘Eat your heart out DO IT’, which proves what confidence Adam had in the release.

CBS released the single on 3rd October 1980 and it entered the charts at number 50, only slightly better than ‘Kings’. By the next week however it had got to number 37.

Lots of people had been saying for years that if Adam got on to the television then he would become an instant success because
of his charm, performance and good looks. The BBC’s *Top of the Pops* show would clinch it. Eleven million people, we are told, buy singles in this country and the greater part of them watch *Top of the Pops*. It is, then, very very important for bands to play the show.

The system is that if enough of your records are sold in the shops these people frequent then you will be put in the programme. The problem is that you have to wait till the very last moment. The programme is recorded on a Wednesday; Tuesday evening is spent by many bands pacing up and down waiting for the phone.

The Ants, however, weren’t eagerly awaiting a call. The BBC didn’t like the last one and so there was no reason they should like this. They were just going about their business of recording the album when the phone in the Ants office rang. Someone had dropped out of that week’s show at the last moment, and when the new charts were compiled *Dog Eat Dog* had shot from number thirty-seven to nineteen, just safely in the Top Twenty.

They telephoned Rockfield Studios and Marco answered. They were all taken by surprise not having a clue how *Top of the Pops* was done.

The next afternoon they were entering the gate of the BBC in Shepherd’s Bush. It’s a huge imposing building, circular in the shape of three enormous Polo mints stuck together. Everyone can look into each others offices. The BBC was the inspiration for George Orwell’s 1984. The Ants walked through the ugly corridors towards the studio. Nobody really told them what to do. Everyone else seemed to know the routine. They stood around, nervous and unsure. Where was all the glamour? It was like a ships boiler room. The whole of the BBC could do with a lick of paint.

The time came for their rehearsal and they went through their paces, Adam wearing camouflage trousers and a waistcoat. Gradually they got to know the ropes and by the actual recording the band was on form, punching out their new look and sound from bowels of the BBC.

Falcon said afterwards ‘We did *Top of the Pops* with that kind of exciting look, and a record that sounded different and then it was all over, overnight.’

By the first week in November the very top positions of the charts were having to fight of the invasion of The Ants as *Dog Eat*
Dog pitched in at number four. They were ‘pop stars’ they had also
gained a little unwelcome notoriety.

As Adam was leaving the Top of the Pops studio after the show
with his girlfriend, Mandy and Kevin, another band, the 4be2’s were
leaving a different studio. They had decided to have a look in on the
‘Pops’ and met The Ants on the way out.

Adam and Jock McDonald came to blows over things that had
been said to Mandy. The newspapers had a field day: The Daily
Mail ran the headline: ‘Punk stars in Top of the Pops Riot’, the sort
of typical Mail article that had always suspected the ‘punk stars’
would one day would start fighting on TOTP.

‘In the incident, Adam and the Ants - who appeared on the show
with their current hit Dog Eat Dog - were seen pushing and shuffling
with three of the four-man group 4be2.’ Daily Mail

The BBC said: ‘Three people were asked to leave the studio
audience after they started jigging around in front of the cameras.
Outside, but on BBC premises, they were involved in a minor fracas
with Adam and the Ants.’

Scotland Yard said: ‘We get called to dozens of similar disputes
all over London every night, as far as we’re concerned, this was a
trivial incident which did not even necessitate a report being made
out.’

Later that evening both Adam and Kevin were nursing some bad
bruises. Adam had not had his glasses on, or contact lenses in and
hadn’t really been able to see who was coming at him. At the start
of the fight he was jumped from behind anyway. To Adam it was
not a trivial incident. He began thinking about the future and what it
would hold: if he became a big pop star then he would be continually
in danger of being attacked or mobbed. He began talking to Falcon
about security.

After Number Four the single began to fall out of the charts
again. Again CBS hadn’t made a video for it. When you’ve got a
record at number four you should really get some of the image of the
band to other record markets, a British Top Ten hit creates a lot of
interest abroad. You should make a video and ship it all around the
world.

Somebody from The Ants was in CBS every day, to get things
done. There were so many opportunities open, they had waited and
worked so long it would be foolish to let it all go again. The Nation, however had had a taste if Adam, and what is called a ‘phenomenon’ had already begun to take root. *Dog Eat Dog* would have gone further, it’s an excellent single, but of course it was the first big one, and you can never go that far when you’re still building an audience.

It was obviously the time to release the album. Adam wanted to include a free booklet and catalogue with it but the company wouldn’t have this at all. It was far too expensive to include such a thing, someone would have to print it, someone would have to put it in the sleeve. They didn’t want to do this at all. Adam however, was convinced that it was the right thing to do. He went and saw David Betteridge himself about it and sat in his office one afternoon and explained the whole thing. They wouldn’t have to pay for the photos, he would give his and Falcon would take the rest. The idea of the catalogue was to give something back to the fans, it would also show that they weren’t a band who had suddenly just popped up out of nowhere like so many bands do. They weren’t going to be a ‘one hit wonder’ - they had been around, they had paid their dues, they were people with ideas and character. Adam himself compiled the catalogue of ‘Antshows and events’ which traces the development of the band from 1976 onwards. David Betteridge was convinced by him, he knew that he was talking sense and that such an insert would play a part in establishing the band. It was also like a ‘welcome’ to all the new Ant fans in the recent months. The album was released on November the seventh. On the ninth they had begun a new tour. It was obvious they would have to do another tour on the release of the album, even though not one member of the band enjoyed touring at all, Adam was set on doing a mammoth thirty five date nationwide excursion. Few bands would attempt as much. Again not all the venues would be right. They were playing some big venues but not always, it was very mixed. To play thirty-five dates you are going to have to play a lot of smaller places, obviously because there are probably only twelve major venues in the country.

By the time they got to Edinburgh, however, they were greeted with a great boost. They were sitting in a hotel room when the first news of the new album chart came through. The album had entered at Number Four. All the band jumped up and cheered, left the room.
and began running up and down the corridor shouting ‘Number Four, Number Four, Number Four!’ Everyone in the other rooms wondered what on Earth was going on.

Although the album began to fall after that the tour helped to keep it up in the Top Twenty throughout the Christmas rush, which is always a bad time for new bands.

During the tour they released *Antmusic* as well with a B side *Fall In* written by Adam and his old friend Lester Square. Lester was, and is, still working with The Monochrome Set. *Antmusic* too, steadily climbed the charts during the course of the tour so the situation was getting like it hadn’t been since The Beatles.

Back on tour however, they were meeting with all sorts of problems. The crew weren’t able to cope with it all. They had a large set which simulated a ship, with two great bows at the front end of which lights streamed like cannon fire. At the back of the stage was a backdrop which flew high the ‘Antlogo’ that Adam’s college friend Danny Kleinman had designed. Halfway through the tour the crew was sacked and a new team employed. Adam was maddened the whole time by the inefficiency of the promoters. Even down to the simple things like putting up enough posters.

They got to some venues only to find that their set couldn’t even fit on the stage or worse, they couldn’t play there at all. Marco remembered the tour by saying: ‘Out of all of us I was the most depressed and Adam, second.’

The crowds turning up for the shows were so far above what they had expected some of them had to be transferred to larger venues, or cancelled altogether. They had to cancel at Manchester Poly because the place could only hold eight hundred people; they found the same in Shrewsbury and Lincoln. The Manchester concert, however, was rehoused in the full sized Manchester Apollo.

In Sheffield some of the disappointed customers caused trouble in the streets, attacking parked cars because they couldn’t get in. All this caused the band much heartache.

In Hull, four hundred extra people turned up and tried to burn the place down. The show was cancelled.

The owner of the HMV record shop in Leeds asked if The Ants would do an autograph signing session in the shop. When they arrived the whole place was jam-packed. The owner insisted that
only one person was allowed in at a time. The Ants sat in a line, signing autograph after autograph watching the queue outside the window steadily grow until it was a thousand strong.

The final night of the tour at the Lyceum in London was tumultous, playing the same venue that they had used to finish *The Ants Invasion Tour*. This time the atmosphere was very different. It was the crossover point from the ‘street’ to universal appeal. Sadly this would mean that a section of the audience, namely those that had stuck with the band through thick and thin, would feel left behind, they had lost a friend and gained a hero. Adam felt this too and was conscious of it throughout the performance. It was the natural, unavoidable consequence of being ‘taken into the nation’s heart’ as a new idol.

The CBS people had turned out in force, many of them seeing the band for the first time. As they walked through the extravagant foyer of the Lyceum, bedecked with people clambering to see them, they saw at first hand the power of the appeal of the band they had signed. The Chairman of CBS was very eager to see them working up close and decided to ‘get down with the kids’ right at the front of the auditorium. He stared around him at all those who had dressed up in the clothes of a new sensation. Up in the gallery, behind the golden chandeliers, in the red velvet flap back seats sat David Betteridge the Managing Director. He was sitting with Adam’s father and stepmother, the Goddards. It was the first time they had been to see him perform. As soon as Adam came on the stage the audience went berserk, moving up and down, cheering, surging to the front. David Betteridge looked towards Mr Goddard: his mouth had fallen open, he couldn’t believe it was his son, he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. The Chairman of the company, who was down with the crowd, immediately beat a hasty retreat.

Even *The Guardian* and *The Times* reviewers were there, and the next day they printed the strangest type of reviews which were obviously meant to explain to the parents why their offspring were going mad the night before.

The man from *The Times* wasn’t really sure how to deal with it all, he would obviously have been much more at home with a Tchaikovsky night at The Festival Hall. He liked it but he could only express it like this:
'There is an undeniable and often proven excitement to be had from the sight and sound of two trap drummers resolutely performing synchronized or unison figures.' (?!)

He had a rather quaint way of talking about ‘gigs’ too:

‘a well rehearsed method reminiscent of a now-forgotten group called Mr Big, who attained a limited popularity around the London clubs five or six seasons back.’

_The Guardian_ lady was a lot less kind but her review was dogged by the fact that she had totally misunderstood everything and, as is often the case with that paper, a few printing errors too.

‘Recently, to everyone’s astonishment, they produced a hit single and a wonderful album called _King of the Wild Frontier_ … it is a very exciting, physical sound and it has style, if not humour. The group’s concert would be marvellous if only Adam weren’t such a prat … the group’s rallying cry is “Antmusic for Sexpeople - Sexmusic for Antpeople”, he isn’t very sexy.’

It’s only in papers like _The Guardian_ that you get such direct uses of expletives like ‘prat’. It was unfortunate that in this case it was misdirected, it’s not Adam who was the prat …

All this goes to show how Adam and the Ants had crossed over to being part of ‘showbusiness’ rather than just the limited field of rock.

The _Melody Maker_ were equally behind in their review of the album. On it’s release they predicted that it would never sell:

‘A laborious sense of someone trying to make a point – “We are stylists and reckless and we’d be very grateful if you’d buy multiple copies of our new album”. It’s an old trick and it never works.’

Adam Sweeting

Little did they know that it was about to soar up the charts, not
once, but twice. Not only would people buy the album but also anything else, however old, that had been made by The Ants, to the extent that the charts would be existing to display the success of one band only, ADAM AND THE ANTS. Once again, as with the rise of punk, the *Melody Maker* was caught with it’s trousers down.

Two days before the end of *The Frontier Tour* the band went on *Top of the Pops* again, this time with *Antmusic* which was heading steadily up towards the Number Two position. On 20\(^{th}\) January the band were recording a show for Australian television, moments before they were due to go on the air someone rushed on the stage with the news that *Antmusic* was at number two and the album had travelled all the way back up the charts to Number One. They all leapt up and down shouting out as they had done in Edinburgh a couple of months before, but this time it was ‘Number One, Number One!’

Even though the success of the singles had been totally surprising and none of them had behaved as anyone had expected, the whole thing had been, on reflection, perfectly timed. What you need to have a big successful album (apart from good music) is to have three singles and each one to be bigger than the last. ‘Kings’ had earned them some ‘chart credibility’ for the first time - they could do it. *Dog Eat Dog* was a Top Ten record and *Antmusic* went to Number Two only being held off the Number One slot by the re-release of John Lennon’s *Imagine*.

What these chart numbers show is much more than sales, they show a band growing, catching everyone’s imagination, the music being accepted and Adam becoming a ‘star’ with charisma which goes beyond the normal run of the mill pop personality. The attitude of the music industry toward the band was summed up in the words of The Ants manager ‘It’s going to be a monster’.

Quite frankly the tour had been exhausting and the band could have done with a rest. It was a very difficult and strenuous job just to keep up with the interviews, but throughout Adam insisted on doing them all and giving as much as he could, after doing long sessions with journalist after journalist. Several members of the band were suffering from fatigue; for Kevin, still comparatively new to playing live, it was just one long blur of van, stage, van, stage. They often forgot what town they were in. By the time the album was at Number One the band was exhausted. Unfortunately, having a record that
high up is a full-time job in itself because of all the people that want
to see you and talk to you and so they had to go on using all the
stamina they had.

Everyone was interested in Adam’s success, but what they
didn’t know was that he was still as poor as he had ever been and
still living in the tiny ‘cupboard’ at Earls Court, behind the station.
Both the tours had cost a considerable amount of money, tours
always do. One night Adam turned up at Stephanie Gluck’s flat and
said: ‘I’ve got a limousine outside.’ She laughed at him thinking
he was joking. When she went to the window she could see all the
neighbours crowded round a huge car. It was his limo.

The system for actually getting the money you’ve earned,
however, is a complicated one. Record companies, as well as
providing limousines that the artists don’t have the money to run,
give an ‘advance’ against sales. This money is invested in the band
and until enough money is earned from record sales to replace that
they don’t see a penny. Naturally it takes a long time for the royalties
to come in, and even longer until they are finally paid. Consequently
Adam the star was living in his mustard-coloured cupboard, still
with his stereo from Woolworths.

Falcon went to see David Betteridge. ‘Now you’ve had a
Number One record,’ he said to him, ‘Don’t you think it’s time to re-
release the Kings of the Wild Frontier single?’ This was something
the band felt strongly about, it was an important song, the first of the
new music and the charts had not been quick enough to do it justice.
Lots of people had been robbed of it because it was no longer in the
shops. David Betteridge had decided to delete the record after the
second record had come out. They thought then ‘It doesn’t really
matter at this moment, delete it and see what happens.’

Betteridge had said: ‘Oh well, we’ll release it maybe next year,
when there’s nothing else happening.’ But the reverse was true,
so much was happening that it seemed daft that ‘Kings’ wasn’t
available when there was a huge demand for everything else, Young
Parisians had got to number nine and Dirk Wears White Sox had got
to number sixteen in the album charts. David Betteridge would not
shift however, he really felt that there was no need to re-release it.
He and Falcon had a big argument.

‘No, we will re-release it with the next album. I don’t want to
hear about it,’ he said. So Falcon spent the next three weeks talking to as many people in the company as possible. In the end they all went, the Marketing Director, the International Director, everyone, up to David Betteridge and said ‘Don’t you think we should release Kings of the Wild Frontier, and finally he got so fed up that he did. This time ‘Kings’ went to Number Two.

Back in November, when Adam had begun to see that security was going to be a problem, he had asked him to hire a security man. The best man in the business is Don Murfet, having been at the job for twenty-three years, head of ‘Artists’ Services’ that provide the security men for most major concerts, and also running a company to look after important personages. Don gave the band his services.

By the time ‘Kings’ was re-released the relationship between Adam and Falcon had become strained. Falcon had known since November, after the incident at the Top of the Pops recording, that Adam had felt that he was not able to devote enough time to the band because of his other commitments. Don Murfet had gradually done more and more for the band until he was working as the manager in all but name. Adam was keen not to accept any more advances from CBS, which he saw as putting them into debt. When their original advance was finally covered by record sales and they actually started to earn, Falcon made application for a further advance. Such applications have to be signed by the artist. Adam wouldn’t do this. Falcon ceased from this point to work for the band. Don Murfet drew up a management contract and became the bands ‘proper’ manager and immediately threw himself into the task of re-negotiating the contract they had with CBS.
Everything about the rise of Adam and the Ants has been neat, a model of how to take show business by a storm that has been a long time brewing. The imagination of the press was caught by the band at the beginning of the year.

The Daily Star were the first people really to go overboard about The Ants, and then The Sun. Adam became one of the most publicised faces in Britain, the only person really to compete with him was Lady Diana Spencer. Any excuse for a picture of Adam would be used, journalists began tracking down his friends and girlfriends to the extent that it became a real worry, especially when Adam’s mother was singled out for interrogation by the press.

The climate of his, and the band’s success in January of this year is illustrated by the article run on The Sun’s pop page on Friday the ninth of this month:

‘Salute rock’s newest sex symbol. Adam is on the eve of superstardom. 1981 I predict - and I don’t care if I sound adamant about it - is going to be the year for Adam and the Ants. The music is smashing. Distinctive, driving, tribal drumming. Strong primitive, proud rock. But Adam is the centre of everyone’s attention.’

The article went on to cover a lot of his attitudes towards sex and show business, and this over the next few months became the hallmark of articles about Adam. Very surprising really, because no pop star of similar standing has ever been so frank about these matters. He was able to say things in a very direct fashion and to communicate to a great many people a manifesto of pure ideals.

On Sunday February the ninth the band played their most prestigious concert to date. Adam had offered his services to one of

**Twenty-two – House arrest in the hall of fame**
Britain’s biggest show business charities, The Royal Variety Club of Great Britain. They in turn asked him to do a charity performance at the London Palladium. They stole the show. Afterwards when Princess Margaret came back stage to meet the performers she stopped to talk to Adam. In the course of their conversation she asked him ‘Please would you give me your autograph?’ Adam obliged and signed a couple of the programmes for her.

Behind the scenes however, a new difficulty had arisen within the band. For the relationship between Adam and the bass guitarist Kevin Mooney had been deteriorating. The night before the Palladium show Kevin’s guitar strap had shown itself to be faulty. In the opening seconds of their song it broke. Kevin played up to this, making what he thought was the best of an unfortunate incident, by swinging the bass around a bit. Adam, however, felt that he should have mended it properly the day before. This was just one little thing in a string.

Even though Kevin’s youth and enthusiasm was a great part of the band, Adam felt that he wanted someone a little more experienced to cope with what was to be ahead. Gary Tibbs, ex of one of Adam’s most respected bands, Roxy Music was approached. Gary is a very pleasant, easy guy with a passion for Space Invaders. He joined the band in time for the new single and a new tour and Kevin went off to pursue his interest in funk - and to marry Jordan.

The Stand and Deliver Tour began on the twenty-third of March, it was an even larger tour than Frontiers, not only in Britain but America and Europe. They played only seven venues in England, only the places that were big enough to take them. Adam was determined that it would be a first class show, not the hit and miss type of affair that tours can often be. Everyone had to be excellent. He was determined that all the details would be right, that they were booked into decent hotels in order to cope with the strain of it all, and of course, the constant interviews.

I had a long talk with Marco Pirroni about the tour, ‘How do we give some sense of what this mammoth tour was like?’

‘Well, you don’t do you?’ he said in his usual, short, sharp fashion, ‘You can never tell people what it’s like, it’s horrible. If you’re the sort of band that likes drinking a lot and entertaining all the girls that flock to the hotel, then maybe you’d enjoy it. We’re
People think it’s terribly glamorous being besieged by fans in a hotel room but in actual fact it is the closest thing there is to a house arrest except that you’re not even in your own house. They do the tours for one reason and one reason only, because people want to see them, and the fans come first.

When they were in San Francisco, playing at the California Hall, Marco was sitting in his hotel room after the gig thoroughly bored. When you come off stage you are on such a high that you can’t go to sleep, yet you are in a city where you know no one or anything. What do you do? Marco picked up his telephone and dialled the number of a friend of his in England.

‘Where are you?’
‘I’m in San Francisco,’ he replied.
‘What are you doing?’
‘Nothing.’

The person on the other end of the line couldn’t believe him. He couldn’t understand how he could have phoned him up from America simply because he was bored.

The Ants were very concerned to get on well in America. It is notoriously difficult for bands that are ‘big’ in Britain to go over there and make a success. In the American system of promoting a record is very different from here. Generally the first hundred thousand copies of a record are sold at a reduced price in order to achieve a chart position. This is because it is very difficult for an unknown band to achieve radio play, but once the record has been promoted then the public gets to hear and judge for itself. Consequently they sold a quarter of a million copies of *Kings of the Wild Frontier* and the attention of the American public was caught. By the time they arrived in the States the word from England had already arrived from across the blue. So much of the bands character and image is American in any case. If anything they could be described as a perfect unison of both the English and American cultures. An English sense of history and humour and an American sense of romance and showmanship. When they arrived they were already being described in the press as ‘the popular Adam and the Ants’.

Epic, their American record label threw a party for them in New York at the Mudd Club on White Street. They wanted to do
something different to show the American press that the Ants Invasion had begun. They decided to hire a live anteater for the party, rather a cryptic joke, but unfortunately it would have cost five-hundred dollars and although anteaters are a wow at parties everywhere, it’s always very difficult to engage them in conversation. They decided on a stuffed one, but even that was three hundred and fifty pounds. Suddenly ‘Ant farms’ occurred to someone, those glass cases that show off all the intricate tunnellings of an ant society.

‘Ants,’ they discovered, ‘were out of season.’ They would have to ship them all the way over from the West Coast, and this would work out at twenty dollars an ant. Better, but you’d need several thousand of them to make any real impact. The idea was abandoned but the party was a success anyway because of the real, live mega-ants themselves, who everyone was quick to admit, were far from being out of season. In fact it was there season in America, but still Adam left the party early.

Big fashion shops like Bloomingdale’s had sent their buyers over to the English fashion shows to buy up the new look romantic pirate clothes and in their stores they installed video equipment to show the Ants videos.

One of the interesting reactions to the enormous publicity that the band were receiving was from the North American Indian community. They were very concerned about Adam’s stripe. They wrote to the offices of CBS and declared their disapproval saying it was a sacred Apache warsign and he should abandon it. Instead of dismissing it, Adam decided to go and meet them personally, rather like the American generals would go unarmed on a horse up into the hill country for a pow-wow.

Adam arranged a meeting with them and he found himself going through the door of a very ordinary office of the North American Community Indian Association in New York. All the people there were wearing smart business suits but had names like George Stonefish and Rudi Martin. After he had talked to them for a while they could see that he wasn’t using their culture as a gimmick at all. His love of it stemmed from a genuine interest in their culture and a personal identification with them. He invited them to see a show, ten came in all, and from then on they gave him not only approval but applause. They agreed that he had won his stripes, and in effect
accepted him as an Indian brave.

In many of the venues they played there were overspill audiences watching the concert live on close circuit TV. By the time the band had crossed the country top Los Angeles, what the press called ‘Antmania’ had become a properly organised display of affection for their heroes.

The local ‘Antpeople’ made a float in the shape of a ship, bedecked with flags and jolly rogers. A review of their concert there said:

‘Adam and the Ants recent shows at the Roxy were packed tighter than any we’ve seen for years. And the furor over the Ants Invasion also gave rise to a phenomenon not unlike the days of Mod and Rocker England.’

There was even some resistance to the surge of ‘Antmania’ when local skinheads and punks threw eggs at the float. This was surprising and very much an isolated incident. American audiences are much more of a hybrid than we find in England, where Heavy Metal fans would get well headbanged if they ventured into a punk event and vice-versa. In America this isn’t so and The Ants’ audiences ranged right across the board from young kids through to the old rock’n’rollers. Mick Jagger and Pete Townsend turned out to see them. There was in fact much infighting amongst the press. Generally press men are allowed in free to whatever they want and everyone falls over themselves in order to get them drunk and happy. It was not so with The Ants. They were interested in doing things properly in an organised fashion. Adam was made wise to the press, and what happens if you are misunderstood or misquoted, very early in his career. Instead of dozens of wayward freebies they gave intensive interview sessions.

One of the journalists that attended, Chris Lamson, said of this affair:

‘As I was looking down at my notes, making last minute changes to my questions, I heard the woman sitting next to me gasp rather loudly and a smattering of applause ran through the room. I looked up to see Adam Ant standing
before me, dressed in a loose black shirt and black leather pants, with tiny bows in his hair, silver rings on every finger, earrings hanging from both ears and a long checkered scarf tied to his belt. As he smiled and greeted the press, I noticed that the woman next to me did not take her eyes off him. Whatever charisma is, this guy had it - in frighteningly powerful amounts.’

The band were invited to go on one of America’s largest TV shows, the networked NBC Tom Snyder show. In the course of the programme Tom Snyder remarked on the mammoth build up the band had received and asked Adam: ‘How can you possibly live up to all of the advanced billing that has come preceding you arrival here and measure up to the expectations so many people have for your success here? It seems to me that you’re under an awful lot of pressure.’

Adam looked at him with his disarmingly cheeky smile and replied: ‘I think you quite simply stop talking, put your clothes on and get out and play for the people, very simply.’

America is a vast continent full of modern myth and energy; The Ants measured up.

Stand and Deliver was the first single with a real, properly made video. It was made by the pop producer Mike Mansfield, for whom Adam has great respect. It was an enormously enjoyable video to make. Perhaps for the first time it made people realize that the band has a sense of humour. It was like a mini Hollywood epic, a full costume piece complete with carriage, gallows and banqueting halls. Adam was determined to do all the stunts himself, wanting to translate some of his stage energy into more colourful gestures on video.

He did the tricks normally reserved for stunt men, like crashing through the great window in the eighteenth century dining room. He didn’t actually land on the table, as it appeared on television, he did, in fact, land in a great pile of cardboard boxes to break his fall.

Everyone around the band got ready to watch the single enter the charts, they were sure, at a good position. Fingers crossed in the hope that it wouldn’t hang around in that dreadful number two
It was released on the first of May. The band stood quiet and stunned, and feeling slightly robbed, when they heard that it had entered at Number One. *Stand and Deliver* ignored every other record around. Ignored the charts and simply made everyone else move over and move down. Advance orders had been so vast that it was heading toward ‘platinum’. Unqualified success that had not been seen in England for a long time. The video was rushed to the television studios. By the second showing, however, the BBC had decided that they didn’t like the ending, consequently, the BBC, who had previously decided not to censor things anymore because it only attracted more publicity, cut the ending scene with the gallows.

Meanwhile *The Stand and Deliver Tour* was travelling Europe.

The European Tour was in some sense a re-run of the American success except that Adam had the pleasure of visiting places that he had played years before. Returning to Berlin, for instance, where this time the audience was warm and responsive instead of arty and aloof.

When they had played there previously a group of Nazis had threatened Adam and Dave Barbe saying that they were going to shoot them on stage. Adam had dismissed it but during the course of the gig a young man had been apprehended at the front, he had a loaded pistol in his hand.

They returned to Belgium too where the theatre had been destroyed and to Italy where he was a bit of a National Hero. The gig there was an absolute riot.

One of the high points of the tour however was playing in Spain where they had the best response from the Audience, matched with the friendliness of the CBS people there and the excitement of the attempted Military Coup.

Another was the concert in Copenhagen. Sitting in the stalls of the Oddfellow Palace there, with the rest of the fans, dressed in a smart suit with a little jewellery was Mr. Showbusiness himself: Liberace. After going backstage to say how much he’d enjoyed it he went into the theatre foyer to mix with the fans again.

One of the most uncomfortable, but at the same time most comic, moments of *The Stand and Deliver Tour* for Adam had to do with his changeover from glasses to contact lenses. It was a well-known
fact at gigs that Adam could barely tell one member of the audience from the next because of his eyesight. Most of Adam’s lady friends are present at every gig. ‘You can always tell who they are,’ says Stephanie ‘because you can see them worrying about the amplifiers and every little detail of the show. You stand there in the audience, and it’s like, whenever you know someone who’s on the stage you hope they will look your way and smile. Sometimes he looks my way and I think “You creep, you don’t even know who I am, you’re as blind as a bat”.

For this and other reasons Adam decided to wear contact lenses. He began using them on the European tour. As is often the case when you are not used to using them you can get a very painful swollen eye. This is what happened to Adam and it got so bad that he had to wear an eye patch. Everyone thought this was part of the ‘pirate look’ and by the next concert dozens of kids had turned up wearing eye patches. Much the same thing happened when he started wearing the white stripe. Lots of people misunderstood it. Consequently, throughout London you could see people standing around at gigs with sticking plasters on their noses thinking that it was some sort of post punk gesture.

The European Tour finished in, of all places, Cornwall, which was a rather nice touch, something which, no doubt pleased those who campaign for an Independent West Country. There was another little nation all of its own at that show too. Four hundred under eight year olds had bought tickets, and, for safety had a little pen all of their own.

To cut a long story short Adam had come from being a hero of the underground to a hero of international proportions.
Charles Whiteing, the band’s stylist went for a long holiday as soon as *The Stand and Deliver Tour* was over. He picked the mirage-quivering terrain of Morocco in which to ‘get away from it all’. It was the first time since the band’s success with their climbing the charts that anyone had been able to take a break.

He stepped outside his hotel room on the first morning and hired a guide to take him round the old town of Fez, where Arab music blared from cheap trannies and early morning called from the minarets. By the time he turned the first corner he heard a familiar sound. Blaring out from one of the cafés was *Stand and Deliver*, he turned to his guide and asked ‘Do you know who that is?’

‘Oh yes,’ he said, ‘An English group called Ahmed and the Ants.’

Adam is now in the top twenty in thirteen countries. In August, he recorded an interview for one of the biggest American TV shows, *Good Morning America*, in Trafalgar Square. While he was doing this an Australian crew and a BBC crew were, in turn, filming the other crews filming him.

Naturally the revenue from records and merchandising is substantial, but Adam’s intention is to make the money he has earned work for him as hard as he has worked for it. He has a whole range of ‘projects’ on the go. He has set up his own publishing company called ‘Antmusic Publishing’ which owns the whole of his back catalogue of over forty songs that have never yet been heard. In the near future he plans to sign up other performers himself to this company and eventually produce and promote them. It’s his intention to create a company that would treat artists like himself in a much more intimate way, trying things out first on a small scale.

In the middle of 1981 he bought his first flat. He phoned up Stephanie Gluck and said ‘I’ve bought this marvellous place, it’s so huge, so luxurious.’ Stephanie went round there eager to see what it
was like. She walked in and looked at it, ‘But it was still a cupboard, just the same as all the other places he has lived in.’

He has since bought a new house in London and has thrown himself into furnishing his first real home. He has asked Dave Conner who designed SEDITIONARIES to work on the interior design, and he’s at last the owner of some of Allen Jones’s work. Nevertheless he still lives simply, still not drinking (or eating chocolate or potatoes) since that night with Kenny Banshee and the vodka. He has a room in a London Hotel where he goes after working in the studio to do what he calls his ‘paper work’. This is the work he is doing on his body of short stories and film scripts. ‘Antmusic Publishing’ will be bringing out a book of the lyrics to *Dirk Wears White Sox* which will be illustrated by his old collage friend Danny Kleinman. And finally of course there’s the new album which all the band have worked long and hard on, often not finishing until three in the morning at Air Studios in London. It’s an album which contains a few musical surprises.
In the course of writing this book a lot of time was spent looking through photographs, trying to decide which ones we should put in. Every time I have looked at the images contained therein and then looked back at him. I can honestly say that I have never really seen a photograph that really looks like him. One thing that this book may not have conveyed yet is the mildness of his manner, his reflectiveness and the softness of his voice. In talking about the past he cannot resist the future. The future for him is literally the next few moments so that he devotes to it all his energy whether it be just talking or travelling in the back of a car. It’s now and therefore something must be made of it.

‘I’ve found it very strange, reading this book,’ he said, ‘Because it’s my life, but I am alive now. I think it’s impossible for people really to try and describe my life story because, to me, I live it every day. It’s very difficult for people to find out who I really am, because I don’t know who I am, and that’s part of a thing of being an entertainer on stage. It’s very schizophrenic, you go on stage to escape, to escape you. I’m very introverted usually offstage. But when I’m on stage it doesn’t matter, “I’m boss, Charlie. If you’re gonna stop this show then you’re going to have to put a bullet in my brain”. No one’s ever stopped one Adam and the Ants show, no one - they’ve burnt the p.a.s down, we’ve had the N.F. down, we’ve had all the problems, but we’ve played on and finished, and that’s important to me. And that must be a result of being positive about what you want to do. Offstage people can barge in front of me in queues, I don’t care, I get another bus. I think it would be nice for people to realise with this book that it wasn’t overnight, it wasn’t something which I take lightly. I never felt like going back at all, because I had nothing to go back to, nothing to lose. I still haven’t. To me, I’m never satisfied with anything so even now it’s not enough. People say “It’s all over bar the shouting,” but they don’t know what
we’ve gone through to do it, and even doing it, it’s still an immense amount of work. To me, it’s a case of conserving energy, preserving the youthful drive that you’ve got, because you can get very old very fast, and fall to bits. That’s why I’m so anti drugs and drink, because I know those things are the destruction of everything positive and creative that I have. They would be I know.’

‘Somebody said to me “How did you do it?” said, “well, I went on the telly and fate played the straight man and I’ve never looked back!” and for them that was enough, but I was taking the mick. Right now, according to the business journals, Marco and I are the top writers. Which is good. Nice. We want to be like Rogers and Hammerstein, write film music. People are very quick to say “He’s a failed punk rocker and now he’s a big star, it was overnight and now he’s a straightman”, but I say now, that I am proving in a very quiet way with the B side of every Ant single that they were good songs. But they were good songs four years ago when I was being called a wanker. That drives me.’

‘When I listen to Dirk and I think of what that album could have been, it kills me, so that I can’t listen to the thing.”

He’s not so busy now that he can’t spare time to encourage other people. A lot of pop stars are just facades behind which there is nothing but a promotions department, Adam’s interest in the slow painstaking process of putting together his ideas and the ideas he gleans from what he sees and hears, makes him an artist, not just a passing fad.

He still writes to Joanna Saloman his teacher at primary school who is now a novelist writing under the name of Dessau Greene. He still keeps in touch with Peter Webb, the tutor from Art School. He’s just bought a set of pictures for his new house from Chris Brown whose house he lived in in Putney. He values more than ever the relationship he has with his parents.

Sitting on the edge of a billiard table in the rest room at Air Studios I asked Adam how this book should end.

‘The way I want to run my career,’ he answers, ‘Is long term, and this book, well, that’s the story so far, but it’s got to look forward, it should end with a dot dot dot …’
APPENDICES

THE ‘ANTMANIFESTO’
(Compiled by Adam in 1978/9 when recording ‘Dirk’)

‘We are four in number; we call our music ‘antmusic’; we perform and work for a future age, we are optimists and in being so, we reject the ‘blank generation’ ideal; we acknowledge the fanzine as the only legitimate form of journalism, and consider the ‘established’ press to be little more than talentless clones, guilty of extreme cerebral laziness; we believe that a writer has the right to draw upon any source of material, however offensive or distasteful it might seem, in the pursuance of his work; we are in tune with nothing; we have NO interest in politics; we identify with no movement or sect other than our own; there are no boxes for us or our music; we are interested in sexmusic, entertainment, action and excitement, and anything young and new; we abhor the ‘hippie’ concept and all the things that surround the ‘rock’n’roll’ scene; we admire the true ‘individual’; and above all THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SOCIAL AND SEXUAL TABOO: finito muchachos …’

Adam Ant  November 7 1978

Likes:
The Slits, tamla mowtownt, discs, Dirk Bogarde; curry, Steve Walsh, Rudolph Schwarzkogler, Otis Redding; The Velvet Underground; The Monkees; Stanley Spencer; Dave Berry; Jane Suck; Roxy Music; tea, letters from antpeople; The Doors; David John Gibb; early futurist ideals; Roald Dahl; Kraftwerk; Jordan; Ripped and Torn; good graphic design; doing the ‘ant’ (new dance craze); bad reviews (funny and useful); James Brown; unpredictability; Fellini; the Texas Chainsaw Massacre … Lenny Bruce!

Dislikes:
Nostalgia-lifestyles; drugs; outdoor festivals; false modernity; the National Front; sloppy journalism (the N.M.E.); Chocolate; hangerson; dolequeue; martyrdom; sexual repression, male chauvinism; bad record covers; bootlegs, spitting …

Adam Ant  November 9 1978

‘We consider the habitual contempt for everything which is young? new? and burning with life, to be unjust and even criminal … we declare was on all artists and all institutions which insist up hiding behind a façade of false modernity? while in fact they are actually enslaved by tradition, academicism and above all, a nauseating cerebral laziness … down with the critics, those complacent pimps … away with affected archaeologists with their chronic necrophilia.’

‘Elevate all attempts at originality however daring, however violent.’

‘Bear bravely and proudly, the smear of “madness” with which they try to gag all innovators.’

‘Regard all art critics as useless and dangerous.’

‘Rebel against the tyranny of the word “harmony and good taste”.’

‘Sweep the whole field of art clean of all themes and subjects which have been used in the past.’

Manifesto of the Futurists Painters 1910

‘Commercial baseness and misoneism … reduce music to a unique and almost unvarying form of melodrama.’

‘Futurism declares inexorable war on all doctrines, individuals and works that prolong or exalt the past at the expense of the future.’

‘It proclaims the conquest of amoral liberty, of action, conscience and imagination.’
‘It proclaims that art is disinterest, heroism, and contempt for easy success.’

‘To combat the venal and ignorant critics with assiduous contempt, liberating the public from the pernicious efforts of their writings.’

‘To consider as an honour, the insults and the ironies of moribund and opportunities.’

Manifesto of Futurist Musicians 1910

The Futurist Manifesto of LUST Valentine de St Point

‘Lust when viewed with moral preconceptions and as an essential part of life’s dynamism … lust is a force …’

‘Lust is the quest of the flesh for the unknown … Lust is the act of creation … lust excites energy and releases strength … we must stop despising desires, this attraction at once delicate and brutal between two bodies, of whatever sex, two bodies that want each other, striving for unity … we must stop despising desire, disguising it in the pitiful clothes of old and sterile sentimentality.’

‘We must strip lust of all the sentimental veils that disfigure it, these were thrown over it out of mere cowardice, because smug sentimentality is so satisfying. Sentimentality is comfortable and therefore demanding … lust is a force, in that it refines the spirit by bringing to the white heat, the excitement of the flesh.’

‘Lust is for the body what an ideal is for the spirit … lust is a force.’

‘There is only one law for the artist, and that is modern life.’

Umberto Boccioni

‘We tend to sing the love of danger? the habit of energy and fearlessness … courage audacity and wit will be essential elements in our poetry … except in struggle there can be no more beauty … no work without an aggressive character can be a masterpiece.’

Founding & manifesto of Futurism 1901
DISCOGRAPHY

Singles:
YOUNG PARISIANS/LADY (Ant)
October 1978, Decca (Produced by Joseph Julian)
Ant/Warren/Barbe/Ashman/Mason
Highest Chart Number: 9

WHIP IN MY VALISE/XEROX (Ant)
July 1979, Do It (Produced by Adam Ant)
Ant/Warren/Barbe/Ashman
Highest Chart Number: 41

CARTROUBLE/KICK (Ant)
March 1981, Do It (Produced by Chris Hughes)
Ant/Marco/Terry Lee Miall
Highest Chart Number: 33

KINGS OF THE WILD FRONTIER/PRESS DARLINGS (Ant/Marco)
April 1980, CBS (Produced by Chris Hughes)
Ant/Marco/Mooney/Miall/Merrick
Highest Chart Number: 2

DOG EAT DOG/PHYSICAL (YOU’RE SO) (ANT/Marco & Ant)
October 1980, CBS (Produced by Chris Hughes)
Ant/Marco/Mooney/Miall/Merrick

ANTMUSIC/FALL IN (Ant/Marco & Ant/Lester Square)
November 29th 1980, CBS (Produced by Chris Hughes)
Ant/Marco/Mooney/Miall/Merrick
Highest Chart Number: 2

STAND AND DELIVER/BEAT MY GUEST (Ant/Marco)
May 1st, 1981, CBS (Produced by Christ Hughes)
Ant/Marco/Tibbs/Miall/Merrick
Highest Chart Number: 1
Albums:
DIRK WEARS WHITE SOX – January 1980, Do It (Produced Ant)
Ant/Barbe/Warren/Ashman

KINGS OF THE WILD FRONTIER – November 1980, CBS (Produced Chris Hughes)
Ant/Marco/Mooney/Miall/Merrick

JUBILEE – OUTRAGEOUS FILM SOUNDTRACK:
PLASTIC SURGERY & DEUTSCHER GIRLS – July 77, Polydor
PLASTIC SURGERY: Produced Danny Beckerman & Will Malone
Barbe/Warren/Ryan/Bivouac/Jordan
DEUTSCHER GIRLS: Produced Guy Ford & Adam & the Ants & Don Hawkins
Warren/Barbe/Bivouac/Ant/Jordan
Here, at last, is the fully authorized Adam Ant biography - written and compiled with Adam’s full co-operation. Through a series of extensive and fascinating interviews with Adam himself and some of his closest friends and colleagues, James Maw vividly brings to life Adam the man, and Adam Ant the star.

Since the release of YOUNG PARISIANS in 1978 Adam Ant has been steadily cultivating his own very original brand of music, Antmusic is the dramatic result. Its sensational impact on the British, American and European music scene has made Adam and the Ants the phenomenon of the eighties. Now find out about the charismatic ‘genius’ behind the warpaint and the feathers, about the group’s early days, the good times, the bad times, the fun, the fiascos, and finally - the success.

Fully illustrated with pictures never before published this extraordinary and compelling store is a hard one to put down.