

The War Cry



20p/25c
No 7360

FIGHTING FOR HEARTS AND SOULS 24 February 2018 Est 1879

salvationarmy.org.uk/warcry



'AN EATING DISORDER IS AN EVIL THING'

Former model on her battle with food



FRESH FIELDS

JB EXCLUSIVE ON
FAME, FARMING
AND HIS FAITH

SHATTERED DREAMS

John Cleese puts plans on hold in new comedy



FRESH FIELDS FOR JB

THE past ten years have been what many *X Factor* contestants would describe as 'an amazing journey' for JB Gill since he took part in the TV singing competition. The show thrust him into the public eye as part of the boy band JLS.

'Being on the show was a whirlwind,' he tells me. 'We hadn't experienced anything like that before and we were thrown straight into the fame and the attention. But we're all close to our families and to each other, so that kept us grounded. I think we handled it well.'

Although the group came second to Alexandra Burke in the show's final, JLS went on to become one of the UK's most successful boy bands, chalking up five No 1 singles, scooping many awards, touring at home and abroad and selling more than ten million records worldwide.

However, all that came to an end when the group disbanded in 2013.

'It was a mutual decision,' JB recalls. 'We'd fulfilled the requirements of our record deal. So we were in a position of strength and were left with the question of whether we wanted another deal or to do our own thing.'

'We decided that it'd be best for us to

explore our options, so we finished our final album and the tour and that was it. I don't regret it. If we hadn't wanted to end it, we wouldn't have, but it was the right move for all of us.'

When the band ended, the whole world was open to JB. The opportunity to develop new skills was not unusual for a young man in his position. What was surprising to many onlookers, though, was the decision he made to pursue a life in farming. However, JB saw it as a natural progression.

'I'd bought a house with land while I was still in JLS. At the time JLS ended, I began to think about how I wanted to live, and one thing that was important to me was resourcefulness.

I had ten acres of farmland, and I just got to thinking: "What can I do with this?"

'A few people mentioned farming to me, so I looked further into it. I thought about the right type of farming, I prayed about it, and then I just started to do it. My interest began to grow, but I didn't think it would end up being what I do.

'Now I've had some success with it. We produce and sell award-winning KellyBronze turkeys and free-range Tamworth pork. It has been important to me, as it's contributed to my family and our lifestyle.'

Although JB is now a fully fledged farmer, he has not completely turned his back on the entertainment industry.

He says: 'I've got a show that I present on CBeebies called *Down on the Farm* and I'm presenting BBC One's *Songs of Praise*. People

JB GILL tells Sarah Olowofoyeku how his life has changed since his whirlwind experiences with JLS

had mentioned presenting to me before, but I wanted to have some focus rather than just take whatever came my way, because the entertainment industry is so broad. Now I feel I have a direction, and it helps me to develop my presenting skills. There are still lots of options, but I know that I'm focused.

'In the future, I hope to develop some more of my own shows, bring my ideas to the table and maximise the opportunities I have.

'I also want to look at opening up the farm to the public. At the moment it's a working farm, but I would love people to be able to come and visit it.'

Timing is key for JB in all areas of his life, and just before JLS came to an end he decided the right time had come for something else to change.

Before *The X Factor*, JB had studied theology, and faith had played a significant part in his life.

I began to think about how I wanted to live, and one thing that was important to me was resourcefulness

'I grew up in church, so on paper I would've always said that I was a Christian,' he says. 'But it wasn't until later that I decided to take ownership of that title.'

'Being in the whirlwind of *The X Factor* and then full-on fame, I'd been going with the flow. So it wasn't until my late twenties, when we were coming to the end of JLS and I was about to get married, that I started to consider what I wanted to be about and what I wanted to stand for. I made the decision to take ownership of being a Christian and to live like Christ.'

'At that time I wouldn't say I was the exemplary Christian, but thinking about what kind of husband and father I wanted to be became important in giving a deeper meaning to life.'

I made the decision to take ownership of being a Christian and to live like Christ



JB performs as part of JLS in 2013

