

Biff bash bosh I'm a new man

FOR a legendary metal frontman, Saxon's Biff Byford has been kind of quiet lately.

But that's one of the snags when you're getting over a life-saving triple heart bypass. You have to give the old vocal cords a bit of a rest.

"I was out training on my bicycle," Biff recalls of the day when he became aware he had a health problem.

"I like to keep fit. But going up a hill that day, it began to feel as if my lungs were straining a bit too much.

"Then a few days later I was down in Brighton with the Saxon boys and I started feeling a bit wacky.

"When I got home, the doctor found a strange rhythm on my heart. So I was sent to hospital. They took me straight in."

Biff feels much better now, he assures me, and his voice is recovering well.

Saxon, who had a huge hit in 1980 with 747 (Strangers In The Night) had to postpone gigs in Glasgow, London and Manchester but they will go ahead next month. Pretty much no-one asked for a refund.

A return to fitness also means he can promote his first solo album, School Of Hard Knocks. April sees him on a tie-in tour - a words-and-music affair.

And the "words" bit shouldn't be underestimated. At 69, he's not exactly short of a tale or two, some going way back to when he was a kid.

In the Yorkshire village where he was raised, lads were expected to work down the local pit. "But I always wanted something different," he says.

Losing his mum at 11 was a crushing blow but somehow he used his grief to spur him on.

"On some level, that sort of trauma can't help but shape who you become," he says.

Biff's album has a lot of stuff reflecting on his childhood. But it also has a northern theme.

The press release that accompanies it proclaims England's north as the country's "true heart". Biff agrees: "Yes, the north has always been the industrial heartland.

"It was hard to not follow your father into a steelworks or coal mine or textile factory.

"So a lot of people wanted to form bands and do music.

"Some of the greatest rock bands - us, Def Leppard, Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin etc - have come from the north or the Midlands.

"It's particularly that strip across the middle. I might be wrong but I'm not aware we've had many great bands from the Lake District."



THE MIKE WARD INTERVIEW

**BIFF BYFORD
ON HIS ROAD
TO RECOVERY**



**CUTS
PLEEZ**

**ROCK ON:
Biff Byford.
Left, in 1984
and, below, with
Saxon in 2018**



BIFF'S FAVOURITES	
FILM:	Saving Private Ryan
BOOK:	Harry Potter
TV SHOW:	Top Gear
ACTOR:	Richard Burton
COMEDIAN:	The Monty Python
SPORTSPERSON:	Lewis Hamilton
SPORTS TEAM:	England Women's football
SPORTING EVENT:	F1
SONG:	Stairway To Heaven
SINGER:	Frank Sinatra
BAND:	Led Zeppelin
FOOD:	Indian
CLOUR:	Red
DRINK:	Red wine
CITY:	London
HOLIDAY DESTINATION:	California
BUILDING:	St Paul's Cathedral
APP:	GPS
SCHOOL SUBJECT:	Music / History
FIGURE FROM HISTORY:	Winston Churchill
ANIMAL:	Dog

WIN

TICKETS TO SHOWS AND NEW ALBUM

YOUR Daily Star is offering Biff's fans 10 bumper prizes, each containing a copy of his new solo album, School Of Hard Knocks, plus tickets for his April tour.

Biff's spoken word and live music show kicks off in Gateshead on April 17, finishes in Brighton on April 29 and visits eight other towns and cities in between (full list at

myticket.co.uk/artists/biff-byford).

For a chance to win the CD, plus two tickets to the venue of your choice, just answer this question. Saxon's

biggest ever album, released in 1980, was called:

- (a) Wheels Of Steel
- (b) Wheel Of Fortune
- (c) Wheels On The Bus

Email your answer, plus your name, address, mobile number and the show you'd like to attend, to starcompetitions@dailystar.co.uk.

CDs will be posted to the winners. Show tickets will be left on the door to collect on the night. Winners must bring ID and a copy of the email confirming they have won.

The competition closes at midnight this Thursday, February 27. Normal Daily Star rules apply and the Editor's decision is final.

