



# DIESEL

*Diesel is a hard rocking new outfit comprising of ex-Bad Company singer Robert Hart and FM guitarist Jim Kirkpatrick, with Pat Davey on bass and Jimmy Copley on drums. Their debut album 'Into The Fire' boasts a sound sure to appeal to fans of well crafted Classic Rock. James Gaden got in touch with vocalist Robert to find out more about this exciting group...*

**Last time I spoke to you Robert (in Fireworks #52), I asked if you had any plans to make another record, and you said you were busy touring with Manfred Mann and didn't see anything happening at that time. Now we have Diesel! Where did that come from?**

(Laughs) I know! It came about after I did the *Rock Of Ages* premiere with Bernie Marsden. When Tom Cruise was over for the opening of the film, Bernie put a band together to perform and he called me to come down and sing. When I got there, Jim Kirkpatrick was there. I was told Jim was a bit of a fan of mine, so we looked at maybe doing something together. We decided to write songs and see how it would go – they came out well, we got signed up and made the album. We did it really quickly, made it in about two and a half weeks I think!

**Wow! I was pleasantly surprised at how Rock orientated the album is – was that a direction you agreed on before you started?**

No, not really, it just came out that way. I thought the album was more Rock than anything I'd done for quite some time too. We were sat together writing, Jim coming up with riffs – he's quite a player isn't he? I went down to where he lives, so I'd write lyrical ideas and stuff on the train on the way down and we would just take it from there.

**You've got a group of great musicians helping out as well, people like Steve Overland and Adam Wakeman.**

Yeah! We were so pleased to have Steve Overland join us. He's got to be one of our favourite singers. He's incredible – so with him being in FM with Jim, we asked if he'd drop by and do some backing vocals. He said "Yeah!" but more than that, he came in and helped with all the vocal arrangements, he was a big part of things.

**I thought this was a project for you and Jim, but the photos feature you and Jim alongside Pat and Jimmy, you have the name Diesel... is this a proper band, rather than an album project?**

Yeah, I reckon it is. I think we're going to make another album and I think we're going to be doing some gigs. We're looking at stuff for September, going out as a four piece much like it is on the album, so yeah, watch out for that! Hitting the road again – motorway service station food, you can't beat it! (laughs)

**Where did you make the album?**

It was in a place called Newcastle-Under-Lyme, just outside of Stoke. It's a great place run by a great engineer called Dan, who owns the studio. It's out in the back of beyond, nobody knows it's there. I think we did the basic tracks there in just four days. Like I say, we had the whole album done in two and a half weeks. That was mixing and everything. Once we had the basic tracks down and we started laying on the guitars, it all came together really quickly.

**Vocally I thought you sounded really strong on it too. The way you and Steve Overland sounded when you sang in tandem was great.**

Thank you! Wasn't bad, was it? Do you know, the best thing for me was to just go and be able to sing. I wasn't having to scream anything – it was just material I was really comfortable with. Most of it was done live in the studio. The band were all playing so I'd get up and start singing with them, and we ended up keeping most of those takes.

**There's a lot of energy on the record and if you've done a lot of it live, that's probably where it's from.**

Exactly! And it was a happy album to make, which always makes a difference.

There was no drama, no fuss, and with absolutely no record company interference at all, which was lovely. They just left us to it. We'd send them stuff we'd done at the end of the day, they would approve it and that was it. It was all relatively trouble free. I very rarely have that happen! (laughs)

**And along with Diesel, you're doing stuff with the Bad Apples (comprising of Robert, Jimmy Copley, Micky Moody, Mick Brown and Ian Jennings) including a new album. I've been a fan of yours for a long time and I've been waiting for you to do a new record, and now two come along at once!**

(Laughs) Yeah, it's happening with the Bad Apples, we've got a gig coming up and we're going to be on Paul Jones' radio show. So there's me and Jimmy Copley, with Micky Moody – just a great set of guys and that should be a lot of fun. So what with Diesel, the Bad Apples and the fact I'll be out singing 'Davy's On The Road Again' with Manfred Mann, my life is quite diverse at the moment!

**What sort of music do the Bad Apples play?**

It's bluesy based, almost an R&B band really, but with a Rock element obviously, because everybody in the band is an old rocker! Again, it's something that's happy and great fun. We've got a couple of guest spots on the album too from Anthony Head and Manfred Mann. It's coming together nicely, we'll have an album ready for release soon. It's great to work with Micky Moody – I think he's the best slide guitar player around. He's playing up a storm at the moment.

**So it sounds like you have a pretty full schedule then!**

That's right, Diesel's album is done, we're looking at dates. The Bad Apples record is done and we have a couple of gigs lined up there – one of them is at the Albert Hall playing as part of a Blues festival. Also I'm back out on the road with Manfred Mann. Life is great at the moment – I'm busy, I'm happy and I think I'm enjoying the music more than I ever have done in the past.