



# The Life And Times Of Fast Eddie

Not long before he died in January of 2018, **Motörhead** guitarist **'Fast' Eddie Clarke** gave *Howard Johnson* one of his most revealing interviews ever. On the 40th anniversary of the band's 'Iron Fist' album, *Rock Candy Mag* brings you his fascinating story...

**IT'S NOW FULLY 40** years since Edward Allan Clarke, better known as 'Fast' Eddie, was fired from Motörhead, splintering what would soon become known as the definitive band line-up. Over the course of just six years between 1976 and 1982, guitarist Eddie, bassist and vocalist Lemmy, and drummer Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor recorded a slew of classic heavy metal albums that not only redefined the genre, but also inspired a whole new generation of thrash musicians.

Eddie's sharp and aggressive playing style, which he'd honed over many years playing in London bands including Zeus, Blue Goose, and Continuous Performance, became a key element of the unique Motörhead sound. His contributions to tracks such as 'Overkill', 'Bomber', and 'Ace Of Spades' were every bit as important as Lemmy's voice and thundering bass tone, and Phil's over-the-top drumming.

Just a few months before Eddie's untimely death in January of 2018 at the age of 67, the guitarist spoke at length about his life and music, revealing himself as a sensitive, thoughtful, funny, and endearing man. He's sorely missed...

## HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST GOT INTERESTED IN GUITAR?

"I first started tinkering when I was 11 or 12, sometime around 1961 or '62. But I was 13 when I first started playing properly, and I was 14 when I got my first electric guitar, a Watkins Rapier 33. It was black with silver pick-ups, a lovely thing. It cost 15 quid and my dad bought it for me, no doubt after a win on the horses! I was really enthusiastic to play right from the start. The first tune I

learnt was [the George Gershwin classic] 'Summertime' and as soon as I swung my feet out of bed in the morning I'd reach for the guitar and have a storm through it."

## YOU WERE BORN AND RAISED IN TWICKENHAM, WHICH WAS A REAL HOTBED OF ENGLISH R&B MUSIC IN THE EARLY '60S...

"I was very fortunate to be in Twickenham at that time. There were great venues in the area like the Eel Pie Island Hotel, and the Crawdaddy at the back of The Station Hotel in Richmond. The Yardbirds and the Stones played some of their earliest gigs around there and very early on

I saw the Yardbirds with Eric Clapton at the Crawdaddy, probably in 1964. It wasn't a bad way to start. I saw them

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a few times, and from then on I took my guitar playing seriously, labouring in the garage. But the big moment when I knew playing guitar for a living was what I wanted to do was when I saw John Mayall And The Bluesbreakers at Eel Pie Island. Clapton was playing with them by this time, and when they went into 'All Your Love' - that double-time bit in the middle - I got an electric shock down the back of my neck. It really got me. For me, playing the guitar wasn't about being the greatest technically. It was about having that effect. I'm not a fantastic player. I do my thing. But every so often I think I come up with something and people go, 'Ooh, nice!' I think of myself as third generation American blues. The Yardbirds were second generation and I copied them."

## DID SCHOOL GO OUT OF THE WINDOW FOR YOU AT THIS POINT?

"I suppose it did, really. Music and girls did for me. ▶