

# WHO ARE YA? DON POWELL

Born in the September of 1946, Donald George Powell first got into the drums after joining the Boy Scouts. Starting his musical career in The Vendors (later with Slade guitarist Dave Hill), a change in name to the N'Betweens saw Powell and Hill meeting Noddy Holder. Going under the name of Ambrose Slade, they had their first band practice on April Fool's Day and, barring the shortening of the name, the rest is history. Having drummed for Slade for over fifty years, Powell recently completed an album and tour with Suzi Quatro and The Sweet's Andy Scott. With Slade out on the road for Christmas, Eugene Butcher spoke to the man himself about the early skinhead image, rock 'n' roll stardom and knocking about with Ozzy.

## BACK IN THE DAY, BEHIND THE KIT

"I found music from my youth club days when I was fifteen. Three records spring to mind in the form of Eden Kane's 'Well I Ask You', Joe Brown's 'Picture Of You' and Billy Fury's 'Like I've Never Been Gone'. Why the drums? Well, it was an extension of my Boy Scout days. I can't sing or play anything else as I'm tone deaf... Basically deaf."

## NEVER GIVE UP, NEVER GIVE SKIN

"We never considered giving up. We were so confident about ourselves and we certainly had the 'bit between our teeth', especially after being stranded in the Bahamas for nearly four months. The skinhead phase was exactly that: an image for that period which we honestly never really believed in."

## ROCK 'N' ROLL STARS

"Did we feel like big stars? (laughs) For the most part we were still living with our parents. We actually felt chuffed with ourselves, having achieved what we set out to do but, stardom? We couldn't get the hang of it. We were always first at receptions and parties and we were always the last to leave, our pockets full of food and booze..."

## WORKHORSES

"Just before we 'made it', selling out the smallish venues we were contracted for... Maybe places we'd played before with only a handful of people there. But we never reneged or cancelled any gigs that were in the book. We honoured every gig."

## EXCESS AND OZZY

"It was a great ride for the time. Now I suppose it's overrated as

I've been tee total for thirty two years now. Ozzy is one of the funniest people to be in the company of. We'd always arrange to meet every day for a drink or fifty. One day he was so late, which was unusual on our drinking sprees. When he did show up, he was wearing a dress – one of Sharon's – saying, 'My wife's got two cunts, and I'm one of them'. It turned out she'd hid all his clothes to try and stop him making our daily rendezvous. Another one, it

was arranged for him to get up and sing the Black Sabbath classic 'Paranoid' with Iron Maiden at their London concert. We went to a fancy dress shop where he hired a ballerina's outfit, tights, tutu, all the regalia. We proceeded to get to Hammersmith Odeon on the bus!

"When he got on stage the place erupted. Somehow we got split up, and I still don't know how either of us got home. I woke with no clothes on, my front door wide open and a trail of clothes behind me. Apparently, he woke up the same but without the ballerina's costume!?"



## IT'S CHRISTMAS!

"I'm so proud of that record. Noddy Holder and Jim Lea wrote the classic Christmas song as far as I'm concerned. I remember being in a lift when it was playing and a bloke behind me – he didn't know I was there – said, 'I'm fed up with this fucking record!'"

## STILL HITTING

"I love it. I've got the best job going, travelling the world doing what I love doing, playing drums. Don't take things for granted." **VLR**

*Slade tour the UK in December*



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