

Boys in the Band



In the early days, the members of Led Zeppelin didn't have posh limousine services to ferry them to their concerts. Mrs. Edith Prawnly of Hummock-on-Smythe in southwesternmost Lincolnshire clearly remembers seeing them bicycle through town with their instruments in tow en route to Ringo's tiny basement flat, where they would rehearse for up to an hour a day. Occasionally, guest artists sat in with the band. Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg and Jasper Johns once showed up with their guitars, but when they saw the dingy condition of the flat, they hauled out their brushes and tempera and instead repainted the place. Another time, Ozzy convinced the St. Swithins Girls School Chorus to sing back-up harmony on one of his songs. The girls had no transportation of their own so Ozzy did the honors himself – six each on either side of the handlebars, four more in the rumbleseat and, balanced precariously on his shoulders, the prim headmistress, Miss Engle. When the lads were pressed for time, they took a shortcut to Ringo's flat – a jolting ride down a steep flight of stairs that led past Heavelly's Fish Market. The route was eventually immortalized in their hit song, *Stairway to Heavelly*, or would have been if the typesetter hadn't misspelled the last word.