

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bonzo's Big Banger: The 'Led Zeppelin McLaren'



Led Zeppelin's John 'Bonzo' Bonham was a simple soul. Not for him the mysteries of the tarot pack or Aleister Crowley's 'Magick, Book 4'. When at home at his Worcestershire farm, a few pints of beer and his close family nearby were enough to keep the band's powerhouse drummer more than happy.

He also liked cars and bikes. So much so that, in the band's 1976 film 'The Song Remains the Same', while Plant, Page and Jones choose mystical adventures for their 'fantasy' sequences, Bonham is seen content to be at home on his Harley, playing snooker and running an AA Fueller dragster to 260mph at Santa Pod.

The background music to this pastoral scene is Bonham's 'own' Zeppelin number, 'Moby Dick'.



In 1974 Bonham had been the prime mover in the band's famous Zeppelin image appearing on British driver Kaye Griffiths' McLaren M8E/D (chassis 80-08). The car had already been running in the usually undersupported Interserie series in 1971-72, when it was owned by the Belgian VDS team.

Griffiths bought it in November 1972 - minus the fearsome twin-turbocharged Chevrolet engine - and, for the following two years, entered it in several Interserie and British Formula Libre events. The car appeared in 'Led Zeppelin' livery for the May 1974 Martini International Trophy Supersports event at Silverstone, a round of the Interserie. An occasional chart-topper in Formula Libre, Griffiths spun out of contention in the big race at Silverstone.



The car's dark blue with white stars and grey 'airship' paint scheme looked stunning - seemingly straight from the airbrushes of the Hipgnosis design agency. (It was, in fact, designed by Richard Evans Design & Art Direction, Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire - not far from the drummer's home.)

In recent years, the 'Led Zeppelin McLaren' has been seen in historic motor racing, in the hands of its current

owners, the Moritz family in the USA.

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