

Paul Kiff on being against folk clubs

Sue: How far have you been involved in folk clubs, rather than folk dance?

Paul: Well, this is a hobbyhorse of mine. I am anti– against clubs, of all sorts, whether they're dance clubs or song clubs. And it's not because I don't– Clubs of a certain sort, where people sit and watch other people perform. And these are the sorts of clubs which generate lots of hot air in the folk press about floor singers being crap and professional singers being wonderful. To me, it's got the wrong way round. I do go to folk clubs, song clubs, all the time– I go twice a week. But to me these clubs are not like the folk clubs as they were, which have nearly all died anyway. They're clubs where people go along with an instrument or their voice and they sing and perform to each other, in the round. And they sometimes sing traditional stuff, they sometimes stuff they've written themselves, they sometimes sing what I call 'new folk' – which is, like, stuff from the Beatles, or REM – or music hall stuff. They are genuine to me. That's a genuine folk music song club. And they exist and they, I think, are generally thriving in the county. What has died is the sit-up-and-watch-people-on-a-stage-perform type club. And I think rightly. Because that to me was- If there was a tradition to be maintained it was the singaround, it was not the spectator sport. And the spectator sport was– They may have sung traditional songs, but it was not a traditional art form in itself.

Read more about the interview on Essex Archives Online: [SA 30/7/1/11/1](#)