

Paul Kiff on commercialisation benign anti-folk

Paul: But the clubs that still go, the sessions that are around, and the singarounds – I think they're fine.

Sue: The, erm... from what you say, you didn't go to folk clubs in the 60s and early 70s.

Paul: No.

Sue: So you've come to those sorts of folk clubs a bit later. I've got a great fondness for those, sort, of great days of folk clubs where there was an enormous buzz. And one of the things that was happening was that whenever the paid artist came, everybody in the room learnt a lot. And I think, I just think that if you had a complete absence of any paid performers– I realise exactly what you're saying about this is not the tradition- and yet, they do stimulate.

Paul: I'd be all in favour of what I'd call roaming musicians, who are talented, and who people say, well we know they're good, we're happy to pay them to come and visit us. But it's gone way beyond that, into mega-folk concerts, where you're paying thousands of pounds on a stage with 1000W PA, to watch Fairport Convention, from a distance. That's pretty destroyed it, I think. And the Cambridge Folk Festival is my really– I hate it, detest it. I think it's really done a lot of damage to the folk world. Because it has done what all commercial music does. It creates the impression that if you're not performing on a big stage, you've somehow failed. Or, you know, if you do what they call cover versions. But what is folk music, if it's not an entire cover? There is a commercial ethos which has got to keep selling new music, otherwise it dies itself. So it sees folk music as an enemy really, because folk music says you don't need new music. So it's only interested in the bits that it wants.

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