Chapter 4

When Mr Fox Met Kit Calvert, the Maker of Wensleydale Cheese: Constructing Yorkshireness in the Sixties Leeds Folk Scene

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Abstract

In 1970, Mr Fox released their first, eponymous album on Transatlantic Records. Marketed as folk rock, it became a commercial and critical success, winning folk album of the year in *Melody Maker*. In 1971, Mr Fox released their second album, *The Gipsy*, which included the epic title-track, an adventure up the Yorkshire Dales by the narrator in pursuit of a gipsy he has fallen for in a pub in Bradford. This second album was not as well-received, and the band split soon after. In this chapter, I want to explore how Mr Fox emerged from the Leeds folk music scene. The band's key musicians, the young married couple Bob and Carole Pegg, had moved to Leeds in 1963 as musicians already building a reputation on the national scene at the time. It was in Leeds that Bob and Carole started to explore the traditional music of the Yorkshire Dales, and this exploration led to them attempting to capture something authentically northern and rural Yorkshire, while simultaneously re-producing it in a folk-rock style. After showing how the band came to be, I will move on to discuss the lyrical and musical themes that the Peggs used across both albums to construct their own imagined Yorkshire.

5362 words

Introduction

In *Electric Eden: Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music*, journalist Rob Young (2011) argues that there is a long history of myth-making in English music, rooted in the late nineteenth-century and the art of William Morris, present in Frederick Delius and Edward Elgar and brought to prominence in folk music. Young shows how folk-rock bands such as Fairport Convention, The Incredible String Band and Mr Fox all attempted to construct their own visions of England and Englishness while simultaneously being part of the post-war folk music revival, itself a return to the initial work of Ceil Sharp and other collectors of folk song and dance. Young is cynical about English folk music's attempts to find the authentic songs of a rural, pre-modern culture untainted by industrialization, a scepticism shared by many critiques of English folk music (Keegan-Phipps 2017; Spracklen 2013). For Young, the only truly authentic English music is mystical, hallucinogenic and weird.

In 1970, Mr Fox released their first, eponymous album on Transatlantic Records (Mr Fox 1970). Marketed as folk rock – being released just a year after Fairport Convention re-constructed the genre with *Liege and Leaf*, and two years after Pentangle popularised it – the album became a commercial and critical success, winning folk album of the year in *Melody Maker*. In 1971, Mr Fox released their second album, *The Gipsy*, which included the epic title-track, an adventure up the Yorkshire Dales by the narrator in pursuit of a gipsy he has fallen for in a pub in Leeds or Bradford (Mr Fox 1971). This second album was not as well-received, and the band split soon after. In this chapter, I want to explore how Mr Fox emerged from the Leeds folk music scene. The band's key musicians, the young married couple Bob and Carole Pegg, had moved to Leeds in 1963 as musicians already building a reputation on the national scene at the time. It was in Leeds that Bob and Carole started to explore the traditional music of the Yorkshire Dales, and this exploration led to them attempting to capture something authentically northern and rural Yorkshire (Spracklen 2016), while simultaneously re-producing it in a folk-rock style. After showing how the band came to be, I will move on to discuss the lyrical and musical themes that the Peggs used across both albums to construct their own imagined Yorkshire. In particular, I will return to the journey narrated in 'The Gipsy'. Before I return to Mr Fox, however, it is necessary to discuss the spatial and cultural relationship between Leeds, Yorkshire, and the Yorkshire Dales, and a brief historical account of the latter.

Leeds, Yorkshire, and the Yorkshire Dales

Leeds, the city at the focus of this book and chapter, is situated in the historic county of Yorkshire, the largest county in England, which stretches from the eastern coast of northern England to a point far over the Pennine watershed very close to the west coast. More precisely, Leeds was in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which was the third of the traditional county that extended from the mines and factories of what is now South Yorkshire all the way through modern West Yorkshire and into the southern part of the Yorkshire Dales (now the Craven and Harrogate Districts of North Yorkshire). Leeds is on the River Aire, one of the rivers of the Yorkshire Dales. But Leeds is not in Airedale or withing the boundaries of the National Park: Leeds is in the low-lying floodplain of the coal measures, a possibly Roman foundation built to protect the river crossing. Modern Leeds now extends to cover the lower reaches of the River Wharfe, one of the other rivers that form the Yorkshire Dales. So it was never far by Roman road or by river from the limestone and millstone grit pastures of the Pennines and the Yorkshire Dales, and there was much interaction between Leeds and its hilly hinterland for hundreds of years.

Leeds was never the capital of the West Riding, but in the nineteenth century it competed with Sheffield and Bradford for the prize of being the most enterprising and the richest (Briggs 2014). In 1904 Leeds beat Sheffield by one year to be the first Yorkshire city to have a University, and both of these cities attracted professionals, academics and students who gentrified the university districts through the twentieth century and before the growth of higher education in the post-war period (Whyte 2015). Leeds in the twentieth century was also at the centre of the growth of the railway industry, textiles and chemical engineering, all of which demanded large numbers of workers. As a consequence, the population and the size of the urban district of Leeds grew enormously from the thirties to the beginning of the seventies. The black smoke of the factory chimneys made people in Leeds yearn to escape up into the Yorkshire Dales, especially in the fifties and sixties when many green fields and farms in Leeds not protected by planning laws were built on by new houses.

At the same time, traditional life in the Yorkshire Dales was under threat. Quarrying and lead-mining had finished. Farming was becoming unprofitable, especially for upland sheep farms, and mechanisation of farming removed opportunities for employment. In Hawes in Wensleydale, the Dale north of Wharfedale, the creamery that made the eponymous cheese was being run-down and threatened with closure by the managers who preferred central factories close to the new motorways. For many of the people born in the Yorkshire Dales in the twenties and thirties, there was nothing to keep them in the area. This was a time, then, when people migrated to Bradford and Leeds, where there were still opportunities for

employment and education. As villages such as Grassington, Hawes, Kettlewell and Buckden lost permanent residents, empty cottages were bought as second homes and holiday lets (Williams and Hall 2000). Throughout the twentieth century, the Dales were marketed to tourists and active recreation enthusiasts as spaces in which one could escape the city and find the freedom to walk green fields in the shadow of hills (Dewhurst and Thomas 2003; Spracklen and Robinson 2020). By the Second World War, walking and cycling tourism had become key forces in re-shaping the domestic economy, with lobbying groups such as the Ramblers Association and the Youth Hostel Association campaigning for better access to the beautiful places of Britain (Birkett 2014; Sheail 1995). Labour backed this movement and its post-war government ensured national parks became established through England, including the Yorkshire Dales National Park in 1954. The original and long-established boundaries of the Yorkshire Dales National Park took in all the hills and fells the major valleys that cut though them: Swaledale; Wensleydale; Dentdale; Littondale; Wharfedale; and Airedale. It stretched as far as the old West Riding border in the Howgill Fells above Sedbergh, but did not include the towns and cities in the southern and eastern valleys. To anyone in Leeds in the sixties, though, the Dales could be found on OS maps that stretched towards the city, on bus and train timetables[1], in walking books and in newspapers. And one might even glimpse Rombald's Moor, beyond which lay Ilkley and Wharfedale.

Bob and Carole Pegg become Mr Fox

According to the sleeve notes of the 2004 compilation re-release CD *Join Us In Our Game* (Wells 2004: 1), Bob and Carole Pegg were both born in the northern counties of the Midlands, 'on either side of the Derbyshire/Nottingham border'. Bob's personal website[2] tells us that he was born in Long Eaton Derbyshire, a place very close to Nottingham and far from the moors of the Dark Peak and the green valleys of the White Peak. We can assume that Carole was the one born on the Nottinghamshire side of the border. They met each other at the Nottingham Folk Worksop, became a double act, fell in love and eventually married in 1964.

In 1963 Bob moved to Leeds to study English Literature at the University. Carole chose to follow her professional and personal partner to Leeds, abandoning her own degree at Southampton. Now married and living in Leeds, the couple became regulars on the local scene, and with others 'ran a folk club at the Royal Sovereign pub in Kirkstall' (Wells 2004: 1).

[1] A railway went from Leeds to Skipton via Ilkley and Bolton Abbey in Wharfedale. This popular line was axed as far as Ilkley, as there was a second railway to Skipton from Leeds.

[2] https://www.bobpegg.com/life, accessed 06 June 2021.

Kirkstall at this time was an industrial inner district of Leeds, but one with the blackened stones of a medieval abbey sitting in idyllic parkland by the River Aire. It was also adjacent to Burley and Headingley, the main university district where Bob Pegg must have attended lectures. From his personal website,[3] we know that Bob was active in the University folk music society as well, as he edited its magazine. While Bob was still an undergraduate, Bob and Carole Pegg were becoming known on the national folk scene, and after submitting a demo to Transatlantic, they appeared on a 1965 compilation. But by this point their music had not been transformed into what became Mr Fox.

The key moment happened when Bob Pegg started work on a postgraduate research project recording the folk musicians of the Yorkshire Dales. Pegg recalled (in Wells 2004: 2):

> By that point I'd moved on at university to train as a folklorist, recording various fiddlers and squeezebox players from the Yorkshire Dales. We incorporated elements of that sound into what Carole and I were doing in the clubs… Whenever [Fairport Convention] played in Leeds… [Ashley Hutchings[4] and I] spent a lot of time together listening to the recordings I was making of traditional musicians in the Yorkshire Dales.

On his own website, Bob Pegg himself recalls the inspiration of those musicians and the locations:[5]

> In 1967 we spent a week in Moor End farmhouse, high on a hill above Wharfedale, overlooking the villages of Kettlewell and Starbotton. We were working with a group of talented teenagers from Buttershaw Youth Club in Bradford, and their visionary leader Trevor Sharpe. Moor End had no running water and no electricity. We sang and played music into the candlelit night, just like folk used to do. Songs inspired by that magical sojourn appeared on later recordings - The Hanged Man on Mr Fox… Jackie Beresford of Buckden, Wharfedale, playing the accordion, with his son Peter on fiddle - around 1967. Jackie was, among other things, a village dance musician, taxi driver, and barman at the Buck Inn. He is one of the characters mentioned in the song The Gipsy, on the Mr Fox album of the same name. Also featured in The Gipsy is Richard

[3] https://www.bobpegg.com/life, accessed 06 June 2021
[4] One of the important professional musicians in the folk-rock movement, and one of the founders of Fairport Convention.
[5] https://www.bobpegg.com/songs, accessed 06 June 2021

> Alderson, better known as Neddy Dick, a farmer from Keld in Swaledale, playing his invention the harmonium and bells. He has his own song, The Ballad of Neddy Dick, on the first Mr Fox album.

The Yorkshire Dales and the musicians of Upper Wharfedale, then, were a direct influence on the musical turn in the music of the Peggs. In the anecdote offered to Wells, Pegg conjures up an image of a research assistant setting out into the Dales and recording the musicians in a formally academic interaction, collecting data for a project. In his own invocation of this spirit of the Dales, the interaction is more playful. We can imagine the young people from the council estate in south Bradford becoming enraptured by the majesty and the misery of the hills above Kettlewell, the hours of sun and rain, night and day. Moor End is still present on the western edge of Upper Wharfedale. Pegg does not tell us that Jackie and Peter Beresford were actually present at Moor End with the Bradford youngsters in that formative week (nor does he say Carole was there, apart from the ambiguous 'we' at the start of his story). Buckden is just a few miles up at the top of Wharfedale, so Moor End would have been easily accessible for the Beresfords. Pegg remembers their playing being an influence on the week and the musical turn of the Peggs. And he frames his recollection in such a way that there is no doubt the Beresfords were two of the musicians he had seen and recorded. But of course this turn was equally shaped and negotiated by the urban mundanity of middle-class Leeds: the folk clubs, the coffee shops around the University, and especially the University itself. There were academics there who were keen to capture the folklore of the Dales, and students like Bob Pegg happy to be employed to record musicians, because they shared a belief that folk music was an important part of English culture (Young 2011). Bob himself clearly believed that the music of the Dales had to be recorded and protected as an authentic representation of rural Yorkshire popular culture, at a time when radio and television were commodifying music and mechanisation was commodifying sheep farming – the basis of the economy of the Dales (Spracklen and Robinson 2020).

In 1969 the Peggs left Leeds and moved to Hertfordshire, the commuter belt of London, far from Yorkshire, where Bob had secured a position as a Lecturer in English and Music at Stevenage College of Further Education. Just after that move, according to Wells (2004: 2), Bob and Carole worked with Bill Leader, 'old Leeds pals, country pickers Nick Strutt and Roger Knowles, Stevenage musicians Barry Lyons and Pete Wagstaff' to record an album for Trailer called *He Came from the Mountains* (Pegg and Pegg 1971). Again, according to the story by Wells (2004), friends in the industry gave a copy of this to Transatlantic, which had

released their demo in 1965, but which had then refused to sign them professionally at the time. Five years on, the Peggs had built a strong reputation on the live circuit, and had vocal supporters in the music press. Transatlantic signed-up the Peggs in 1970, but by that point the Peggs had become Mr Fox.

Mr Fox and *Mr Fox*

Mr Fox was born in Stevenage, but the band was deliberately put together by the Peggs to reflect the arrangement of bands that had played the chapels and dance events in the Yorkshire Dales in the first half of the twentieth century (Wells 2004: 3-4). Barry Lyons came into the band from the *He Came from the Mountains* session to play electric bass, and was joined by Alun Eden on drums, Andrew Massey on cello, and John Myatt on flute, clarinet, bass clarinet and bassoon. Carole continued to play the fiddle and sing, but Bob extended his range to include organ, melodeon, tin whistle and terrapin alongside his vocals. This band went into Livingstone Studios in Barnet, far from Leeds or the Dales. Carole and Bob nonetheless reproduced their imagined Yorkshire folk-rock to perfection. Most of the ten songs on this debut album were written by the Peggs together or individually, with one song brought to the band and another two co-written with Ashley Hutchings. In other words, none of these songs were traditional English folk music or even Yorkshire folk music, even though they are constructed to sound like they are.

On the front cover of the eponymous first album (Mr Fox 1970) there is a picture credited to Bob Pegg, we might assume, to be of Mr Fox[6] himself, a wizard or spirit of the woods with black hat, scraggly beard and demonic eyes. He is stood in a wild landscape holding a naked woman close to him. On the back there is a picture of the Peggs standing across an outcrop of Millstone Grit. Below this, we are told:

> Mr Fox came out of the Yorkshire dales (sic.). Hard-bitten farmland cut bare of trees centuries ago – a landscape which controls the men who live in it… Three years spent working in the dales; treading out their emotional and geographical contours; making friends with warm and defeated people; meeting their ghosts, listening to their music and their tales… Three years re-creating a past when the lead mines were still producing ore… And all the time, everywhere, the landscape: hills bare but for rocks and sheep,

[6] The name Mr Fox was chosen because the fox often appears in folk songs (Young 2011).

rivers waiting to catch you unawares, crags waiting to fall and innocent field that might swallow a man.

The album begins with the creepy whistle and keyboards of 'Join Us in Our Game', written by the Peggs, which sounds like nothing except perhaps an impossible combination between a late-Victorian Methodist revival meeting and the Goblin soundtrack to *Dawn of Dead* – as if Mr Fox had travelled forward and backwards in time. Then comes 'The Hanged Man', where Bob Pegg starts to sing in a Yorkshire accent about a hanged man 'in a valley that never saw the sun'. He sings of rocks, rivers and the moor, then says:

Waking in the forest, beneath the spreading pine,
I saw my body hanging like a shirt upon a line.

Every word evokes the Dales, reinforced by the folk arrangement around them and the way Bob is obviously imitating the Yorkshire accent and style of the singers he recorded. The music is mournful, nostalgic for the places he tells us about in the chorus: the valley; the stones; the church; and the pathway. At the end of the song we discover that the villagers found his body and took it away, but 'I remain here still'.

The rest of the first side reproduces the feel of the opening two songs. 'The Gay Goshawk', written by Carole Pegg, is driven by her ethereal vocal and unsettling fiddle playing. Then Bob's 'Rip Van Winkle' has the harmonium and the Yorkshire enunciations in a song that evokes mountains, sheep, rivers and valleys and a 'flower that has withered in my hand'. 'Mr Trill's Song', with words by Hutchings and tune by Bob Pegg, feels like a live recording of a Morris band doing a ceilidh in Skipton town hall.

The second side begins with 'Little Woman', written by Dave Mason. It is slow, and does not have the obviously Yorkshire vibe of the rest of the album, even if the musical arrangement does. 'Salisbury Plain' with words by Hutchings and music by Carole Pegg, is even slower than 'Little Woman', The name (the South-West of England?) is not a promising start, but the music and the feel is strangely correct. The album continues with Bob's 'The Ballad of Neddy Dick' which brings us clearly back to the Dales and Pegg's description of the song's inspiration, the musician and Swaledale farmer Richard Anderson. The lyrics again take us through the landscape evoked n the songs on the first side of the album and described on the back of the album. This is followed by the lament 'Leaving the Dales', written by Bob, which

identifies the decline of the traditional communities there. The album ends with Bob's 'Mr Fox', another pagan evocation of the spirit of the Yorkshire Dales.

The debut album was a critical success, as I explained earlier in this chapter. According to Pegg,[7] this was when they 'tour[ed] Britain playing folk clubs, concert halls and festivals'. But commercial success was another matter. The band had to lose Massey and Myatt as the line-up was too expensive. One can imagine the label and its management team scratching their heads at these strange tales of hanged men, and who was Mr Fox anyway? Almost immediately, the band was back in the studio: the pressure was on to create an album that would keep the band in business.

The Gipsy (Mr Fox 1971)

The Gipsy, produced again by Bill Leader and recorded at Livingstone Studios in Barnet, has a cover on which the gipsy girl herself is portrayed in traditional Romany costume. On the back is a cartoon of the four members of Mr Fox, and Carole is wearing the same dress as the gipsy. Three of the seven songs are written by Bob, one by Carole, and two are traditional songs arranged by the Peggs. The album begins on side one with Carole's 'Mendle', a start as equally unsettling and awesome as 'Join Us In Our Game'. Her ethereal vocals are accompanied perfectly by Bob's sinister church organ. The story is inspired by the then popular book *Mist Over Pendle* (Neill 1951), about the famous witches of Pendle Hill, who were tried and executed in 1612, though Carole has made a weak pun about being pissed over Pendle (Wells 2004: 8). Then the rest of side one is dedicated to the 13-minute epic 'The Gipsy', Bob's finest moment discussed in more detail below. The second side begins with 'Aunt Lucy Broadwood', Bob's Yorkshire Dales proto-rap song. This side includes 'The House Carpenter' and 'All The Good Times', traditional folk songs made traditional or invented Yorkshire Dales songs. But nothing on the second side can compare to the combination of 'Mendle' and 'The Gipsy'.

'The Gipsy' itself is built on the English folk narrative tradition of musicians falling in love with beautiful but deadly women: witches, fairies, gipsies (Joosen 2011). In these tales, these otherworldly lovers can be deadly for the musician, or they can provide inspiration or gifts. Gipsies belong to this tradition because they have been viewed as exotic and dangerous outsiders ever since they arrived in this country with their culture of movement (Kenrick and Clark 1999). Many conservative people still view Romany and Irish travelling communities with suspicion because these communities want to maintain their freedom to move from site to

[7] https://www.bobpegg.com/life, accessed 06 June 2021.

site. Bob's tale is a modern iteration. His story begins, sung in a broad Yorkshire accent to a jaunty organ riff:

> I'd like to tell you people I met her at a fair,
> But I met her in a pub down by the far side of the square.

This is Mary Lee, the gipsy, and he falls in love with her immediately, drawn to the 'fires of India' in her eyes. She tells him that her family used to have horses, 'but now they lived in Bradford where her father dealt in scrap'. We never know explicitly which city Bob meets the gipsy in, but since he is drinking 'Tetley's Ales' in the evenings he spends 'court[ing]' her 'from Autumn into Spring', we can guess it is Leeds, the home of Tetley's. Leeds is also close to Bradford where Mary Lee lives, though the courting may be taking place in Bradford in a Tetley's pub. Bob wants to ask for her hand in marriage, but is too nervous. Then he fears that his lover is becoming 'restless with the budding of the trees'. One day he turns up at her father's and receives the news that Mary Lee is gone, travelling to Scotland. Bob laments:

> And I knew that I must travel on the road that she'd gone on
> Even if it took me to the dark side of the sun.

'The road' is the old way to Scotland through the Yorkshire Dales. At this point in the song the music changes, slowing down and becoming as unsettling as 'Mendle'. This is a magical road, but one marked by real places. Bob travels from the 'silent' city to Ilkley, on the River Wharfe. He hitches a lift to Bolton, which is Bolton Abbey. Then he tells us he walks past 'the low hills of Wharfedale' and the 'black top of Kilnsey' Crag, before meeting a farmer who tells him the gipsies 'were camped up at Langstrothdale', the far end of the valley carved out by the Wharfe. Bob is of course walking the tarmac road, not a public footpath. This is the old way pedestrians reached these dales, as the road follows the old tracks by the rivers that take the easiest way from village to village – although it is possible he took the paths that go on either side of the valley below Moor End farm between Kettlewell at Buckden. At Buckden, Bob stays the night presumably at the Buck Inn, where his 'friend Jackie' (Beresford, mentioned earlier in this chapter) works, where he is told the gipsies have moved on 'over the top' to Wensleydale. The next day Bob follows them:

So next morning I took the road into Wensleydale,
Moorland before me, stretched out like a dream.
Up by the boulders and over the bridge
Where the White Lady walks into the stream.

Where this happens, and who the White Lady is, is unclear. The road to Wensleydale from Langstrothdale goes high over rough moorland, but the direction and description in the third line suggests to me the road in Langstrothdale – limestone country scattered with erratics – before it turns up to the moors. There is a bridge in Wensleydale before the road reaches Hawes at Gayle, but this is in a village by a mill. Wherever the White Lady crosses the water may not be possible to mark on a map that is not in the fairy realm. But the magical tone is balanced by the first person Bob meets in Wensleydale: 'Kit Calvert, the Maker of Wensleydale Cheese'. Kit is the person who saved Hawes Creamery and Wensleydale Cheese, and at the time in the fifties and sixties he had some regional fame for his involvement in Dales culture, folklore and dialect. His presence raises a smile for those who know the story of how he saved the local cheese – even if the music is still in the same slow, spooky tone. Kit warns Bob that the gipsies have already set off towards Keld in Swaledale over the Buttertubs Pass, one of the most difficult climbs in the north of England. Bob pursues them onto the rise between the two dales, where is alone. At this point the music changes and there is a fiddle solo, a tin whistle and a more furious drumbeat.

Then the slow music returns as Bob tells us he has come to Thwaite by the River Swale, before reaching Keld where he tells us 'Neddy played his harmonium and bells'. He then spies the horses and wagons and realises he has found the gipsies. The music returns to the jaunty riff of the first part, and he sees Mary Lee again. He knows this is 'the closing of a love affair' but spends the night with her 'under the haloed moon'. When he wakes up she is gone, and has left him a note. Later, he hears she has a baby and is living in Dundee with a 'tinker'. He ends his tale by wondering whether she still remembers him. At this point there is a magnificent instrumental coda that remains joyful.

The Gipsy did not receive critical acclaim, nor did the album sell enough records to allow the band to become the next Fairport Convention. Rather than reach out to a bigger audience by making their music accessible and relatable, *The Gipsy* was defiantly, regionally Yorkshire, seemingly appealing only to people who had walked themselves up and around the low hills of Wharfedale. The band struggled on until 1972 then broke up at the same time as Bob and Carole's marriage ended. Carole tried to establish herself as a singer-songwriter, then

became an ethnomusicologist when that career path failed. Bob returned to Leeds and tried to recapture the magic of Mr Fox in a series of idiosyncratic recordings, but nothing came close to having the impact of the debut album. And none of those recordings invent and play with rural Yorkshire so effectively as either Mr Fox album. Indeed, in Leeds in the late seventies, Bob's music was becoming more grim, more real and more reflective of the (post)industrial city scape of that time.[8]

Conclusion

Everything released by Mr Fox was clearly a confection, a re-imagined construction of songs and tunes. There was nothing in either of the two albums that was authentic Yorkshire folk music. Neither of the Peggs came from Yorkshire, neither lived there when they were making the Mr Fox albums. Listening to the records now, one can hear romantic notions of identity and place, of meaning and purpose and belonging, that are as real as the ghost of the White Lady. All Bob Pegg wanted to do was to take the songs and tunes he had heard and recorded and somehow reproduce them in a way that captured some idea he had about what genuine Yorkshire Dales folk culture or popular culture actually was: church music, bands playing organs and singing songs of the decline of mining, of farming and of the villages and communities that had been thriving at the turn of the last century.

And yet there is much in this collage of Yorkshireness that rings true (Spracklen 2016). The musicians who inspired Mr Fox were real people making real music, which Bob and Carole channelled into what they believed to be a true reproduction of the sound and the place. The Dales exist, people live in it still, as farmers, as taxi drivers, as pub landlords. People visit the Dales as tourists and pass through these places and wear down every stile with the weight of their boots. When Bob and Carole Pegg moved to Leeds the Dales were there on the horizon, for them and for every other citizen of the city, so it is not surprising they found pleasure and belonging for themselves in exploring the fields and the hills and the moors. And it not surprising that people now listen to Mr Fox and identify completely with the Yorkshire Dales evoked by the ritual magic at the heart of their albums.

[8] In 978, Bob was interviewed by police in Leeds as he released a single called 'The Werewolf Of Old Chapeltown' at the height of the hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper: the police thought the lyrics were suspiciously true to what the actual killer Peter Sutcliffe had been doing (Wells 2006: 7-8).

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