Alan Lee's 'Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed' in
Lady Charlotte Guest's *The Mabinogion*.

Subversive or What? Fairies and Rebellion

Jeremy Harte

In the woods, it is always twilight. Appearances are frequently deceptive, paths never run straight, and we strain our eyes to distinguish shadow from substance. What half-lit figure can it be that slips between the great oaks of Newbury and Fairmile? Do we recognise the urbane PhD student Andy Letcher? Or is it a raw and lawless road protestor? Or could it be … something else entirely? Many people live in the woods, and not all of them are human.

After his return to King Alfred's College from the protest camp at the proposed Newbury bypass, Letcher wrote about the days he had spent in the forest, and reflected on the role of the Otherworld in sustaining the values and cosmology of his fellow-protestors. The first camp to be set up at Newbury was the Pixie Village, and people who were being invited to join the camps could be rhetorically asked, 'Are you one of the fairy folk?' Gossamer wings, tinkling bells and the magic faraway tree made frequent appearance in protest music and songs. These allusions to the elfin realm all came from the world of childhood, which is natural enough, as that is where most English people had their last experience of fairies. But not everyone identified with it, and there were protestors who consciously dismissed all this childlike imagery as naive. 'Oh, we don't do any of that fairy pixy stuff', said one group at Newbury. 'That's because we're *trolls*.'

As this suggests, tropes of the supernatural were hard to escape in the rhetoric of the road protest movement. For as long as they remained in the camps, protestors formed a new tribe with its own distinct traditions and values, bricolaged out of the cultural materials brought from a previous mainstream life. Everyone knew something about fairies – their elfin glamour, their tricksy ways and, most importantly, their unquenchable opposition to the mundane world of fences and policemen. That made them a natural metaphor for the people of the trees, and a shorthand way of explaining why they had come to the protest and what motivated them to stay there in the face of continued hardship and occasional violence. Then sometimes the metaphor was extended into an active embodiment. People no longer said that they were *like* fairies, they acted as if they *were* fairies, with all the disregard that the secret people might feel for mere human law. If the protests of 1992-7 were successful in halting the government's road-building scheme, it was because previously non-criminal people were prepared to do illegal things, and a shift of this kind is made much easier if you decide that you are not your ordinary law-abiding self, but an avenging leprechaun. 'Pixieing' was the name for that mysterious

process by which the offices, vehicles, fences and machinery of road-building contractors were found overnight to have been wrecked and broken.

Furthermore, there were some who had seen the fairies themselves among the protest movement, overseeing, motivating and warning their human confrères; Letcher was told several memorates about these encounters. Since many protestors were off their heads for much of the time, it is not surprising that they had unusual experiences, but there was something about these visions, invoking natural forces and articulating passionately held beliefs, which meant that they were taken more seriously than an ordinary trip.[1]

The intense, threatened world of the protest camps could not last, since their temporary autonomous zones were soon broken up by the law. But the balance between state power and local protest is not always so one-sided. Sometimes the woods have been successfully occupied by communities who sustain themselves against the will of the government. Much depends on geography, for authority finds it hard to get up into the hills; a mile of ascent is as good as fifty on the level when it comes to putting distance between yourself and central government. So it was in the Beaujolais in the 1770s, when the surveyors came – in this case not to align new roads, but to redistribute lands which had been allocated to a distant landlord. They were assaulted by strange figures with black faces and long robes who ended each encounter by melting away into the hills. When the police came to find out what was going on, there didn't seem to be any men at home, but the women of the district were forthcoming about what had happened. It was the fairies. Everyone knew that fairies came down from the mountains and did things like that – such a pity for the poor surveyor men – but who can do anything about the fairies?[2]

This is the way of the peasant, to combine daytime respect for government with night-time resistance. They did it in the Beaujolais; they did the same in the Hebrides a hundred years later, where crofters blamed vandalism against their landlords on 'the fairies'.[3] Of course, if the authorities did not take the hint then things could get out of hand, as happened in the French Pyrenees during what became known as the War of the Demoiselles. This conflict began in the collision of new estate management with more traditional, communitarian uses of the wilderness. People in the department of Ariége had always gone into the forest to gather firewood, coppice the growing trees, and graze their cattle, while any conflicts between these potential uses were adjudicated through the web of customary rights. The Revolution swept all this away as part of its ideological hostility to local and particular rights, but in the turmoil that followed, peasants of the Ariège were left largely to their own devices, until in 1827 a new Forest Code was issued. This put silviculture on a rational footing by dividing the woods into blocks leased exclusively to investors, who planned a regime of clear-felling and new planting which would supply the nearby iron foundries with charcoal, and did not welcome interference in the land for which they had paid.

Deprived of their customary rights to firewood and grazing, the peasants were cold, hungry and discontented, and since they knew their environs much better than the strangers ever could, they were able to mount an effective campaign of sabotage. And they did so, not as citizens of the state or as freedom fighters against it, but as fairies. When night fell, the forest guards and charcoal burners would be overwhelmed by angry figures in long white robes, their blackened faces topped by scarves or wigs. They came and went at will; they dressed like women but fought like men; they were the Demoiselles – which literally meant the young ladies, but to anyone familiar with local lore was an unmistakeable reference to the Forest Maidens. These were the fairies who had always watched over the resources of the wild places, rewarding honesty and punishing greed. Now they were needed more than ever.[4]

Disguise was at the heart of the revolt. By daylight it is not hard to tell the difference between a working-class French woodcutter and an elfin queen, and even in the shadows guardsmen must have had an idea that they were not facing a supernatural adversary, but the seeds of doubt had been sown. Like all revolts, this one denied the official account of what was really what. These trees were not the property of the state but the home of the people. Once they had been profitable wood-pasture; now, poisoned by the bad magic of capitalism, they were the illimitable forest which hates the frightened stranger and sends out its angry supernatural emissaries against him. To the urban troops which had been sent to suppress them, the peasants were just *sauvage*s, but they themselves identified with the ancient sense of that word as *sylvatici*, the people of the trees; even, perhaps, as *sylvanae*, wood-fairies. The forest was a person and the Demoiselles came from its angry heart.

Gender reversal also played a role in this carnival of overturned identities, although it is not clear how seriously the insurgents took their role of men dressed up as women. The important thing was to wear something long and white which hid your ordinary working clothes – as amongst those other, earlier French rebels, the Camisards, who were named after their *camisas* or *chemises* they wore when protesting against the persecutions of Protestants from 1702. It didn't matter much whether it was your shirt or your girlfriend's smock, as long as it produced a ghostly effect in the moonlight. Was it a good idea for the ground troops of the uprising to wear something which made them so very visible as targets? That would overestimate the willingness of either side to escalate their encounters beyond an exchange of threats. It's true the War of the Demoiselles was fought under very different rules than those that prevailed at Newbury and Twyford Down. There were guns, and people were killed. But a lot of the shots seem to have gone amiss, which is odd when you think that fighters on both sides, like most Frenchmen in the 1820s, must have seen military service. These were not guerrilla actions; they were more like dark silent riots, with most of the violence on show and not for use.

White shirts, however inappropriate as a military uniform, are effective as a disguise, especially in a peasant society where men could otherwise be identified by their one everyday set of working clothes. Long shirts and smocks were a traditional way to dress up when people wanted to look different but didn't have the money to buy costumes. And they made everyone look the same, which was important if what you wanted most of all was to be anonymous.

Anonymity was certainly achieved by the 'Fairesses' of Kerry who went out at night, under the instructions of their leader Daniel Mahoney, after dressing in women's clothes and blacking up their faces to make themselves unrecognisable. They carried clubs of hazel with which they broke into the houses of people who, in Mahoney's opinion, were causing trouble. This meant almost anyone from outside who tried to break into the affairs of Kerry gentlemen. In 1722 an intrepid investor leased lands which had come on the market as part of the infamous system of quit rents – a fine levied specifically on Catholics. Mahoney had no religious bias when it came to his fellow Kerrymen, but outsiders were another matter, and he sent his fairesses to intimidate the wretched renter, alternatively beating him up and bringing lawsuits before local magistrates until he was driven out of the county. There were supposed to be eighty of the fairesses, although with this kind of organised thuggery it is not easy to say who is in and who is out. Some would be ringleaders, while others would join because it was safer to tag along than to mark yourself out as a potential victim by not participating at all.[5] The same disguise and the same identity was assumed by the Whiteboys who roamed Tipperary in 1762. They knocked down enclosures, controlled prices, and prevented the eviction of tenants and the dismissal of servants. A disgruntled landowner reported that there were five hundred of them and they 'frequently assemble with shirts over their clothes doing whatever mischief they please by night, under the sanction of being fairies'.[6]

Men had learnt to behave like fairies, as they could easily do once they had imagined fairies in the likeness of men. The otherworldly rulers of 17th- and 18th-century Ireland – Finnbheara, Clíodhna, Aoibheall, Áine – had territories, capital seats, devoted followers and regular circuits for the exercise of their rule: in short, everything that had once been possessed by the native Irish earls, and which could now only be imagined by the descendants of their followers. It was taken for granted that the political allegiances of the Otherworld would align with those of the Irish-speaking peasantry. In 1823 there was an insurrection planned amongst the people of Limerick, including those who lived around Knockfierna, the hill from which Donn Fírinne rode out each night with his *slua* or band of followers. Donn was a king of the *sí* and everyone knew of someone who had entered within the hill and seen the splendours of his court. Stern to anyone who insulted him, he was scrupulously fair to those who kept their part of the bargain. So when a smith made a set of sharp pike-heads, and left them concealed on the mountain ready for use in the uprising, no-one was surprised to find that a bundle had

gone missing. Donn had taken them as his own share, and it was a compliment to the smith that his workmanship was good enough to arm the fairy host.

Brought up in the world of these stories, one of the Riordans was not much surprised when, walking one night along the road of the hill, he saw the *slua Dhuin*. But then they stopped and called out for him to join them as they rode to meet the mail-coach heading west from Bruff. The coach was carrying a lawyer who brought the hated writs to evict people from their homes: and when he met up with the Whiteboys (for that is what they were), he would get what he deserved. The young man joined them – it was not as if he had much choice – and the host rode on to do the justice of Donn.[7]

If these groups had such an open-ended membership – and at their peak they comprised most of the young men of the neighbourhood – then what need was there for this mummery of white smocks and blackened faces? Not to conceal themselves from the forces of the law: if there had been any effective law enforcement in rural Ireland, none of this would have been going on anyway. Yes, anonymity must have added an extra terror to the powerless victims, who found themselves being knocked about by a faceless, nameless horde and not by individual neighbours to whom some kind of appeal could be made. But most of all the fairesses were disguising themselves against themselves. Once in costume, they were free to act in character and do the dreadful things that must be done at night if social order – their version of social order, at least – was to return in the day. In the liberty of disguise (*Maskenfreiheit*, as the Germans call it) they were no longer Pat and Seán but … something else. And that something, if it was no longer quite human, might be called supernatural.

So disguise was not really a practical, guess-who-this-is affair; it was a sign that men had left the stage as social actors, and that their place was being taken by fairies. It was conventional (and, if you were an uninvolved bystander, it was much, much safer) to suppose that the things that went on at night were done by the *slua*, the host of the *sí* whom none can judge or blame. Young men who would ordinarily have shivered at the thought of going out after sunset, at the time when the world is given over to the other crowd, could set out blacked up in the confidence that they themselves were now the fairies. The fear remained, but was transferred to their victims. And the disguise was a barrier, thin as a cotton sheet, which kept them from recognising that it was they themselves who were terrifying.

Deception, like disguise, suggests an illicit motive; in an orderly society, nobody is allowed to pretend to be someone else. However, orderliness was the last thing on the minds of the hundred poachers who in the summer of 1451 broke into the deer-park at Penshurst on the western borders of Kent, where they chased, killed and carried away 20 bucks and 80 does. This would have been about half of the deer stocked in the park, which suggests planning on the grand scale – just transporting the bodies would have involved carts, carrying poles, butcher's tools and so on – while forethought had evidently

been given to other aspects of the poachers' campaign. The men were wearing helmets and breastplates in case they met with a violent defence; they had put on pantomime beards and blacked up their faces with charcoal, so that they could not be recognised; and if anyone asked who they were, the answer was 'servants of the queen of Faerie' (*regina del faire*).[8]

This made sense, at least in the perverted logic of fantasy. Park raids like the one at Penshurst were not assaults by the poor on the privilege of the rich: more often, they were the outcome of struggles for status among the gentry themselves. To break into a neighbour's park and steal his deer was to rob him of the most obvious outward sign of an aristocratic lifestyle; it showed that he was impotent to guard his own walled space, and would therefore be unable to protect his followers either. In a society where most men lined up under the banner of some local leader, it was easy to gather a scrum of violent types who would carry out the actual fence-breaking. The park at Penshurst belonged to the Duke of Buckingham, and he had made himself unpopular in Kent by rooting out the yeomen and middle-ranking gentlemen who had condoned Jack Cade's rebellion the year before. Buckingham was a figure to be reckoned with, an intimate of the royal family and veteran of the French wars; there was no local landowner who came anywhere near him in status. Now, by professing themselves servants of the Fairy Queen, the insurgents marched under the sooty livery of a patron who matched his rank.

Perhaps the Fairy Queen is the last, peripheral transformation of that aerial mistress who features as Diana in the *Canon Episcopi*'s condemnation of witchcraft and continued to ride, from the ninth century up until the eve of the Renaissance, through the imagination of dreaming women in France and Germany. Under all her vernacular names – Satia, Holda, Dame Abonde, the Good Lady, the Lady of the Good Game – she is always the sole ruler and leader of her troop.[9] But if this is the origin of the English motif, it had already become detached from the original story, for the nocturnal procession of women was never known in England.

The Good Lady was generous and kind to households who put out food in her honour, but inflicted damage and misfortune on those who had failed to leave their cups and pots open. As this all happened in dream, there was little risk of the food being purloined by human travellers on behalf of the Otherworld, but the imagery of hospitality being rewarded – or otherwise – followed a familiar daytime pattern. Similarly, wild and unruly behaviour could be described by reference to its supernatural prototype. The rough music laid on for the wedding night of Fauvel, as described by Gervais du Bus in 1316, is typical. The participants have disguised themselves with paint, false beards or costumes of sacking. They have bells and rattles and kitchen pots and pans to beat and cause a din; they tumble through the streets, mooning, breaking windows, throwing dirt at the respectable people. And at the head of the procession marches the giant Hellequin, leader of that noisy troop of spirits, dead or demonic or both, who in their terrifying presence on the night-time roads so closely resemble the *slua*.[10]

But then it's not surprising to meet with a giant in the streets, for this is all a fantasy. Fauvel is a horse, he's just got married to Gloria Mundi, and his friends the revellers are characters in an extended allegory. The lively detail suggests that Gervais du Bus modelled this part of the poem on actual charivaris that he'd witnessed, but this doesn't prove that young people kicking up a din in the streets of Paris consciously thought they were part of the *Mesnie Hellequin*.

Anyway, it was not always necessary for rebellious characters to identify themselves as fairies; others were willing to do it for them. On hearing in 1489 of rebels in Yorkshire against Henry VII, William Paston wrote to his brother with a copy of their proclamation, and added that it was made 'in the name of Mayster Hobbe Hyrste, Robyn Godfelaws brodyr he is, as I trowe'.[11] This is a double put-down: not only does it dismiss the revolt as a sort of pantomime, but by implication it is not even a high-class one. Unlike previous risings against the Tudors, which had at least claimed the sanction of peers and royal pretenders, this was a gathering of commoners – not a ride of the Seelie Court, but a parade of rustic goblins. Hob in his various guises was a household servant, and Robin Goodfellow, according to the most elaborate account of his life, was born the son of a country wench, and played his tricks at the mill and in the kitchen.

As this shows, you could picture rebellion in all its forms as a sudden irruption of the fairy world into the ordinary business of life: often this was just a flippant and colloquial metaphor, but it could also reflect serious values. Unexpectedly, perhaps, we find the Pastons in the 15th century treating fairies as a bit of a joke, while our own contemporaries have reworked them into a deeply held philosophy. But there is no continuity between the imaginings of different eras. The Penshurst poachers, the Whiteboys of Cnoc Fírinne, the Demoiselles and the trolls and pixies of Fairmile knew nothing of each other: they had arrived at the same idea independently.[12]

You can't really say that there is a tradition of subversive fairies; instead, ideas surrounding misrule, mayhem and the overturning of social boundaries form a matrix in which the impersonation of wild spirits occasionally plays its part. Being a fairy is a bit like being Rebecca at the broken toll-gates, or Captain Swing among the blazing cornricks; it is to take on the likeness of the Lady Skimmington who broke down enclosures in 17th-century Wiltshire, or the Earl of the Plough who led a troop in the Peasants' Revolt. Or Robin Hood. Or the Sean-Bhean bhocht.[13] Always it is to muffle up, cross-dress, take on a traditional name and a familiar disguise which gives you the authority to break down things that the authorities have put up, while your followers are unrecognisable in the soot, rags, straw or green branches already familiar to them as traditional materials for seasonal costume.[14]

We know a lot about this because social historians have paid particular attention to what you might call folk riots – those microhistorical moments when the oppressed take to the streets or fields in procession after their king of misrule, marching in disguise to

the sound of tabor and pipe. The bonfires and beatings which follow are real enough, but they still have a flavour of Mischief Night, or the rough stuff expected from midwinter revellers. A wise landlord, if he can keep his head when the crowd come to the door, will distribute largesse as if he were greeting the mummers, open the beer kegs as if it were Harvest Home, and perhaps lend his hat and coat to the effigy which is on its way to burning. The revolt which took its form from ritual can be persuaded to subside into it again.

That is why the folk riot is so short-lived in its effects; it is a festival of inversion, and festivals don't last for long. The rites of Harlequin are a poor substitute for organised radical proletarian action. As Europe's *ancien regime*s morphed into democracies, the newly enfranchised leaders of popular politics turned against the old complex of belief and action which had once validated the midnight raids of fairies. For a while it survived in language, if not action. A group of 1830s Lancashire mill-breakers marched in organised, if slightly drunken, columns; they had passwords to identify those who belonged to their company, and a badge of holly in the hat and white ribbon on the arm for those who went under safe conduct; and if any were to ask who gave the password, or tied on the ribbon and holly, the right answer was 't' boggart o' Deerpley Fell'. A boggart is, by definition, a spirit that frightens, and the wreckers were frightening enough.[15]

But in the end, a disenchantment of the working-class world was achieved by the working classes themselves, which is something of an embarrassment for folklorists. Since supernatural traditions and ritual performances among sub-cultures are our bread and butter, it is awkward when people set them aside. When the last Donga has laid down their drum and washed off their war-paint, aren't we going to be out of a job? So we are, even if unconsciously, inclined to overlook those who rejected the fairies.

But most 19th-century self-taught working-class intellectuals thought otherwise. It was a great step for them to deny everything that they had believed about spirits as a child, everything that their neighbours still believed. This denial was itself a visible sign of the difference that a wider outlook had made in them; as their eyes were unsealed, they could look back on the credulity with which (as they now argued) their neighbours had accepted the invisible world. They could see it as a type of ignorance in all its forms – the inability of the unlearned to imagine a world which was not dominated by priests and kings and ghosts and fairies. It took literacy, and then education, before the common man could raise his eyes and act as a free agent, denying the spectral powers and defying the worldly ones.[16]

At the same time, for all but the most doctrinaire there was a pang of regret in losing the poetry of Faerie – a poetry which was experienced more keenly as they lost any fear of what the secret people might actually do to them. This balance between poetry and reason is an old one: it is there in the foundational text of British fairy studies, Walter Scott's 'Essay on the Fairy Superstitions'.[17]

Scott, like Tolkien, wrote fiction as well as scholarship, and sometimes the scholarship is best illuminated through the fiction. In *Rob Roy* the fairy realm is introduced at a turning point in the narrative. The hero, Francis Osbaldistone, has been sent into Scotland to restore the fortunes of his family. Arriving at Glasgow, he joins up with the garrulous but level-headed Bailie Nicol Jarvie and they proceed north in search of Rob Roy. Night has fallen when they cross the Forth into the Highlands, and the Bailie draws Frank's attention to the hill which stands out above Aberfoyle in the moonlight: this is the abode of the fairies, a hidden race of capricious temperament whom it is best not to meet, and who when met should be treated with respect. (All this comes from Robert Kirk, the 17th-century minister of Aberfoyle whose *Secret Common-Wealth* had been edited by Scott two years earlier.) As the travellers descend, the Deacon changes his language and the *Daoine Sith* are treated with less respect, so that by the time lights are visible in the valley, he is ready to dismiss the secret people as deceits of Satan. But the trials of the night are not over, for the clachan is full of surly and well-armed Highlanders who are not keen to make room for the travellers. In short, the *sith* have given way to the Gael, likewise a race 'who, if not positively malignant … were yet to be avoided and feared, on account of their capricious, vindictive, and irritable disposition'.[18]

Rob Roy is a kind of *Bildungsroman*. At the beginning, Frank Osbaldistone is a lackadaisical young man with a taste for bad poetry; by the end, he has come to rely on and appreciate the good sense of the Bailie, and has seen enough murders committed in wild scenery to satisfy any inclination towards the Romantic. He is an Englishman in Scotland, representative of a Union based on commercial principles which will sweep away the old world of Jacobites, Highlanders, rebels … and fairies. But when Scott looked back he could not help doing so with mixed feelings. As the historian of a formerly independent country, he celebrated tales of fierce honour from the days which would not return; as a chronicler of native superstition, he respected the ghosts in whom he did not believe; and though he had hard words to say about the fairies, he was careful to reserve these until he was out of their hearing.

Now the wheel has turned full circle. The powers which rule our world are no longer underpinned by supernatural sanctions, but by their absence; we live under the hegemony of the rational and humanist. Those who resist this cool power – and there will always be resisters – gather strength from belief in another world; any other world will do as long as it offers epistemic resistance to the dominant narrative of secularism. The trolls and pixies of Newbury woods are on the march, and they do not intend to let the clasps of a book lock them away again.

. . . . . .

Jeremy Harte

Notes

1. Andy Letcher, 'The Scouring of the Shire: fairies, trolls and pixies in eco-protest culture', *Folklore* 112 (2001), pp.147-61.
2. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1965), p.147.
3. Simon Young, 'Fairy bandits', *Fortean Times* 343 (2016), p.25.
4. Peter Sahlins, *Forest Rites: The War of the Demoiselles in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).
5. Mary Agnes Hickson, *Selections from Old Kerry Records* (London: Watson and Hazell, 1872-4), 2, pp.153-62.
6. William Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1913), 1, p.360.
7. Käte Müller-Lisowski, 'Contributions to a study in Irish folklore: traditions about Donn', *Béaloideas* 18 (1948), pp.142-99 at pp.155, 157. I have assumed that these reminiscences belong to 1823, when 68 pike heads were found on Cnoc Fírinne: Maurice Lenihan, *Limerick: Its History and Antiquities* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1884), p.460.
8. R. Virgoe, 'Some ancient indictments in the King's Bench relating to Kent, 1450–1452', pp.214–65 of *Documents Illustrative of Medieval Kentish Society*, ed. F.R.H. du Boulay (Ashford: Kent Arch. Soc., 1964), pp.254-5.
9. Claude Lecouteux, *Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead* (Rochester VT: Inner Traditions, 2011), pp.8-18. A re-evaluation of this evidence, and of supernatural troops in general, is forthcoming from Ronald Hutton in *Witch*.
10. Gervais du Bus, *Le Roman de Fauvel*, ed. Arthur Långfors (Paris: Soc. des anciens textes français, 1914-19), pp.164–7.
11. *The Paston Letters*, ed. James Gairdner (London: Chatto & Windus, 1904), 6, p.131.
12. To which one might add the Red Fairies of Dinas Mawddwy in Merionethshire, a marauding red-headed tribe whose story came to an end with massacre, assassination and extermination in 1554-5 – except that the fairy identity of the Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy, as they were known in Welsh, is only retrospective, caused by a mistranslation. *Gwylliad* 'robber' was mistaken for *gwyll* 'spectre' by a contributor to Jelinger C. Symons, 'On the permanence of races in this country', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 2nd ser 5 (1854), pp.115-25 at p.119; ever since then they have flitted from book to book as fairies, not bandits.
13. For international readers unfamiliar with these areas of English history, these refer to the Welsh Rebecca Riots against road tolls in 1839-43; the Swing Riots against new threshing machines in 1830; the Western Rising of 1628-31 against enclosures on the Wiltshire/Dorset border; the Peasants Rebellion of 1381 against poll taxes and serfdom; Robin Hood; and the poor old woman personifying Ireland in the Irish Rebellion of 1798.
14. Thomas Pettitt, 'In comes I, Jack Straw', *Folklore* 95 (1984), pp.3-20.
15. James Kay-Shuttleworth, *Scarsdale: Or, Life on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Border, Thirty Years Ago* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1860), vol. 1, pp.60-1. This is a novel, but written to represent the real state of things at the time.
16. David Vincent, 'The decline of the oral tradition in popular culture', pp.20-47 of *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. Robert Storch (London: Croom Helm, 1982), pp.31-8.
17. Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1802-3), vol. 2, pp.167-227.
18. Walter Scott, *Rob Roy* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1817), chapter 28.